

dent Ray Burnell as "blond-haired, bronzed-skinned bubbleheads"—are alive and rocking, a more serious, solid school hums beneath the surface. In this, its 101st year, ASU is striving mightily to gain academic respect. And as statistics indicate—and a conscientious look around the campus demonstrates—the student body is older, more serious and more conservative than its first-glance appearance.

The problem is, it's hard to ignore the beauties of ASU. The 600-acre Tempe campus is nearly as spectacular as an Arizona sunset. ASU boasts strikingly eclectic architecture, including Frank Lloyd Wright's last building—a fanciful, carousel-like concert hall that looks as if it could fly away at any moment. And ASU has greened the desert: exotic flora line the walkways, and grass is watered rice-field style, so that the grounds are verdant. Students traverse the campus on open-air buses, stylish mountain bikes or skateboards. Fashion is self-consciously casual; hair might be unruly, but seldom unkempt. Senior Mark Duskin, no slouch in the looks department himself, laments: "Sometimes it feels like I'm walking through a genetic experiment."

Under the surface: ASU's attractions do, however, run more than skin deep. Now the nation's sixth largest university, it offers a choice of 122 baccalaureate degrees. Although a full third of its undergraduates concentrate in the business school, ASU authorities rank its College of Fine Arts in the top 10 nationwide, and several other departments—including business, law and engineering—in the top 30. Strong state funding and grantsmanship have helped the school accumulate state-of-the-art equipment, such as one of the world's most powerful electron microscopes.

ASU also pays its academicians relatively well: associate professors earn \$31,885 per year, \$2,000 above the national average, and the faculty boasts such luminaries as engineer David K. Ferry, who helped develop the world's smallest transistor, and former business dean William Seidman, who now chairs the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Patrick McGowan, former chairman of the respected political-science department, observes with a laugh: "It's very easy to recruit first-rate faculty here—especially if you bring them in January." ASU is also a bargain. Tuition has been held to only \$990 per year for Arizona students; out-of-staters pay a modest \$3,844, but after one year they can qualify as residents and pay the in-state fee.

Yet even Tempe has clouds. One of the blackest hovers over the powerhouse athletic teams. In the past, they have produced such stars as baseball's Reggie Jackson and football's Danny White, and contended reg-



KENT SIEVERS

Slick transit: ASU student transport

ularly for Pac 10 and national championships. But now the Sun Devils seem to collect as many scandalous headlines as trophies. Between August 1983 and January 1985, Pac 10 or NCAA sanctions were leveled against the baseball, basketball, wrestling, track and gymnastics teams for various rules infractions.

Neither the heavily recruited athletes nor the golden girls and boys on fraternity row represent typical ASU students. They are more likely to be commuters (87 percent live off campus) and older than most

undergraduates (the median age for all students is 25½). Many are transfers; atypically, ASU has more seniors than freshmen, a significant proportion married and working at off-campus jobs.

This contributes to the sense of isolation born of ASU's size: growing with sun-belt rapidity, enrollment has jumped from 17,000 in 1964 to 40,558 last year. Compared to smaller, more residential schools, "it's harder to meet people here, harder to establish relationships that are enduring," says Robbie L. Nayman, ASU's director of counseling and consultation. Music graduate Don Slutes calls his school "the McDonald's of higher education—you drive up, get your education and drive away."

War of the minds: As at practically every other college, students tend to call their peers largely apathetic, but ASU's student government and newspaper flame with ideological battles between political and religious conservatives on one side, and moderates and liberals on the other. Says law student Jay Heiler, a conservative and former editor of the student newspaper, the State Press, "There's warfare going on for their minds."

Political conservatism should come as no surprise in Barry Goldwater's Arizona—and ASU is the only university with its own chapter of the John Birch Society. But ASU's conservative tide derives much of its strength from an unusual source—the fundamentalist City of the Lord, a charismatic "covenant community" (recognized by the Roman Catholic Church, though not officially affiliated with it). This 350-member group and like-minded students have been gaining clout since the late 1970s, when they rid the campus of X-rated movies. Religion frequently intrudes on secular matters. One student-government officer, for example, recently supported her argument against funding gay-student groups by quoting from an open Bible. Ray Burnell, a



Rays 'n' plays: Sun Devils in action

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