

## Education not a right, says Frum

by Gazette staff

Linda Frum visited Dalhousie in October as part of a cross Canada tour of Universities. She was filming a video update to her 1987 book, *Linda Frum's Guide to Universities*. The Gazette took the opportunity to interview her on her

much maligned (by students) book and her views on the Canadian post-secondary education system.

**Gaz:** Why did you choose Dalhousie as one of the ten universities you're focusing on?

**Frum:** It's one of the highlights of Canadian higher education, and we

wanted to give a cross country reference. Certainly its one of the major schools in the country.

**Gaz:** Do you find it difficult remaining impartial in your study?

**Frum:** No, not at all. I graduated Dal photo: Maria Patriquin

one of the most exciting aspects of college is getting the hell away from where you've been. Dalhousie has a fairly good reputation and an aura of prestige. If it's a choice between going to Dalhousie or

of British Columbia, they're old schools - therefore they must be good - goes the thinking. They are as underfunded, mediocre, apathetic and boring, and anti-intellectual as all the other schools, but they have a very nice name.

**Gaz:** There is a commission travelling across Canada right now on post-secondary education. If you could say something to the committee about education what would you say?

**Frum:** I think there are too many universities. I'm in favour of radical solutions to what I see as a radical problem. That would include shutting down entire institutions. I think there should be higher entrance standards, tuition needs to be raised, and students should have a higher sense of responsibility for their education. If they were putting more into it financially, they would demand more in return. The meaning of what a university is supposed to do has been completely lost. The minute universities start offering degrees in football coaching as Laurentian does, I think things have really gone bananas.

**Gaz:** Do you not think it's a problem that tuition fee increases will exclude certain students?

**Frum:** I think it's a very big problem, but the system we have now doesn't work. There is a way to get the best students. You want the brightest, best students, not the richest students. Which is what we have now.

**Gaz:** You don't think raising tuition fees is only going to increase that situation?

**Frum:** It seems an obvious danger, but I think there are ways of funding people who aren't in a position to afford university on their own. But we should only be financially assisting people who can't afford it. The majority of people in Canadian universities can afford it, and can afford the increases. The 20 per cent richest Canadians are the 20 per cent who go to university.

**Gaz:** What about creating a system of excellence by eliminating tuition fees and raising standards?

**Frum:** I don't believe this popular notion in Canada that higher education is a right. I do believe it's a luxury. Once you have a degree you are thrown into a higher echelon in society. You're buying something - power for yourself in the employment world. Education is not a right, it's an asset.

**Gaz:** What about those people you run into who say "I've got my degree but I'm still waiting tables or pumping gas"?

**Frum:** It's [having a degree] no guarantee. I'm simply saying it is a spring board to a higher level of society. A university degree in Canada is no longer an indication that you are an intelligent person. I can't tell you how many thousands of dumbos I have met who not only have a B.A., they have a Ph.D., because we have no standards.

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#### Dalhousie Bursaries 1990-91

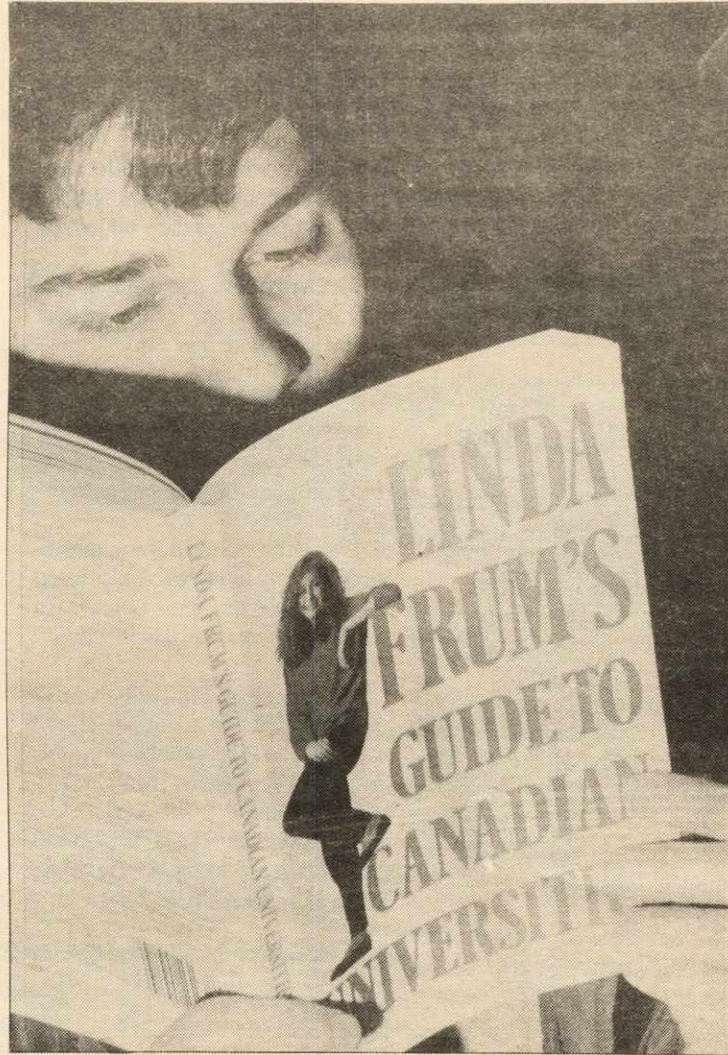
##### DEADLINE DATES

Bursary or Student Group		Deadline
Under graduates	1st	Friday, 16 Nov. 1990
	2nd	Thursday, 28 Feb. 1991
Dentistry (DDS only)		Friday, 14 Dec. 1990
Law - Regular Bursaries		Friday, 14 Dec. 1990
Medicine		Friday, 14 Dec. 1990
Social Work (BSW and MSW)	1st	Friday, 16 Nov. 1990
	2nd	Thursday, 28 Feb. 1991

In order to facilitate the preliminary processing of Dalhousie bursary applications, please submit yours to the Office of the Registrar,

**Room 133,**

**Arts and Administration building,**  
prior to the designated deadlines.



Students were critical of Linda Frum's guide to Canadian Universities

from McGill in 1984, so it's a faded memory, and I have no love for McGill. I mean it's OK., but it could do with a lot of improvement, just like most universities.

**Gaz:** Why do you think so many central Canadians are coming to Dalhousie?

**Frum:** I think Canadians are slowly waking up to the idea that

Laurentian, that's not a tough choice for most people from Toronto.

**Gaz:** Does prestige play a role when students chose a university?

**Frum:** Canadians are so prestige conscience, but the prestige is entirely connected to the name of the school...McGill, Dalhousie, University of Toronto, and UNiversity

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