

Arts One: Alive and well at 25

By **TREVOR MORRISON and NADJA DURBACH**

UBC's Arts One program is celebrating its 25th anniversary.

What began in 1967 as a "pilot" program in the Faculty of Arts, today boasts some 5,000 graduates. Without a doubt, the program has emerged as a distinctive and valued feature of undergraduate education at the university.

Arts One means different things to different people.

Graduate Doug Todd, now a columnist for the Vancouver Sun, remembers the program as a comfortable introduction to university because of the support he received from his peers and instructors. For Todd, Arts One was "one of many communities which have played significant roles" in both his personal and professional life.

Ruth Baldwin, currently completing a degree in honors English, entered Arts One after being away from school for over 20 years.

After such a long absence, Baldwin was understandably apprehensive about her first year at UBC. As a mature student with little academic confidence, Baldwin found Arts One an "exciting and unthreatening" re-introduction to learning.

It is not merely the close-knit community experience that makes Arts One unique. The program is unparalleled in its dedication to instilling in students the skills of critical and independent thinking.

Using an interdisciplinary approach, students and faculty collaborate through small seminars and tutorials as well as regular weekly lectures. With an average ratio of one faculty member for 20 students, it makes learning an

active, rather than passive, process. The curriculum, comprising works from Ovid and Plato to Forester and Rushdie, attempts to explore Western civilization while exposing students to cross-cultural challenges to this tradition.

Susan Mendelson, owner of Vancouver's The Lazy Gourmet store, spent her year in Arts One exploring the theme "Ways of Knowing." She said the program broadened her approach to learning and made her realize that "there are many acceptable ways of being and thinking, and that traditional boundaries can and should be challenged."

As curator of the Fine Arts Gallery at UBC, Scott Watson said the program is invaluable because "contemporary thought can no longer be confined to disciplines whose boundaries date to Medieval times."

Former students are virtually united in identifying Arts One as an ideal first year program that forms a broad foundation for further study. It enabled them to see beyond

the boundaries of their field, and to incorporate other disciplinary methods and ideas into their later work.

From its experimental beginnings, Arts One remains a popular and dynamic program comprising 200 eager students and 10 interested faculty each year.

Although the 25th anniversary is a time to celebrate Arts One's past, it is also an opportunity to examine the future of liberal arts education and the role it should play.

To mark this anniversary, on Sept. 26, during Homecoming weekend, a full day of events has been planned. This will include a session at which Bob Rowan, one of the original architects of Arts One, will present his vision of the program and then engage in discussion and debate in the Arts One style with a panel of former students.

In addition, there will be a formal presentation by a distinguished guest on the role of the humanities in contemporary university education. The day will finish with a reception at Cecil Green House for former faculty and students as well as interested members of the general public.

For those wishing more information on the day's events or who are interested in helping track down former Arts One students, please contact us at 822-3430.

Trevor Morrison and Nadja Durbach graduated from Arts One in 1989.

The caricature of former Arts One faculty members adorned the program's brochure a decade ago. Professors, clockwise from top left, are: Paul Burns, Geoffrey Durrant, Geoffrey Creigh, Frank Whitman and Ian Slater.

In the Aug. 13 Forum, Philip Allingham was incorrectly referred to as a professor of English. He is, in fact, a former sessional lecturer in the Dept. of English.

