Aboriginal student participation to increase at U of A

by Matthew Lawrence

Edmonton (CUP) - The University of Alberta has adopted a new policy to increase aboriginal student participation and increase the level of awareness of native culture on campus.

Native make up about five per cent of Alberta's population, but there are only 129 native students out of the U of A's 30,000 students, said Dexter Young, past president of the Aboriginal Students council. That's less than one half of one per cent.

"We see no parity there, so our overall goal in the policy will be to reach that parity by the turn of the century. We're expecting a ten-fold increase in the number of native students," Young said.

The new policy - which becomes part of the university's constitution - will expand and improve a year-long program offered to natives who want to enter the university. It also calls for a native student centre that would provide tutoring, counselling and a community outreach program.

Reinhild Boehm, director of native student services, said increasing native student enrollment is important, especially since the U of A increased its entrance requirements.

The stricter guidelines will make it more difficult for anybody to get into university, Boehm said, but it will make it especially hard for natives.

According to the 1986 census, only five per cent of natives graduate from high school, making strict admission requirements a barrier.

"(The university) went from a 65 to a 70 per cent entrance requirement," Boehm said. "Because of this tightening, we have seen a drop in native students."

One way the university can ensure an increase in native participation is through the use of quotas, he said. Quotas are not mentioned in the policy, but it does state the university should "improve access to all faculties."

"The U of A is going to a quota system in arts and sciences next year and I think it's important that there are some places set aside for native students," Boehm said.

Young, who sat on the committee that drafted the policy, said quotas should be used in all faculties.

"We would like to see all faculties open their doors by keeping some seats open for native students." Native students would still have to fulfill the same entrance requirements as other students, he said.

Young said he is pleased the policy is now part of the U of A's constitution.

"In other universities there are native studies programs, but none that are incorporated into the constitution. I think of it as constitutional protection because the university is obliged to fulfill its commitment to native studies."

The native student centre is also a necessary addition to the university, Boehm said

"The aboriginal student centre would have a cultural focus and be a living link between the community and the university."

"Universities have a habit of housing beautiful artifacts of native culture, but they've been sitting in the basement for the past 10 years in really cramped corners," he said.

Boehm said an increase in the native student population benefits the whole community.

"I think it's important to recognize that the presence of native students on campus heightens the awareness of native issues, so it's not just a one-way route because it's good for native people and it's also good for campus to have more native people participate."

A committee made of faculty and aboriginal groups participated in the development of the policy.

Not too late to apply for GST credit

Press Release

As part of the government's proposal for the Goods and Services Tax (GST), a credit will be paid every three months to Canadians with low and modest incomes to offset part or all of the tax.

Most students aged 19 or over are eligible to receive the quarterly GST Credit cheques. Students under 19 are also eligible if they are married or are parents.

Individuals may not realize that they are eligible and may not have applied for the credit. Some have little or no income and didn't bother to file a tax return (or the green GST Credit application form) last spring. Revenue Canada Taxation needs both forms to calculate the credit.

It's not too late to apply for the credit. Individuals can still qualify for the full credit, even if their application is not received in time for the initial payment, which is scheduled to be made in December 1990 in advance of the introduction of the GST on January 1, 1991.

The basic annual credit has been set at $190 and the child credit at $100. Single adults, including single parents, are eligible for an additional credit of up to $100. Single parents will also be entitled to a full credit of $190 for one dependent child. The total credit payable is reduced by five per cent of family income over $24,355.

Family income does not include parents' income even if the student lives at home.

This means that

- a single student aged 19 or over will be eligible for a full annual credit of $190 (if a student earned more than $6,000 in 1989, that individual may be entitled to an additional credit of up to $100, for a total of $290);

- a single parent with one child, or married students with one child, qualify for GST credits of up to $480.

Tax returns and GST Credit application forms are available from district taxation offices.

Additional information about the Goods and Services Tax Credit is available 24 hours a day by calling the following toll-free numbers:

- 1-800-267-6999 if you have a push button (Tone signalling phone and "Touch-Tone" (TM) service)

- 1-800-267-5656 if you have any other type of phone.

Arts Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching

The Faculty of Arts at UNB-Fredericton has established an award to recognize and encourage teaching excellence among its full-time faculty members. The winner of the award will be an instructor who displays such qualities as stimulation of student interest, encouragement of student involvement, enthusiasm for subject matter, innovation in course content, format, etc, and/or clarity in organizing and presenting materials.

Both students and faculty members are encouraged to nominate instructors for this award. Nominations may be made by any two registered students of UNB-Fredericton or by any two faculty members who have personal knowledge of the nominee's teaching expertise.

Please use the nomination form provided below and send it to : Teaching Award, Office of the Dean of Arts, Tilley Hall, Room 26, Campus Mail. If you prefer to supply a separate letter, please be sure to include the information requested below

We wish to nominate _____
of the Department of _____ whom we have known personally as a teacher of _____ (give course name).

Reasons for nomination : _____

Nominator 1 _____ _____

Nominator 2 _____ _____

Please print name, address and telephone number. Signature

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