

# NEWS

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## Federal Budget offers pre-election goodies to students...

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THE BRUNSWICKIAN

On Tuesday, February 18, 1997, when Finance Minister Paul Martin delivered what will probably be his government's last federal budget before an election, he obviously had student voters in mind. The deficit-cutting government of Jean Chretien has offered University students some lifelines in an environment where many Canadian Universities are drowning in rising tuition costs and decreasing federal subsidies.

"Canadians know that a better education equals better jobs" announced Paul Martin in his budget speech, as he introduced a myriad of budget measures designed to help post-secondary students. He trumpeted his measures as not only necessary but innovative, adding that if the government did not act "we will short-change the next generation."

Among the measures introduced are increases to the tuition and education credits, which students claim every year on their income tax forms. The government is doubling the credit in two stages to \$200 per month. Under the new system, students can also claim other compulsory fees (like UNB's \$25 SUB expansion fee) under the tax credit. According to Martin, "the combined federal and provincial tax assistance for a typical student will rise from \$900 to over \$1,200 per year - an increase of one-third."

The increase in the tax credit is largely a response to increased tuition costs - a phenomenon the federal government is partially responsible for, and one that the federal budget ignored. Under the Liberals' deficit-cutting plan, federal transfers to the provinces (used to support Canada's Universities, among other things) have fallen almost \$6 billion dollars from fiscal year 1995/96 to 1997/98. As a result of student underemployment, the tuition tax credit does not help many students who live largely on student loans, and cannot earn more than the basic personal deduction on their tax forms during the summer months. Under the new system, a student can forward their yearly tuition credits to offset future income, in the event they find a job upon graduation.

For graduating students facing a mountain of debt, the federal government has decided to become a kinder, gentler, loan shark. The federal government has extended from 18 to 30 months the period of time students can defer making loan repayments. During this grace period, the federal government will pay the interest on their student loans. According to Martin "this means students will have up to three years of help after graduation in managing their loans."

The budget also announced a new initiative, which Andy Scott, MP for Fredericton-York-Sunbury, says "opens the door to an income contingent repayment program for loans." This could be a political minefield for the Liberals, for when they initially suggested the idea in 1994, then Human Resources Development Minister Lloyd Axworthy was pelted with Kraft Dinner by angry students protesting on Parliament Hill.

Scott was pleased with the government initiatives, noting that "the riding of Fredericton-York-Sunbury is home to two universities and a branch of the New Brunswick Community College and students at these institutions will benefit from this budget."

Whether or not students will be pleased with the budget initiatives, or the government's deficit cutting plan, remains to be seen. Students should be able to deliver their verdict soon, since a federal election is expected to be called for June.

## ...and offers treats to UNB as well

One of the major initiatives under the 1997 Federal Budget is a program to support research infrastructure at Canada's Universities, and that suits Frank Wilson, UNB's Vice President of Research and International Cooperation, just fine. "I think it will be positive" notes Wilson, referring to the budget's \$800 million fund for the establishment of the Canada Foundation of Innovation. According to Finance Minister Paul Martin, "the focus of the Foundation will be to support research infrastructure in the areas of health, the environment, science and engineering."

Over the next five years the federal government will be investing \$180 million annually to support important research infrastructure. The fund will create partnerships with the provinces, the private sector, or the research institutions themselves in order to support individual projects.

According to Frank Wilson, there are two strong points to the fund. "One is that it's a very broad infrastructure program" which can be used to assist research facilities in numerous faculties. "Second is that it has few restrictions" so that UNB can take the lead and negotiate partnerships with many different interested parties.

Local MP Andy Scott is even more enthusiastic about the fund. "The budget's \$800 million in investment in the Canada Foundation for Innovation could lead to as much as \$2 billion in support to accelerate Research and Development in universities and colleges, creating thousands of good jobs."

What the 1997 Budget did not highlight was that the Canadian Foundation for Innovation would probably make up for the drastic cuts to key federal departments involved in research. Under the 1997 Budget, strong research departments like Fisheries and Oceans, National Defense and the Department of the Environment faced funding cuts.

## Friends sell football to voters

GORDON LOANE

THE BRUNSWICKIAN

A spokesperson for the "Friends of UNB Football", Mike Dollimore made a soft pitch for votes this week Tuesday and Wednesday to decide whether varsity football will be revived at UNB.

Speaking to a noon hour audience in the Student Union building cafeteria on Wednesday, Dollimore said the football proposal is really about school spirit and social life on campus.

"It's about bringing people out to have a good kickoff to the start of the year to do some of the kinds of social activities that aren't in place right now," he said.

"When you come to campus, besides frosh week early in the year, there is really not much else to bring a large number of people on campus together."

"We used to have 2000 to 3000 people down at College Field before football was cancelled at UNB for budget reasons in 1981," he stated.

"It was a social happening and activities were built around the football program and they can be built around the program again."

But Dollimore stated the issue of student apathy won't be solved by the addition of a football program, but by each student themselves. "Football can be at least a start, a gathering point, some place where we can start to rally to change what this university is all about and bring some spirit, some social life back to the program," he emphasized.

Dollimore told students that his group, made up of Alumni, business people and students, is close to an agreement in principle with the UNB administration and the Athletics Department on dollars and costs for the football program.

"The Friends" also intend to be around for a long time acting as a support group to continue to donate to an endowment fund that would eventually replace the kind of contribution students would make, according to Dollimore.

"Your contribution is for \$10 over a period of ten years (40 percent of the annual operating budget) that would allow us to put a team on the field if in fact the Alumni is able to raise the remainder of the money," he told the student audience.

Students would get into all home football games free of charge for their \$10 annual contribution, Dollimore promised.

"We understand the fee dilemma you are in now, but what we are saying is that at least for the \$10 you can have a say in where it will go," he said.

"It will go to something you think will improve the quality of life here on campus."

Dollimore told students that should his group not be able to raise the rest of the money required to get a varsity football program off the ground, the students money would be returned and could go to things like SUB expansion, for example.

Dollimore said some \$200,000 would be the direct first year financial benefit to the university with the addition of some 70 new students on campus because of football.

"There would also be extra government grants directly associated with this enrollment," he maintained.

"Therefore, the net benefit would be a further \$100,000 a year coming to the university," Dollimore said.

"You can view that as money that can safeguard the Athletic programs now or money that can be put towards hiring perhaps one or two professors," Dollimore concluded.

AARON MACEachern

THE BRUNSWICKIAN

You probably heard them before you saw them.

Some four-hundred students marched throughout the campus last Thursday, in protest of the proposed tuition increases.

The group began in front of the SUB and ended at the Wu Centre, where the University's Board of Governors was meeting. In between the two stops, students chanted and cheered throughout the halls of Tilley, Carleton and Memorial and stormed the office of the University's President, Elizabeth Parr-Johnson, located in the Old Arts Building.

The protest stemmed from the Task Force and Tuition Fees discussion paper, released earlier this month. Students were eager to have their concerns about increases in tuition fees addressed. One student leader wanted to make sure that members of the Board of Governors understood their intentions.

"The Task Force doesn't decide our fate, you do and you do [pointing to BOG Chair, Richard Tingley and another Board member] and the Board of Governors does," said Political Science Association President, Steve Allard.

Tingley commented on the process through which the proposal will be addressed, before it is either accepted or rejected.

"The Task Force will take the information they get and submit it to the President [Parr-Johnson], who in turn brings it to the Board of Governors for decisions to be made."

Students were also concerned about issues arising from the Task Force document that would limit enrolment



to only the financially adept and stable. "You're basically going to reduce the middle class from being able to attend university, and that's not right," said Allard.

Political Science Graduate student Elise Craft also spoke of the issue of financial problems students face while attending university and beyond. "I know someone who just turned forty-three and had to pay his loan off this year. We're going to be burdened by a student loan into our forties, we can't afford that. we can't

afford to be able to pay year after year, just to be able to pay our tuition."

When contacted at her office the President did not respond to the phone call, but addressed students at the Wu Centre. Parr-Johnson talked of the students who would face an increase in tuition, compared to others who would not.

"I've heard that the majority of students would face an increase under such a scheme, sixty percent would not."

She went on to say, "This proposal is about structure and I think if we could inform ourselves and have a logical discussion, it would make a lot of sense."

Those students who are not well informed as of yet will have the opportunity to ask questions and gain more knowledge on the subject matter in a meeting to be held by University VP of Finance Jim O'Sullivan in upcoming weeks.

## Lamrock: finances too uncertain to okay football

GORDON LOANE

THE BRUNSWICKIAN

Former UNB Student Union President Kelly Lamrock is calling the latest proposal by the "Friends of UNB Football" nothing less than a twenty page whiewash.

"It is an artful job of flushing out uncertainty, but everything is still uncertain," said Lamrock, who intends to vote "No" in the student referendum on football to be held next week.

"We still don't have any real answers here," said Lamrock. "There is still no guarantee of any additional money from outside."

"They are still asking students to fork over an \$800,000 commitment without making any promises of raising one dollar from anybody else," Lamrock emphasized.

He said there does not seem to be

any guarantee that students will get their money back if this proposal does not fly. Lamrock also points out that a \$10,000 to \$15,000 sum for annual merit awards seems too low. He feels that amount would leave about \$250 to 400 for each recipient.

"That is not in keeping with a budget that will allow the team to be competitive," said Lamrock, referring to merit awards.

As for an endowment fund that would require over \$2,000,000 to make the football program self-sufficient in the long run, Lamrock wonders whether it is possible to raise this amount.

"I think there is a chance that maybe they can do it."

The real issue for Lamrock is: "Why is there money out there for football when it is not there for something else?"

"There are a whole number of meritorious students on campus right

now who could use a little bit of help." Lamrock also feels that there are some student athletes on a number of fine varsity teams at UNB who could use a little more encouragement and a little more funding.

"I think it is offensive for alumni to say to students here today we are going to raise money for merit awards for other prospective students because we don't see enough to contribute to here on campus now," he said.

Lamrock feels that while the "Friends of UNB Football" may not intend it they are going to cannibalize other fundraising sources that are currently available to the university.

"We have already stretched, through the Venture Campaign, the fundraising capacities of our community to the max," Lamrock feels.

"If we are going to go out there now and raise an additional \$2,000,000 or

so for football, what does that mean about library acquisitions, campus lighting, hiring professors, creating new academic programs, upgrading new facilities on campus or improving the quality of residence life?" Lamrock asked.

"What are we not raising money for?" "We don't need a multi-million dollar white elephant when the core purposes of this university are having so much trouble," Lamrock said.

"I think a football proposal would leave outside funding for other varsity athletic programs in doubt, cut ourselves off from fundraising we need and commit students to paying some \$800,000 over ten years and all for what?"

"Four football games a year!" Lamrock said.

"Is that the best use of money we can come up with?" Lamrock asked.

## Over 2-mil needed to fund football

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A further \$40,000 would be spent on a free-standing dressing room and locker facility (possibly located in the parking lot behind the existing South Gym) and for bleachers for Chapman Field where home football games would be played.

A Head Football Coach would be hired to begin the recruiting process in January 1998 at an annual salary of some \$40,000 to \$52,000 including benefits.

Other start-up administration costs would ring up a further \$11,000.

First year operating costs in the \$150,000 range would include salaries for a head coach and four assistants \$47,000 to \$61,000, training camp costs \$12,000 to \$13,000, administration \$9,900 to \$11,900, fields \$1,100, home game expenses \$3,880 to 4,280, road games of some \$16,000 to \$20,000 and other expenses of \$14,000 to 17,000 for advanced scouting, trainers/first aid equipment and recruiting, etc.

A further \$10,000 to 15,000 would be set aside for Merit Awards.

Revenues for the first football season would come from the student levy \$71,000, home game tickets, programs, 50/50 draw and concessions max. \$31,500, football camps maximum \$10,000 and local donations of between \$10,000 and \$25,000.

The financial proposal also includes projected revenue and expense budgets based on an annual rate of inflation of 1.5 percent to the year 2005.

Dean of Kinesiology Haggerty has pretty much signed off on the projected budget for the start-up and first year of operation.

"That part of the budget has been pretty much hammered out," Haggerty told *The Brunswickian* this week.

What has still not yet been finalized are certain infrastructure costs such as the bleachers for Chapman Field for example, where these costs are under consideration. Two cost options present themselves when dressing room and locker facilities are being considered.

A Contingency Fund has to be included in any budget, according to Haggerty.

"In some cases, Mike Dollimore and his group have indicated that a contingency has already been built into their estimates," Haggerty said, referring to a high and low range for most all of the budget items listed in the current proposal.

A contingency would also cover any unforeseen items, such as a possible drop in student enrolment, which might reduce the total annual student levy.

It would also take care of situations where a rainy home game date would reduce sales receipts.

Haggerty emphasized that the finalized proposal can contain "no risks" as the university can not fund any of the costs of a varsity football program in the current fiscal climate.

Chapman field would be the home football field with the practice field located near the UNB Heating Plant on College Hill Road.

"We looked at a number of options on where to practise and play," Haggerty said.

"Given our limited facilities now to play at any field other than Chapman would incur costs that would make it very difficult to follow through on the football proposal."

College Field would not be an option as it would cost too much to bring up to standard, according to Haggerty.

Chapman Field is also the home field for women's field hockey, which does

require a "soft surface."

Haggerty indicated that football would "try it out" at Chapman. He acknowledged that the field might need much more work after a football game such as rolling and adding some sand,



Is that the smell of pigskin in the air? Students going to the polls next week will vote whether or not they want to pay a \$10 student activity fee to finance a football program at UNB.

DIRK NELSON FILE PHOTO

for example. "It would be labour intensive but it could be done to maintain a field," Haggerty said.

New physiotherapy equipment valued at \$8,855 would be purchased with the arrival of a football program.

There are no current plans for new facilities or for an increase in staff in this area, at least according to the football proposal.

"We will continue to allow student volunteers to gain valuable experience in this area," Haggerty said.

For those with questions about gender equity with regard to varsity

teams at UNB, the arrival of a football program would put males one up.

"Our policy in our Faculty about gender equity is based on proportionality, so if we take the proportion of males and females in our full-time undergraduate program, then the number of athletes we have on our teams should map onto that same proportion within reason," the Dean said.

"That was one of the reasons why we were keen on adding women's soccer as a varsity program."

"Now we are matched," said Haggerty referring to the male-female balance in varsity teams.

"So anything we now do in either direction throws that out," he said. "One possible response for the future is to add Women's Ice Hockey as a varsity sport similar to requests currently being made at other universities."

Haggerty also acknowledged that actual governance for a revived varsity football program has still not been worked out.

The "Friends of UNB Football" say that the university will control the team and Haggerty agrees.

"The Friends" hope to set up a Board of Directors with various representatives from the alumni, community, sponsors, students and the City of Fredericton.

"How that is going to be structured would have to be determined," Haggerty said.

"The Friends" would want to have an input, an advisory role," he acknowledged.

The Alumni group is expected to co-ordinate their fund raising activities through the UNB Development office.

"The intent of this alumni group is not to take money away from other worthy varsity teams, some of whom must seek outside funds," the Dean said.

"They would not be going to knock on the doors of firms that we know are already linked up," Haggerty said.