

## GRADE 10 AND 11 STUDENTS RETURNING HOME: A WARNING

We know that for students entering grade 9 as of September 1, 1984, the secondary school system in Ontario has changed.

We know that these students

- may complete their high school in four years instead of five
- must take 16 compulsory credits instead of nine
- must successfully complete six OAC's (Ontario Academic Courses) to be admitted to university.

What we don't know, is how all this is going to affect us personally.

To graduate with the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) a student needs 30 credits. Of the 16 compulsory credits, one is in Canadian geography (taught in grade 9) and one is in Canadian history (taught in grade 10). Should you have been abroad at that time, chances are you don't have these credits. Compulsory credits also include one in Business or Technology. Again, it's possible you don't have these credits.

At the same time, to be admitted to university, students must have successfully completed six OAC's. The exact courses haven't been determined as yet, but the Ministry, in collaboration with the universities, is in the process of finalizing them now. Meanwhile, those students who are planning on completing their high school in four years instead of five, have been taking the maximum number of courses each year, nine, in order to accumulate credits plus prepare themselves for the OAC's. You, therefore, upon entering grade 10 or 11 in September 1986, may find that you have completed 2-4 fewer courses than your peers. Your hopes of completing high school in four years instead of five, it is now realized, are unrealistic. Disappointment.

The fact is, according to the Ministry, very few Ontario students will complete the program and enter university after four years. To do so, a student would have to have taken all the necessary pre-requisites for the OAC's by the end of grade 11. Then in grade 12 he/she would have to successfully complete the six OAC's. Until these courses and all their pre-requisites are finalized, this will be very difficult to do. So, a warning: don't return home expecting to breeze through high school in four years instead of five. It is possible, but it is not easy.

### WHAT SHOULD YOU BRING BACK WITH YOU?

The critical factor is to be able to determine the number of credits you have already

earned. To do this, you need proof of the courses you have taken and the number of hours of instruction you have received in each. (One credit is given for 110 hours of instruction.) Thus, bring back a list of all your courses and textbooks; the total number of hours of instruction given in each course; all your academic records, and documentation on any correspondence or extra-curricular courses you may have taken. Then, immediately, make an appointment with the principal of your new school. It is up to the principal to determine the number of credits you have already earned and the number you have yet to earn. As the Ministry states:

"The principal is not required to list the equivalent credits already earned, but having judged each case on its own merits and having determined as equitably as possible the credit equivalency of the student's background, is then to declare the number of credits that are yet to be earned and any related requirements that are to be fulfilled before the student can obtain an Ontario Secondary School Diploma."

Once the number of credits you still require has been determined, you can organize your remaining years of high school accordingly, so as to complete the program in the time you wish. Don't procrastinate. Don't leave it until mid-year (as some students here have just done), to discover, to your horror, that you don't have as many credits as your peers, and you still have to pick up a course in Canadian geography, or history. Do it immediately.

### CONTRARY TO POPULAR BELIEF, ONTARIO STUDENTS ARE SKILLED

A study of more than 6 300 Ontario students from grades 5, 8 and 12, has revealed that they don't lack basic writing skills. In fact they are quite literate.

Two linguistics professors from Carleton University conducted the study for the Ontario Ministry of Education and found that the students' writing was "more than satisfactory" when it focused on personal experience and showed an "often masterly" command of invented narrative. Constant exposure to commercials, billboards and political speeches, however, the study says, has hurt the ability of students to compose written arguments.

The study recommends a greater emphasis on writing across the school curriculum, — as early as Grade 1 or 2 — and not just in literary subjects.

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### Teen fashions

A Lisgar high school student is capturing the attention of the press and the students with his fashions. Tu Ly, 18, has been designing clothes since he was ten and has strong opinions on what a teen should and should not wear. "For the girls it's got to be the preppie look still," he says. "The skirt is usually narrow, it can be full or pleated but it definitely shouldn't be longer than knee length, but above the knee is good too." Another look he likes is the dainty Laura Ashley look but fatigues (army clothes) are also acceptable for the casual look. Argyle socks (knee highs with diamond patterns) are in and Vuarnet sunglasses are essential. "Few teenagers, male or female will venture out in even the most pallid of sunshine without them." And "no high heel shoes please for teens", he says, "only ballet shoes or a low to medium heel".

That is the latest word from the Ottawa teen fashion world.



Tu Ly with his summer designs