

cross-canada briefs

DAL/TUNS MERGER

Self-stabber at Lakehead

BY STEFAN B. WALTHER

Thunder Bay, ON. (CUP) — Students at Lakehead University feel more secure wandering campus at night now that a brutal on-campus stabbing has proven to be self-inflicted.

The university community was shocked last Oct. 7 when a 23-year-old male was discovered in bushes beside a campus footpath with two stab wounds in his lower abdomen.

At the time, he told police he was attacked by two assailants while walking home just after 8 p.m. Police questioned several people as the supposed attackers were sought.

"We have concluded our investigation and (the stabbing) is not of a criminal matter," said Detective Constable Bill Boote, an investigating officer in the incident.

Boote did confirm the unnamed victim was stabbed and treated for various injuries, indicating the wounds were self-inflicted.

Immediately after the crime, a fearful and cautious atmosphere enveloped the campus as students felt unsafe, especially after dusk. Safety practices were reviewed by administration leading to the installation of more emergency phones, and increased lighting. The dense brush around the area of the incident was cut back.

Cops and merchants take on the poor

BY SONIA VERMA

Toronto (CUP) — Anti-poverty organizations in Toronto have voiced sharp opposition to recent comments made by Metro City Police Chief David Boothby that panhandling is a major area of concern for the police and public alike.

"Begging has become a business...and has become a real nuisance to people," Boothby was quoted as saying by the Toronto Star.

Boothby's solution to the "problem" involves a proposal to implement legislation that would empower police to crack-down on the homeless and panhandlers. "It bothers me that a police officer can't really take somebody off the street for their own protection," he told the Star.

Andy Mitchell, Program Director with the Social Planning Council of Toronto, characterizes Boothby's comments as offensive.

"He talks about crime and poverty in the same breath," Mitchell says. "He is more concerned with the comfort of the comfortable. His remarks reduce (the poor) to an interference in the scenery for affluent people."

Although Mitchell readily admits that the number of homeless people and panhandlers on Toronto streets has skyrocketed, he argues that Boothby has entirely missed the mark.

"Over the past year over \$1 billion has been taken out of the pockets of the poor with the stroke of a pen," said Mitchell, referring to the 21.6 per cent slash to Ontario's maximum welfare benefits.

The eradication of one-fifth of this income for the poor has been compounded by a barrage of cuts to other services such as affordable housing, and changes to rent control laws.

CFS and CASA — who blinked?

BY RACHEL FUREY

Ottawa (CUP) — After months of bitter infighting, the country's two national student organizations — viewed by many as political polar opposites — have joined a coalition partnership with five other postsecondary education groups to propose new student aid measures.

Founded in 1981, the rigidly left wing Canadian Federation of Students spent almost 15 year as the sole student lobby group in Canada, while the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, formed less than two years ago by students disenchanted with the CFS, has since been chipping away at that membership.

The CFS currently represents 55 student associations consisting of 375,000 students, while CASA has 163,000 student members from 13 different schools.

Both organizations say the new student aid proposals reflect their own policies and neither admits to having compromised to produce the document.

"A lot of [the proposals] are based on our campaign strategy," said CFS national chair Brad Lavigne. "We've been [working on] this all year."

But Matthew Hough, national director of CASA, seems to think otherwise. According to Hough, "[the document] is very much a reflection of CASA policy."

"[Lavigne] is coming forward with more moderate representation on some policies," said Hough, whose own organization has been called a neo-conservative mouthpiece for big business by its many critics.

Book the church for April Fools Day

BY MONICA GILLIS

It's all over but the crying.

The legislation making the amalgamation between Dalhousie University and the Technical University of Nova Scotia (TUNS) official passed in the Nova Scotia Legislature on December 13. The bill, which takes effect on April 1, outlines the structure and responsibilities of the new combined institution which will be known as Dalhousie University.

"The amalgamation will open the doors to more students and faculty, and position the institution internationally, making it a magnet for business and industry," said Education and Culture Minister Robbie Harrison in a press release.

TUNS, Dalhousie and the province are already partnering to bring new business and industry to Nova Scotia. Recently, Newbridge Networks, Keane Software, and Cisco Systems have all recognized the benefits of doing

business in a province with such leading edge technical education and research.

Under the legislation TUNS becomes a college of the new Dalhousie University with a uniquely-named College Board and an Academic Council; both are headed by a Principal. The new TUNS will consist of a Faculty of Computer Science, a Faculty of Engineering, and a Faculty of Architecture.

Along with the creation of this new Board and Council the legislation — known as Bill 44 — protects the seniority of employees at both universities by insuring that seniority is combine, not broken. This means that seniority will be maintained by those who have worked the most years at their respective institution. Also, employees who have the option of taking early retirement, but aren't sure whether their positions will be eliminated as a result of the merger, can still qualify for the current package despite the pass-

ing of the January 10 deadline.

The Department of Education and Culture will be providing, in new funding over three years, the sum of \$3 million in support of the amalgamation. Part of this funding will be used to hire new professors while other money will assist in attracting additional private and public sector support.

President Tom Traves of Dalhousie said in his press release, "We're already seeing the strategic value of this amalgamation. Together we're more competitive in advanced education and research and can enhance opportunities for students and for the citizens of our province."

The Minister believes that this will benefit students in a number of ways. Engineering students will now be able to complete their degree in four years instead of the five that is now required. Computer science education in Nova Scotia will also be greatly strengthened by the amalgamation.

Lacklustre response to library survey

BY BRANDON BUTLER

The Dalhousie University Libraries just completed one of their most extensive surveys to date of their facilities, with a disappointing student response.

The survey, named *Shaping Our Future*, was conducted over the past eleven months, beginning last February and finishing up this past November. The most extensive of at least the past decade, the survey's purpose was to serve as a data guideline for the Dalhousie University Libraries (DUL) — consisting of the Killam, Kellogg and Pharmacy libraries — in shaping their future policies. These service policies must adapt to mounting pressures, not the least of which is a budget that is not growing enough to cover inflation costs.

A broad range of facility topics were addressed in the survey, from the state of the libraries' electronic services to their opening and closing hours. With feedback on these areas from students and faculty, the DUL hoped to be better able to decide on which services were considered low and high priority. This would enable them to cut or extend programs accordingly so as to fit the DUL's budget.

"Two main concerns were to find a way to cut to take pressure off of the library staff, and to see if the impressions of the staff were correct, in terms of policy," said Elizabeth Sutherland, the Associate University Librarian (Health Sciences) and the head of the User Services team, the group which oversaw the survey. "Were the feedback on the 'Comments, Compliments, Complaints' cards representative of a large trend, or were they isolated cases?"

However, the feedback to the survey from students proved to be less than what was expected. Of the 3200 questionnaires sent out, 1500 were given to random students, approximately 1700 went to faculty members and the rest were handed out to non-academic staff. Response from the faculty and non-academic staff was 26 per cent and 27 per cent respectively, while the students offered

up only a 16 per cent response. The initial estimates for student feedback were 25 per cent.

The low response might be due to the length of the survey, which asked for one to answer the top 10 of 47 questions.

"In hindsight, a smaller amount of questions might have been more effective," said Sutherland. She added that there would be no other survey of this length done for at least another five to ten years, and that any other surveys done in the future would be smaller, and more specific in their topics.

Despite the disappointing turnout, the results will be instrumental in helping to shape the DUL's

policies, and are being looked over by the DUL and the Dalhousie Senate Library Committee. The results will not be published in any report, as it would take up too much unnecessary time and money.

"In some cases the numbers would be meaningless," Sutherland said. "In others they might be misinterpreted."

Nevertheless, the data will still be used in the formulation of the DUL's internal and external policies within the coming years.

"The survey was worthwhile," said Sutherland. "It was a lot of work, but it provided us with information that will continue to be used for planning purposes."

Wet

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International Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs.

"I think we should be portraying our next generation of leaders as professionals. I don't think [the games] are emphasizing the seriousness of our new business leaders of tomorrow. I can't see how this will help them."

But Alia Del Bianco, president of the game's organizing committee, doesn't feel the contest interferes with the unifying spirit of the games, adding that any students who feel uncomfortable, or offended can leave. "They don't have to watch," she said.

"The girls are wearing their bras, it's not anything disgusting. It wasn't meant to be a message of any kind. It's just there to attract people to Montreal."

Del Bianco also added the event "is great exposure for Concordia."

Great exposure indeed. Five contestants took the opportunity to expose themselves in each of the soggy categories.

Coordinator of Concordia's Women's Centre Natalie Leveille is disillusioned with the event, and sees little enjoyment in wet

T-shirt and boxer short contests, under any circumstances.

"I'm surprised and a bit shocked," she remarked. "As students we have a responsibility to act and react within a political and social context, even in the name of fun."

Leveille dismissed the notion that it was an event promoting equality among the sexes by having a wet boxer contest as well. "It's a lame attempt at balancing things out with the wet boxer contest. Women's breasts and male genitalia are completely different," she emphasized. "The ramifications for women [participating in the event] are much greater than for men. Men are rarely made to feel degraded for their body parts. And women are."

Concordia's Dean of Students, Donald Boisvert, feels that all the participants are adults, and are therefore responsible for their own actions and intentions. He said he does not have a place to directly interfere with the organizing of the games, or the policing of social activities organized during the evening. However, he added that the wet T-shirt contest was inappropriate.

"If [the organizers] had discussed it with me, I would have raised questions about the inappropriateness of the event," he said.