boarding off campus was high, although Stewart, if she is right in asserting that the costs of room and board escalated in the 1930s, needs to explain how this happened during a period of deflation.

Two of the book's chapters deal with the "boys' rules" that governed a masculine institution and how these were seen to apply to women, and the "girls' rules" whereby women accommodated themselves to the female reality of subservience. A basic problem was that "it was difficult to be both attractive to men and taken seriously" as students (p. 103). Some did not let this bother them and distinguished themselves academically. Others lived down to male expectations. Many, one suspects, lived with a constant ambivalence.

In her concluding chapter, Stewart warns against the view that conditions have changed completely since the 1950s. There are more women on campus than ever, but "women still struggle to win academic recognition and parity" (p. 129). Her assessment of the future is cautiously optimistic: major changes are taking place. Perhaps nowhere is this more evident than in the faculties of law and medicine, where women now constitute roughly half of the student body.

Last year, when I was working in the UBC Archives and got tired of looking at microfilm, I got out some yearbooks of the early 1960s in order to see how many of my former high school and college classmates I could locate. In Law and Medicine women's faces were rare; in Commerce or Engineering, rarer still. That old reality seems hard to recapture today. Lee Stewart has shown herself capable not only of recapturing it, but of making it understandable.

Michiel Horn
Glendon College of York University

T.C. Byrne. *Athabasca University: The Evolution of Distance Education.* Alberta: University of Calgary Press, 1989. Pp. 137.

Athabasca University, in Alberta, is one of a new breed of "open" universities—where conventional admissions criteria do not apply, and where teaching and learning occur mainly or wholly at a distance, using a variety of sophisticated print, audiovisual, and telecommunications media. Their quality, standards, and outcomes are a far cry from many correspondence programmes of yore.

In Canada, one of the earliest correspondence study programmes was initiated by Queen's University in the 1890s. Such programmes remained small and marginalized until the early 1970s. The number of conventional universities and colleges teaching at a distance has since increased enormously, as have their programmes and student numbers. In addition, there have been created several educational broadcasting systems, and three specialist distance education institutions—Athabasca University (1970), the Télé-Université de Québec (1972),

and the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia (1978).

As Byrne recounts, the Alberta government originally intended Athabasca University to be a fourth provincial university catering for the overspill from the University of Alberta. The interim governing authority, of which Byrne was a member, was charged to develop innovative ways of structuring and delivering undergraduate programmes. A change of government in 1971 and decline in demand from school-leavers led to a review of the embryonic university, and a decision to run it as a pilot project offering three courses at a distance, to adult students, with an open admissions policy.

In 1975, the pilot project was deemed a success, and the government approved full-fledged development of a baccalaureate university with a mandate to teach at a distance. In its early years, the University was based in Edmonton. In 1980, the government, without warning, required it to move 130 kilometres north to the town of Athabasca. The move and its aftermath preoccupied the University for most of the decade, and wrought major changes in personnel, sense of community, and policies of course development and delivery.

T.C. (Tim) Byrne was Athabasca University's first President, from 1971-1975, following a long career in the Alberta Ministry of Education culminating as Deputy Minister. In this book he describes the political environment in which Athabasca University was created and nurtured; the gestation period before its confirmation as the province's fourth university; the original "learning systems" model developed by its planners; subsequent systems for course development and teaching at a distance; and the experiences of selected Athabasca students. As such, the work purports to be both educational history and an explication of a model of distance education. It fails on both counts.

To produce an educational history, Byrne could have written a memoir of his involvement in the genesis and early years of the University. Alternatively, he might have opted for an institutional history. This book is both, and neither. Byrne's description of the political machinations and motivations of successive Social Credit and Conservative governments is perhaps the most interesting part of the book, but is too brief and superficial, and lacks analysis of motive or outcome. Given Byrne's long and intimate experience of government and educational policy in Alberta, this is disappointing and tantalizing. The style is that of the loyal bureaucrat, too accustomed to cautious "adminspeak" to be frank or analytical in public. As a memoir it is unsatisfying and incomplete.

As institutional history, it is worse. Byrne claims the University's original academic model was based on those of the Santa Cruz campus of the University of California, and Sussex University in England. Athabasca University was to go against the prevailing trends, emphasizing undergraduate teaching rather than research and graduate work. Interdisciplinarity was to prevail, based on a modular organizational structure. Byrne's description of this first model is rather

hard to follow. He does not explain clearly how much of it survived the University's metamorphosis into a distance education institution (the second model), with the very different structures and systems that implied.

The narrative is superficial and hagiographic, the analysis minimal, the time frames badly confused. Byrne might have got away with an uninspiring story of the University's history to the end of his presidency in 1975 had he confined his discussion of Athabasca's innovations in instructional design, materials production, and teaching strategies (especially use of the telephone) to their development in those early years. Ignoring the "evolution" in his title, he uses the present tense, writing as though these innovations sprang fully formed from the fertile minds of early University faculty and professional staff and have remained static ever since. Consequently, his description is sometimes faulty, uncontextual, and out-of-date.

He notes in passing that members of the planning group visited the University of Wisconsin and the British Open University but, if anything, implies that Athabasca University developed its version of distance education without benefit of the example of these or other distance education experiments of the early 1970s. Such an argument would be hard to sustain. Indeed, Byrne's description of the (second) Athabasca model strongly suggests an amalgam of the British open university concept of the course team, and the University of Wisconsin's telephone-tutoring systems.

Byrne is not a professional historian, which may account for some of the methodological problems. It is frustrating, however, to read an institutional history which rarely cites sources and whose bibliography is curiously devoid of primary sources beyond major public reports and planning documents. One suspects Byrne used his own files rather than the University's well-organized archives. He fails to locate Athabasca University's experience in the context of other developments in distance education in Canada and elsewhere, despite a large available literature; neither does he draw much on the sizeable body of publications by Athabasca University staff. A further, cardinal sin is the sexist language in which the book is couched, for which the University of Calgary Press is as much to blame as is Byrne himself.

However well intentioned, this book does a disservice to the burgeoning fields of history of higher education in Canada, and of distance education, as well as to Athabasca University itself. John Reid, Paul Axelrod, Michael Hayden, and others have taken the Canadian genre of institutional history far beyond superficial, administrative narrative to contextual, interpretive, perceptive studies of intellectual and social life in higher education. Historians have barely touched the field of distance education as yet, but its literature is rapidly moving beyond description of innovations and rapid changes in structure, systems and approaches, to critical analyses and evaluations of policy and practice. Athabasca University is widely reckoned as a

leader in distance education, not only in Canada but internationally. The evolution of its policies and practices, its intellectual and social life, and its approaches to distance learning deserve better than Byrne has offered here.

Louise Moran
Deakin University
Victoria, Australia

Paula S. Fass. *Outside In: Minorities and the Transformation of American Education.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1989. Pp. vii, 308. $34.95.

Paula Fass's thesis is clear: she examines "in some detail the history of the education of outsiders in the society" (p. 3). By education, she means public high school and college levels, and by outsiders she intends early twentieth-century southern and eastern European immigrants and later "various racial, gender, and religious groups" (p. 4). Fass stresses a social history approach, particularly how those groups challenged or shaped (or "transformed," as the title indicates) the schools.

This emphasis on human agency is significant; historiographically, it represents a task long overdue. Too often, students from various ethnic, racial, sexual, and religious backgrounds have been treated as helpless victims. A case in point is immigrant educational history. On the one hand, conventional historians celebrated how the schools moulded foreign children into Anglo-American conformity, implying passive objects. Ellwood P. Cubberley, in his *Public Education in the United States* in 1919, minced few words about his feelings towards these inferior "racial" stocks: "Largely illiterate, docile, lacking in initiative, and almost wholly without Anglo-Saxon conceptions of righteousness, liberty, law, order, public decency, and government, their coming has served to dilute tremendously our national stock and to weaken and corrupt our political life." According to this simplistic interpretation, the public schools aided these immigrants in their gradual transition to American culture, and afforded their eventual economic success by facilitating social mobility. On the other hand, revisionist historians criticized schools for participating in such blatant socialization, again objectifying students. Colin Greer, the most extreme example of this genre, cynically confronted the traditional perspective in *The Great School Legend* in 1972: "In assumptions and practice, the urban schools remained essentially unchanged—and the poor continued to fail. Our official historians have mistaken the rhetoric of good intentions for historical reality." Greer saw blind faith in the redemptive powers of the schools as insidious, but his exaggerated version contributed little to how students and their families may have responded to this dilemma. However, studies like *Outside In* are beginning to examine the schooled.