

Petition's value continued

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On our local level, what are we supposed to do if we disagree with what our representatives tell us what we want and what is best for us? Perhaps form an N.B. Coalition of Student's Opposition? No, that sounds basically like students fighting amongst themselves. Politicians love that, for without a united front, there is no challenge to them. But basically, that is what we have happening between NBCS, AFS and NUS, but not because of the amount of money they require. Rather, I disagree with most of their policies and I feel I am being misrepresented by them. If I felt I was being asked my opinion and being truly represented, I would definitely be willing to support them, financially and bodily.

I feel that any representative body should be responsible to find out, from its constituents, exactly where they stand on an issue. This includes the percentage in each group for, partly for, and against the issue. Then and only then should they represent that particular group for that issue. The pros and cons of the above can be debated (as was done on the issue of the death penalty), but in the vast majority of cases, I feel the above should be followed. For the most part, what I've seen here on campus, the decisions have been made with little concern for my and other opinions.

I would like to share with you a few of my opinions, of which I'm sure a lot of people agree with, but have never heard voiced by our representatives. The first goes back to my statements on the petition. I disagree philosophically on the tactic of demanding a highly unreasonable goal, made very

popular by unions and management disputes. Here, both groups are at opposite extremes, and eventually beat each other to a middle of the line settlement, where, in recent years, very few have been very happy with. This also creates a lot of animosity: witness the postal union disputes.

Again, on a local level, I feel this is happening to a certain extent with what the petition asks for. "We call upon the CMP to find post-secondary education for 1978-79 at the level called for by the MPHEC to offset any or all tuition increases", and what the students hope to obtain, as stated by 3rd person Sheenagh Murphy in the Bruns, Feb. 24, "if the total amount of the non-space fund was awarded to the university and if the NBCS was successful in getting at least a 1 percent increase in the operating grant . . . tuition fees would not go up."

Obviously, the people of this province are not too sympathetic with the student's requests, and I can't blame them. For a moment, let us look at it from their view. Somebody has to pay for what the government supports. That somebody is usually the taxpayer and therefore asks for a cost benefit analysis to take place. In our case, the taxpayer and government have decided that they can't support masses of graduates from arts, science, etc, and even traditionally high demand occupations such as engineering. (witness the demand for civil engineers this year). Thus, their decision to make cutbacks which will increase tuitions and therefore limit the number of students at university is hardly coincidental.

This runs headlong into the

idealistic goal of anyone and everyone who wants an education should be able to get their education for free. But let's be realistic and face the facts. Most people at university are studying to be able to get a better job than the uneducated person, or at least a jump on them for the job. Very few are here getting an education for education's sake only; although we all hope that happens in addition to the improved job prospects. Many professions are considering (or have done so) limiting the number of entrants to the profession. This is to keep from flooding the market, which reduces salaries. Thus, the remaining graduates would probably have to take a lower qualified job, and their motivational level would fall. This, along with stiffer competition at all levels, would probably bring a lot of discontent and unstableness.

If you limit the number of graduates, you can limit one area of possible discontent and unstableness, and at a much smaller cost, at least in the short run. That solution also angers only the idealistic student population, which is small compared with the rest of the population to be considered. I don't feel that the taxpayers are all that wrong in their decided solution, considering the job market, present attitudes and moods, and current widespread knowledge. I don't feel you, as soon as you get out of her, get your ass off pogy, and become a taxpaying citizen, will feel much different, unless a better solution or attitude comes forth.

To get back to some earlier comments, let's not ask for the

idealistic 14 percent increase of the operating grant as suggested by MPHEC, which has already been turned down. Rather, assuming we get the total amount of the non-space fund, I suggest we ask for the realistic figure of what we hope, a 1 or 2 percent increase over the 6.7 percent we were granted; and stick to it, hard. This would not appear so ridiculous to the taxpayers, and we might have more students supporting the cause.

We now come to the problem of student aid. Our representatives have been asking for more, more, more. This also really helps the inflationary cycle, if more money is granted, along with infuriating many taxpayers. In my five years of living in residence, I would say I have witnessed almost one out of every three students, abusing the privilege of student aid. Also, some who need it, can't get it. This has fully appalled me, and obviously, a number of taxpayers feel the same. I would like to see a careful redistribution of the money to much further decrease the number of abusers.

Only increasing the amount of money available would increase the number and abusers. Perhaps there are more abusers in residence than the rest of the student populace, but I do not support more abusers, and therefore feel misrepresented again by our student leadership. Perhaps our representatives could show some true leadership. Instead of following everybody else asking for more, we could set an example of voluntary restraint. Everybody has asked for more most of the time, and we have found this leads to inflation. Voluntary restraint has been

talked about, but not followed in a big way. It may be worth a try, and maybe NUS and others could pick up on the idea and set a good example for the rest of the country to follow. Also, instead of asking for free tuition, we could question the validity of technical schools paying students, who, as graduates, may make more than many university graduates.

It sounds nice to be very idealistic, but why not have differential fees? Britain has them and it costs several thousand dollars more to attend a private university in the U.S., and, if my understanding is correct, it costs more to attend a state college if you are from out of state. Why should the Canadian taxpayer have to subsidize a European, American, or any other foreign student who wishes to study here? Of course, a case can be made that Canadians have a stake in helping to educate people from the third world countries. A case can also be made that they return home afterwards, of whom many do not, where they can effectively use this knowledge.

This article has been written not to criticize people for the past, but to encourage debate and offer a few suggestions for the future. I encourage rebuttal on these issues, and I would especially like those who feel as I do to make their views known to this newspaper and to their representatives. Please do not attack me for my lack of involvement, because this article is a form of involvement. Thank you for hearing me out.

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