

# New BC university causes controversy

BY CRAIG SAUNDERS

VICTORIA (CUP) — Despite mounting opposition from students and faculty, BC's provincial government is going ahead with plans for a new university.

Plans for the Technical University of British Columbia (TUBC) in Surrey were approved by the NDP government in late July and have already sparked an international academic boycott, launched jointly by the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) and the Confederation of University Faculty Associations-BC. (CUFA-BC).

Unlike traditional universities, the new school won't have an academic senate or a tenure system. According to the opposing groups, the lack of senate, combined with a strong corporate presence on campus, presents a serious threat to academic freedom.

"We don't reject the idea that an applied institution can have ties to business," said Robert Clift, executive director of CUFA/BC. "But it needs to have academic freedom measures."

University senates normally include faculty, student, alumni and community representatives who oversee curriculum and programming issues. But at TUBC, the committees that advise the school on curriculum will comprise mainly of people from the business community.

The CUFA-BC fears that this structure will make the school a training tool for the corporations

that fund it.

Clift says a university should be a place for education, not just job training.

"General skills [should be] built within a context...not merely providing a set of specific skills a student will use unquestioningly when working," Clift said.

Representatives at the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, and TUBC President Bernie Sheehan both say Clift's concerns are premature.

## Non-residents face hikes

BY IDELLA STURINO

MONTREAL (CUP) — University students in Quebec were greeted with a new twist upon returning to school this September, as the reality of a provincial tuition fee increase of more than \$1,000 for non-Quebec residents set in.

According to the new differential tuition fee structure introduced by the Quebec government last year, out-of-province students will pay an average of \$3,600 in tuition fees for a full-time academic year, while Quebec students will pay \$2,400.

Until now, all Canadian students at Quebec universities were charged the same amount.

As students from across Quebec and Canada poured into Concordia and McGill, the province's two largest English universities, many expressed anger over the fee increase.

"My tuition went up and now I have to get a student loan and I don't know if I can cover the full year," said Carey Hummerston, a returning McGill student from Manitoba. "It sucks."

Hummerston also criticized the new differential fee structure for being unfair because it charges Quebec and out-of-province students unequal fees. In the eyes of many students — particularly non-francophones — that amounts to discrimination.

McGill's student council is taking the Ministry of Education and McGill University to court, arguing that the differential fee structure violates both the Quebec and Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which guarantee the right to non-discrimination based on nationality and the right of mobility between provinces.

More pressing than the debate over differential tuition fees, however, is the requirement for almost all undergraduate students in Quebec to prove their Quebec residency in order to avoid the

"A number of the structures are just being developed, I think its disappointing and regrettable that at this stage in the process that alarm bell has been pressed...before [CAUT and CUFA/BC] have taken the time to adequately inform themselves," Deputy Minister of Education, Don Avison said.

Sheehan, who is both president and CEO of the new university, echoed Avison's sentiment, explaining the structure will develop over time.

increase.

For many students, this has been a difficult task, leaving them confused and angry.

Kassandra Churcher, a first-year McGill student from Montreal, says she had to send in her proof of residency three times before the university administration charged her the correct fee.

"I think [the McGill admissions and registrar's office is] really stressed because they have so many people [coming in]. This is the conversation with every first-year student I've met. Everyone is talking about it," she said.

Members of Concordia's student union executive reported similar frustration among students, many of whom they say have had trouble wading through the bureaucracy of proving their Quebec status.

The government form for attestation of residency outlines very specific documents and criteria as proof of residency. For example, unless you were born in, or have parents or a spouse in Quebec — and can prove it with a birth certificate or proof of residency — you stand little chance of meeting the criteria.

Out-of-province students who may have been living and studying in Quebec year-round for the past few years do not count as Quebec residents. Only those students who have resided in the province for the past 12 consecutive months while not studying full-time can claim Quebec residency status.

Tracey Berman, supervisor of McGill's student accounts office, remarked that the fee increase has generated a lot of extra phone calls and questions from students.

"It's frustrating and bad PR for everyone. Out-of-province students must think they are being treated like second-class citizens," she said.

"It's for the future to decide," he said.

But the CAUT does not recognize the new school as a university, and is encouraging academics to refuse to work there through an academic boycott.

As the campaign — which includes newspaper advertisements — continues to develop, the critics hope to see letters of support roll in. They also intend to ask accreditation agencies to deny the new school status as a university.

The first two program areas offered at the new university will be information technology and management. Later program areas will include medical and health technology, food design, industrial design and engineering.

The new school will also offer classes through the Internet.

Although there is no official TUBC campus yet, a site is available for the school in Surrey, and plans are in the works to offer some Internet-based courses as early as September of 1998.

## Out of province students may face tuition fee hike in BC

BY TODD SILVER

VANCOUVER (CUP) — Out-of-province students may pay higher tuition fees than their BC peers if the federal and other provincial governments don't do more to make education affordable across the country, BC premier Glen Clark says.

Although Clark said he doesn't favour differential fees for out-of-province students, and had no immediate plans to institute them, they might be necessary if increasing numbers of students come to the province because of cheaper tuition costs.

"If we want to try to do something [different]...than exists everywhere else in the country...then we have to have a certain kind of barrier...around what we are doing in British Columbia," Clark said in a press conference last week.

Last year, the BC government launched a virtual tuition freeze for Canadian students — keeping tuition costs at BC's universities among the lowest in the country.

Nationally, Statistics Canada found that tuition fees are up almost nine per cent from last year. And in provinces like Ontario and Newfoundland, the rise was even higher.

Quebec is currently the only

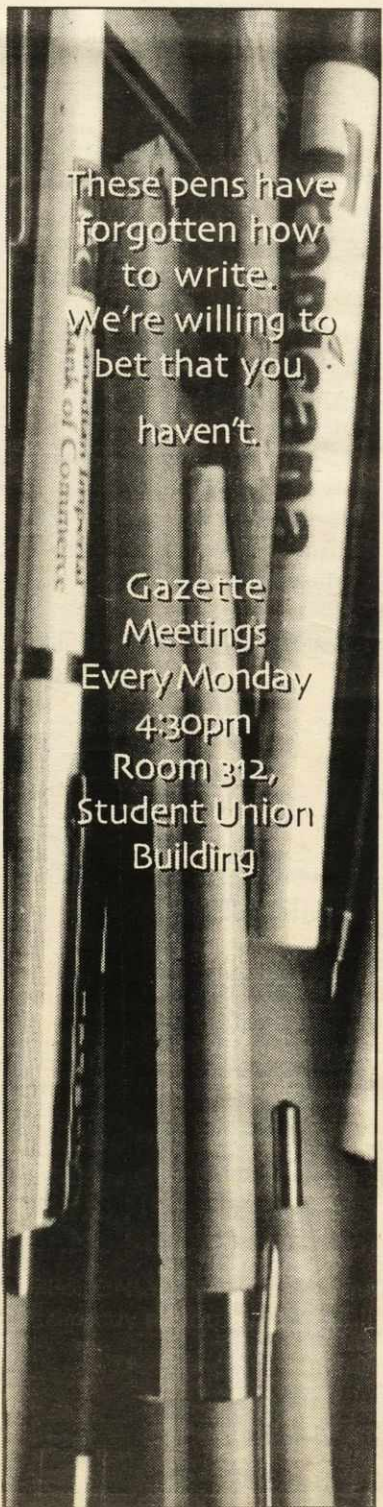
province with a differential tuition fee structure for out-of-province students. The fee structure is supposed to compensate for a tuition freeze in place since 1991. As a result, out-of-province students are paying \$1000 more than their Quebec classmates.

Vivian Hoffman, the director of finance for UBC's student union, spoke with Clark before the press conference, and said she is leery of talk of differential tuition fees.

"If we start giving rights only to those citizens of our provinces, rather than to the citizens of our country...there is not much of a country anymore," she said.

The Premier also had suggestions for making education more affordable. Among them, Clark said he would pressure the federal government to use any expected budget surpluses to boost transfer payments, and attempt to put student debt on the national political agenda.

Clark also said he would advocate systems for student loan applications to be processed over the Internet, as well as ways for banks to verify that student loan recipients are actually students.



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