

# Students ready to protest

by Valerie Mansour  
Canadian University Press

The spirit is high at Nova Scotia campuses as information is being distributed and support gathered for next week's protest of the Provincial Government's grant to post-secondary institutions.

Wednesday, March 21 at 12:30 students will gather at the Dalhousie Student Union Building to proceed downtown to the Legislature Building to tell the Progressive Conservative government just what they think of the 5.5% funding increase. The Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) had earlier recommended a 9.5% increase in operating grants to the province's institutions.

The Students' Union of Nova Scotia (SUNS), sponsor of the march, is circulating a petition calling for "an immediate freeze of tuition fees, adequate funding of post-secondary institutions to maintain the current quality of education, long-term planning to

improve the quality of post-secondary education, and cessation of the discriminatory policy of differential fees."

The Dalhousie University senate has endorsed the student union's participation in the march. They are "urging faculty to take any possible steps to help ensure the success of the protest."

Council president Mike Power said faculty members are being asked to actively participate in the march, cancel or reschedule classes, or barring that, rearrange tests and exams around the day of protest.

A students cutbacks committee is speaking to classes and circulating information. Denise Soucy-Roberge, committee chair said "People are angry. I think they'll show up for the march. A lot will depend on how much faculty and other campus union support we will get. If faculty support us to the extent of cancelling classes, the turnout will be good."

The senate at St. Francis



Dal Hockey Tigers win first AUA title in 52 years. Pic shows winning goal scorer Paul MacLean and Bob Duggan. Read story page 21.

Xavier University in Antigonish has also given moral support to the protest, according to council vice-president Bill MacLellan. "We'll be speaking to our president to ask him to waive absenteeism so people can show up", MacLellan said.

A campus committee is at work distributing information to students. "Support for the march is there", said Mac-

Lellan. "It's mostly a matter of coming up with the money to send people to Halifax. We can only afford two buses but we hope the administration will give us money for more."

Wally Stephen of the Kings College student union is expecting a large turnout for the protest. "If we play our cards right, the students will be out", Stephen said. "People who never showed any inter-

est before are concerned. I just hope it keeps up." A committee is also working at Kings, informing students about the federal and provincial government's role in education funding and about differential fees for foreign students.

Two committees have been formed at Acadia University in Wolfville. One is evaluating a

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**the Dalhousie  
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## Angry students march in Regina

REGINA (CUP)—Four hundred students demonstrated in Regina Tuesday against government underfunding they say will lead to cutbacks and tuition increases.

The Saskatchewan Universities Commission announced the previous day it was giving the University of Regina a 6.9 per cent and the University of Saskatchewan a 7 per cent increase.

However, University of Regina student president Bev Crossman said the grant was not up to the institutional rate of inflation, and would result in tuition increases and cutbacks. The Commission recommended the universities increase tuition by 7 per cent.

The demonstration at the University of Regina was followed by a march to the Provincial Legislature where 250 students listened to speeches from representatives of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, the University of Saskatchewan Student Union, and the Support Staff Union at the University of Regina.

Crossman presented a 10-point declaration of Regina students to Continuing Education Minister Herman Rolfe and Finance Minister Walter Smishek. The declaration called for a freeze on tuition,

accessible student aid based on grants rather than loans, and a full employment program.

Smishek said he could not comment on the program at the time, but did claim there were no cutbacks at Saskatchewan universities.

Earlier in the day, the University of Regina Student Union and nine course unions and clubs had presented a brief to the Board of Governors listing cutbacks in sociology, engineering, and business administration.

Design student Jim Clark said there were 90 students enrolled in a design that did not exist. He said it was handled by a part-time professor on loan.

At the rally, statements of solidarity from the National Union of Students, and other provincial organizations such as the Federation of Alberta Students and the Ontario Federation of Students were read.

Crossman said such a show of support was "an important boost to the people today. It shows that cutbacks in Saskatchewan are not just an isolated occurrence. Their concern and solidarity emphasized the need for a nationally-planned educational policy."

## Drug plan to improve

by Daniele Gauvin

Plans to improve next year's drug plan for students at Dalhousie are focused on two final alternatives, according to Elva Hammerstrand, chairperson of the Health Plan Committee.

The Committee has been considering alternatives to the current H. Ingles Co. drug plan since November. A re-focused form of the Ingles plan and a new plan available through Blue Cross have emerged as the most economically viable and the most all-encompassing of all the plans surveyed, Hammerstrand said.

The new version of the Ingles Plan would end the present co-pay subsidy of oral contraceptives, which are now refunded by the company minus one dollar which the student must 'co-pay'. According to Hammerstrand, the key benefits of the new plan over the old would go to foreign students.

Since the Ingles plan only covers students for what MSI will not cover, foreign students must both pay for a health plan to replace MSI coverage (to which they are not entitled) and another plan specifically for foreign students. "The two plans often overlap. Foreign students are now paying a total of \$125 a year for their health coverage. The new Ingles arrangement would eliminate overlapping and make the price of health care more equitable for foreign students," Hammerstrand explained.

The Blue Cross Plan would be 'somewhat' above the

health budget of \$9.00 per student but its benefits are quite similar to those of the Ingles plan, Hammerstrand said.

"Its main advantage is the proximity of Blue Cross offices in Halifax. Students who are not promptly reimbursed could go up to the office themselves to discuss grievances," she added. The plan's less appealing side is that it would require a \$2.00 co-pay participation on all drugs. This may be the main reason for a rejection of the Blue Cross plan in favor of the new Ingles version, the chairperson said.

The present plan was adopted to fill a vacuum which existed in early September, when Dalhousie students began the term without adequate health coverage. Despite criticism about delays and inconsistencies, the plan offers enough services at a low enough rate to have merited reconsideration for next year.

Hammerstrand recently posted complaint forms about the plan in the Student Health Centre following a Dr.'s sug-

gestions and a rash of complaints. "All cases which could be solved by individual attention, such as ignorance about user numbers etc., I handled myself. Other complaints, especially those about delays, were brought directly to the attention of the company," she said.

Choices were limited for the committee from the beginning. They found that most companies are not particularly interested in students and that most alternate plans offered fewer services than the Ingles plan for premiums four or five times larger than the \$7.50 students paid for their health plan this year. "We realize that people have been very unhappy with the Ingles plan; we hope that if the new version of the plan is adopted for next year, students will be satisfied with the changes," Hammerstrand explained.

In the meantime, she urges students to take their claim forms with them when they go to their doctor or drugstore, to help process their claims faster.

**Coming soon**



march 21

The Horrid  
record reviews  
Hockey nationals