

THE GATEWAY

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PETE YEE

A STEELEY GAZE The Trinity Western Spartans had no chance against Alex Steele and the Bears on Saturday night. Steele put up an astonishing 40 points in the game, bringing his weekend total up to 65 and helping the U of A win 79-62.

SU launches its own online job data bank

RYAN HEISE
Deputy News Editor

With many students becoming increasingly strapped for cash, the Students' Union is hoping that the introduction of a new job registry will help out those looking to ease their debt load.

Jobkin.ca—a joint project between the SU, the NAIT Students' Association (NAITSA), and the Students' Association of MacEwan College, along with the SU's resident tech gurus Whitematter Development, recently entered into beta phase.

As Eamonn Gamble, SU Vice-President (Operations & Finance), explained it, "when the housing crisis

was hitting, we were thinking about other ways we could help out students with their financial situations, and this was just another registry we thought we could jump on to."

"Jobkin is more for students while they're in school."

EAMONN GAMBLE
SU VP (OPERATIONS & FINANCE)

But while there are already a plethora of online options for students looking for jobs, including the University's own Career and Placement Services

(CAPS), Jobkin's focus is specifically aimed at connecting postsecondary students looking for part-time work and employers willing to offer flexible schedules.

"CAPS is more of a career centre; it's intended to help you with placement in career-oriented jobs," Gamble explained.

"Jobkin is more for students while they're in school. There's going to be a lot more pursuit of part-time employers as well as summer positions."

During its beta period, posting on the site will be free for employers in order to iron out any final kinks in the site and to attract employers.

PLEASE SEE **JOBKIN** ♦ PAGE 2

Only 69 per cent of U of A undergrads finish their degrees

NATALIE CLIMENHAGA
Senior News Editor

Approximately one in three undergraduate students at the University of Alberta don't complete their degrees, according to the G13 Data Exchange.

Representing 13 of the biggest research-intensive universities across Canada, the group reported in its Student Completion Rate Comparisons data that only 69 per cent of U of A undergrads graduated, placing the institution third from the bottom.

While the chart doesn't list the names of peer institutions in the results released to the U of A, it showed completion rates for undergrads topping out at 87 per cent. In terms of graduate completion rates, the U of A garnered 61.4 per cent—the lowest of the 13.

"It's one number I don't think you'll be seeing too often in our centennial messages," said Students' Union President Michael Janz. "I see it as a warning bell on a large, systemic problem here at our university."

Both Janz and Graduate Students' Association (GSA) President Julie Charchun explained that as there's no exodus survey, they would like to have some tangible answers as to why so many students leave.

Charchun added that while graduate students may often get "lured" to universities with huge entrance scholarships, that funding tends to trickle out as their programs go on.

"There is no guarantee of what your funding is going to look like after a few years, or even after your first year, and so that might be part of the reason too that students are unable to complete," she said.

But U of A Provost and Vice-President (Academic) Carl Amrhein stressed the challenge of making comparisons across different systems because of varying standards, structures, jurisdiction laws, and regulations that affect student mobility.

"For example [...] in Ontario, there is no possibility of moving easily among the colleges and universities," he said. In contrast, Amrhein said that students might simply leave the U of A to transfer to another Alberta institution to complete their education.

"In Alberta, [that student] is viewed in these statistics as a lost student. But in fact, they're not lost at all. They just found another institution and completed their program."

Furthermore, Amrhein said that while the administration shares the students' desire to understand these figures, he doesn't view an exodus

survey as the most cost-effective solution.

"\$50 000 spent on a survey is an instructor not hired in the classroom, so I'm always reluctant if there are other, less expensive options available," he said, adding that once the Alberta Postsecondary Application System (APAS) is launched, it will be easier to know whether students who leave the U of A are in fact leaving their studies for good.

"It's one number I don't think you'll be seeing too often in our centennial messages."

MICHAEL JANZ
SU PRESIDENT

Under APAS, all postsecondary institutions in Alberta would adhere to a single, uniform number for each provincial student, and the common application system, Amrhein said, is "supposed to come online in the next twelve months or so."

Overwhelmingly, both Amrhein and student leaders cite Alberta's booming economy as a major deterrent for students to stay in school. Amrhein said that so long as the job market remains so attractive, his ideal undergraduate completion rate would be in the range of 70-75 per cent.

"However, I would argue for students to not leave school for an extra year's income in the oil patch because the evidence is over their life, completing a degree is worth a huge pot of money," he said.

While Janz agreed that Alberta's economy is a tangible explanation, he maintained that it doesn't overshadow the impact affordability has on students.

"We do know from surveys like the National Survey of Student Engagement [that] affordability is listed as a major concern that students have," Janz said, adding that for many students, the prospect of debt may deter them from postsecondary studies.

"It'd be interesting to know our completion rates back when education was a lot more affordable," Janz said.

However, Amrhein also pointed to inadequate funding as a major obstacle facing the U of A.

"I think the biggest issue [at the graduate level] is that we are way, way, way behind on funding for masters students," he noted.

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THE Student Body PART 1

Every body have fun tonight

Ever wonder what happens to those fun little caffeine molecules after you finish your latté? Take a dive into the percolator in the first of our four-part series.

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