

Co-op to save universities

TORONTO (CUP) — A new university insurance cooperative will save Canadian universities millions of dollars.

On January 1, universities representing 90 per cent of Canada's university students will unite to form the Canadian Universities Reciprocal Insurance Exchange (CURIE).

"It is truly a national enterprise," said Eric Fleming, University of Toronto Insurance and Risk Manager.

A reciprocal insurance exchange is an unincorporated group of organizations that sign a contract with each other to share risks and losses. If one member of the group suffers a loss, other members help pay for

it, based on a pre-arranged formula.

The Canadian Association of University Business Officers (CAUBO) looked into alternative financing techniques because universities were unhappy with the commercial insurance sector.

This project was started in 1985 and other groups such as the Ontario School boards and hospitals have started similar group projects.

"We are not paving new ground, but we're certainly doing something that is going to be good for universities in this country," Fleming said.

The programme's purpose is to meet the needs of universities at an affordable price. Universities

give a five-year commitment to CURIE, which provides equal coverage to all its members.

Of the 55 Canadian universities who are eligible to participate in CURIE, 45 are in favour of the program. The deadline for joining the programme is November 30.

On average, reciprocal insurance could save 25-30 per cent of insurance costs for any university just by eliminating transaction costs and overheads. At the University of Toronto, for instance, reciprocal insurance will reduce the university's premium by up to \$167,000.

Community colleges are not currently eligible to join CURIE, but some have expressed interest in a similar enterprise.

PHOTO: ROCHELLE OWEN



"Debt should be removed from the financial pages of newspapers and included in the political section," said Susan George during her keynote address at the Rural Communities in Crisis Conference at Saint Mary's last week. George's address was an attempt to look at why foreign debt is at such high levels, the impact of that, and how it's seen as a war against the third world and what can be done about it.

George is an author and consultant of various international agencies dealing with hunder and development.

Foreign students moving south of the border

WINNIPEG (CUP) — Fewer foreign students are choosing to study in Manitoba even though it is one of the few provinces where they are not forced to pay higher fees than Canadian students.

Rawle Ramlogan, a student from Trinidad attending the University of Manitoba, said rising costs of living in Canada are taking their toll.

"The first thing you find when applying for visa student status is that you can't work while in Canda, and secondly, you have to show proof that you have enough funding to live here," said Ramlogan.

The number of international students enrolled at the University of Manitoba has dropped by 20 per cent since last year.

Bob Raeburn, director of university relations, said the drop from 1,485 students in 1985 to 1205 in 1986 and finally to 968 this year is a mystery to the administration.

"Some of the reasons we have are speculative," he said. "We assume the (existence of) differential fees in other provinces is having a 'halo effect' on Manitoba, which doesn't have these fees, and thus the students are staying away."

Amendments threaten autonomy

VANCOUVER (CUP) — Critics say recent amendments to B.C.'s University Act may threaten the autonomy of the province's universities.

Staff and faculty at the University of British Columbi are criticizing the new legislation, drafted in July, which denies B.C. universities the power to create new degree programs without government approval.

And at least one critic says there is too much opposition for the amendment to pass.

"My guess is that the government won't persevere in their amendments," said John Dennison, a UBC professor of higher adult education.

"The reaction has been so strong that it would be very unwise to write it into the legislation," said Dennison.

Dennison said the government is clearly concerned with costs, and is trying to avoid

unnecessary duplication of programmes.

But, he said, "There is a difference between duplication and unnecessary duplication." Duplicate programs may offer "different emphasis, priorities and curriculum".

"The existence of the particular amendment in and of itself lessens autonomy," said UBC Vice-President Daniel Birch.

Birch said it was important for the universities to remain in control of the direction of education.

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