

Costly forum changes nothing

SASKATOON (CUP) — The \$2 million extravaganza in Saskatoon was everything students expected it to be.

It was a meeting of minds, but not a changing of minds. It was an attempt to placate students and other groups who were making too much noise about underfunding, restricted access and poor conditions. It was an orgy of wide-eyed theorizing about a nebulous future and a diversionary tactic from the real and solvable problems of the present.

But it was, as expected, a good start.

The National Forum on Post-Secondary Education in Saskatoon last week brought together for the first time both levels of government as well as over 600 representatives of business, labour, special interest groups,

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university and college administrators, faculty, and students.

The more than 50 student participants gave varied analyses.

"One three-day forum isn't going to change anybody's mind," said Maxine Clarke, co-president of Concordia University's student council. "There's a business person in my group who's been reading about the

stock market in the newspaper all afternoon and every once in a while he looks up to say that greater accessibility (to PSE) is 'not economically feasible'. I don't think people were really listening to each other at all. It was more like mental masturbation.

"You also have to take a look at the people who aren't here and the way the whole thing was structured," added Clarke. "I am the only female black student here. There are three other black women here but they are all in the same workshop. There are very few native students here. All these people sitting around talking about how they are going to make the system more accessible to minority groups is great, but that is now how change happens. It doesn't come from the centre, it comes from the periphery. And the periphery aren't here."

"There are so few native people at this forum," said Gina Blondin, a native of the Northwest Territories and a graduate student at the University of British Columbia. "And there is such a limited amount of time (at the forum), we don't have time to get into any depth."

"It makes me suspicious when the list of delegates to this conference does not indicate who represents whom," said Mitch Diamantopoulos, a sociology student at the University of Regina who attended the forum as an observer.

Delegates to the Forum were chosen from different sectors but theoretically identified as

individuals rather than representatives of defined organizations or interest groups. Conference kits identified participants by name and city only. Name tags gave names only.

"This makes networking virtually impossible, and doesn't

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allow coalitions to form. This kind of forum would have been the perfect opportunity to form those networks and it hasn't happened," said Diamantopoulos.

Others were frustrated that no resolutions or specific recommendations were expected from the 21 workshops.

"When we are talking about generic problems and general solutions, everybody agrees," said Sheena Weir of the Ontario Federation of Students at a mid-Forum student press conference. "But it is much harder if we are talking about details and solutions. When the pocket-books come out, the social conscience goes out the window."

Frank Smith, coordinator of the National Education Association of Disabled Students, was

disappointed with closing plenary speeches which were intended as summaries of the workshop discussions.

"Those speeches could have been written before the forum happened considering how much of the workshop discussions were reflected," Smith said. "They just glossed over everything with no mention of any concrete suggestions that came up. What about the here and now? I didn't expect them to reit-

erate everything that was said but there has been a filtering of information. There was a lot more consensus and constructive ideas talked about here than they are expressing in their summaries," said Smith.

One highlight of the Forum was the gala closing banquet, complete with live orchestra, two dance troupes, flaming strawberries jubilee and a speech from Saskatchewan Minister of Education Lorne Hepworth.

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WED & THUR NOV 4 & 5 \$10
CLARENCE GATEMOUTH BROWN

"The greatest living bluesman" USA Today. If you missed this legendary Louisiana bluesman the first time he played in Halifax, don't let this second opportunity to see him live pass you by. Our presentation of Gatemouth this past summer was one of the best concerts we have ever participated in. Backed by a great band, Gatemouth enthralled the sold out audience with his warmth, humour, and virtuosity on the guitar, fiddle and piano.



FRI & SAT NOV 6 & 7 \$5
SHADOWY MEN IDYL TEA

Toronto's Shadowy Men On A Shadowy Planet are the 80's answer to the Ventures. Known for their zany live show, the band once hired a down-on-her-luck Ice Capades skater to introduce their songs on stage. Shadowy Men have become one of Canada's most popular independent bands, with a steady stream of singles on college radio over the last few years. The band will also appear in a Saturday matinee 3-7pm. Edmonton's finest pop trio, Idyl Tea, appeared at the Club Flamingo last April. Their show and sound evokes comparison to the likes of R.E.M., the Everly Brothers, and the Velvet Underground, - "a bit of folksy acoustic guitar, a bit of electric guitar, a bit of country twang, and fabulous harmonies..." - Erica Ehm, Much Music.



WEDNESDAY NOV 11 \$3
RACHEL FARO & TOM LYON
guest DAVID MACISAAC

Rachel Faro is a New York singer/songwriter who has recorded three records on the RCA and Excalibur labels, produced numerous other artists, and received an Academy Award nomination for her work on film scores. She has also been favourably compared to Suzanne Vega. Tom Lyon is a classical guitar player and singer/songwriter whose new recording was produced by Rachel Faro. David MacIsaac, an internationally acclaimed Celtic guitarist from Cape Breton, will accompany Rachel and Tom.

Dancing and video Mon - Sat night. Listed performers begin at 9:30pm. Entertainment Information 420-1051. Concerts presented by CKDU 97.5FM. SOHO GRILL: Fresh and healthy aromatic grilled foods 11am-9pm.

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