

Saudi universities seek exchanges with Canadian counterparts

TORONTO (CUP) Universities in Saudi Arabia have approached a select group of Canadian campuses with offers to form exchange programs that could send millions of dollars in funding to the Canadian institutions.

But remarks made by the Saudi official in charge of the sales pitches have spread fears that the exchanges would exclude Jews and women.

Two Saudi institutions, King Saud University and King Faisal University, have targeted specific programs at four Canadian universities, approaching their administrations with exchange proposals. They have offered to provide research funding in return for Canada's acceptance of Saudi students and help with programs at their own campuses.

Offers have been made to the University of Guelph, the University of Toronto, McGill University and Concordia Univer-

ity.

At U of T, science and engineering officials signed a five-year exchange plan March 9, agreeing to accept graduate students from King Saud University. U of T will also send faculty to help develop that university's graduate program, and in return the Saudi government will finance the exchange and contribute to joint research facilities.

Concordia University's communications department and building studies department have been approached, while the University of Guelph agricultural program has attracted Saudi interest. McGill University's international office has said negotiations there are also underway.

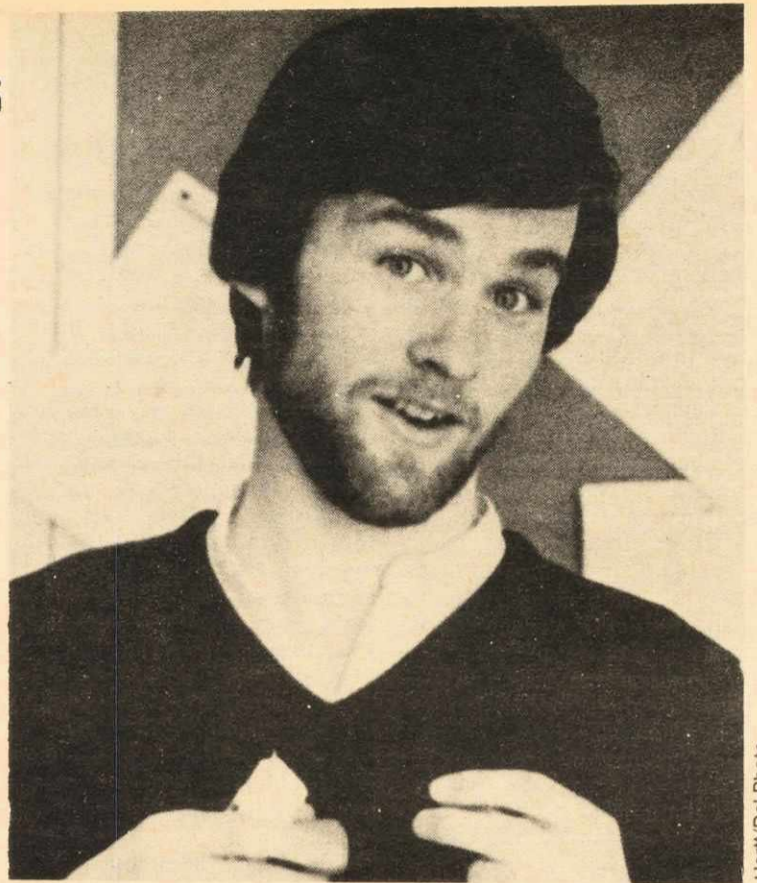
Essam Scheich, Saudi Arabia's educational mission director, said in a CBC radio interview March 15 that "Zionists" would not be welcome in the

country. He said a Zionist would be considered "a person who is out to destroy Saudi Arabia, to destroy everything around it, to make Israel the promised land."

He also responded to questions on the participation of women. Women professors would be allowed, he said, but women don't study engineering in Saudi Arabia.


"Because of the culture in Saudi Arabia, because of the way women look at things, we are not interested in that field for women. We don't feel we can have them work in the middle of a construction site," he said.

U of T president James Ham said any discrimination would be "just grounds for termination of the agreement." He said every term of the exchange agreement must conform to the "institutional policies" of U of T -- including its stand against discrimination.




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Features Editor Ken Burke, shown here not boring people, was elected as next year's Gazette editor on Tuesday. Says Burke, "Now what do I do?"



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