

Students will come to value their investment in PSE—Amrhein

INCREASE • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Across the river, Grant MacEwan College Students' Association President Justin Benko explained that his institution also approved raising tuition by 4.6 per cent, the inflation index calculated by the Alberta Ministry of Advanced Education and Technology. However, student representatives at MacEwan were successful in ensuring that portions of that increase go directly to helping students.

"We ended up getting \$1 million taken from the actual tuition increase put towards new needs-based bursaries," Benko explained, adding that another \$500 000 was earmarked for sustainability initiatives and another \$500 000 put towards building a new student centre at MacEwan.

Benko stressed that while he didn't vote in favour of a tuition increase, he is happy that an agreement was worked out with the MacEwan College Board of Governors. At the U of A, money raised from tuition increases is unrestricted dollars. However, the Administration stressed that much of

the funds go towards the University's largest expenditure—faculty and staff salaries.

U of A Vice-President (Finance & Administration) Phyllis Clark explained during the meeting that the tuition increase is a fundamental part of the University's operating budget and that, despite this fee increase, the U of A still has a small operating budget deficit.

"I'm not going to say how much because we are trying to beat it down as close to \$3.5 million as possible, but it is turning out to be a challenge," Clark said.

But more than teaching or deferred maintenance, it was the question of affordability that concerned Students' Union President Michael Janz.

Janz stressed that every time fees are increased, the debt loads that students incur go up, as do the chances that someone will not apply to the U of A because they see it as financially unfeasible.

"Students are leaving the U of A with a bad taste in their mouth," Charchun added. By further increas-

ing tuition and residence fees, she said student debt is ultimately being increased while quality of life for students is decreasing—factors she considers detrimental to future alumni relations.

"We are doing nothing to promote alumni to want to support the University once they go on and get those high-paying jobs that they are promised," Charchun said.

However, Provost and Vice-President (Academic) Carl Amrhein said that from his and his wife's own experiences graduating with large debt loads, he understands the financial pressures students sometimes face, but hopes that students will understand the value of those sacrifices.

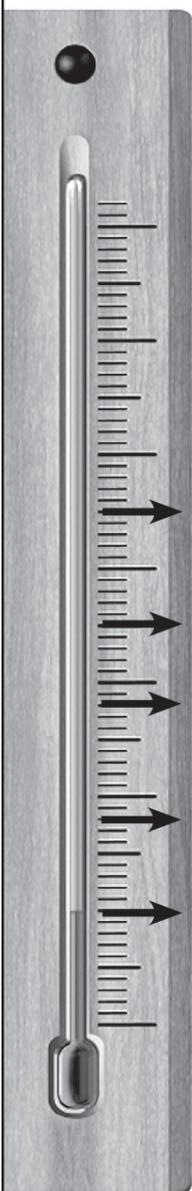
"My personal belief is that over time, individuals will come more and more to appreciate the very dramatic personal benefit derived from their investment and the university education, and that benefit is directly linked to everything that we invest by way of faculty, facilities, and research opportunities," Amrhein said.



FILE PHOTO: MIKE OTTO

DESPISING DEBT Janz is worried increasing fees will scare off potential students.

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