

## Both STU and UNB could benefit by merging

The notion that Saint Thomas University should merge with this university is one that has been tossed around for some time, without any moves being made in that direction.

With the statistics for this year's enrollment at both universities, it is obvious that STU is in trouble, potentially very serious trouble, and we feel that the best way to solve the problem is amalgamation with UNB.

STU is particularly vulnerable to decreases in enrollment it offers courses in Arts only. Each year it loses students who do not really wish to leave the university, but must if they wish to study for degrees other than Arts.

Another problem with being limited to Arts is that it is one faculty which has a low job-preparation level as compared with Science or other faculties. It appears there is presently a tendency to switch to those faculties that offer a high job-preparation level, according to the statistics at UNB.

The administration of STU has admitted that the university has problems and if the trend continues steps will have to be taken to improve their situation.

Enrollment at the university decreased from 900 students last year to 800 this year. The decrease was caused by large graduating classes in recent years, and a large amount of students leaving the university to study in faculties other than Arts. However, the size of the freshman class has remained fairly stable at about 250 students.

Obviously, the university is not utilizing its facilities to their fullest capacities.

At the same time, UNB is experiencing a situation almost the opposite of our neighbours up the hill. Enrollment here was restricted in physical education, nursing, law, and post graduate studies.

We feel that the students of both universities, and especially those valid applicants who were refused admission at UNB, could be served better if the merger was to take place.

The facilities of both universities could be used in conjunction giving more assurance that one campus will have sufficient students, and the other would not have to restrict enrollment so drastically.

Naturally, any such move will have its drawbacks. Many students prefer smaller universities which make it easier to get to know both your instructors and fellow students. However, it seems that small universities are becoming more and more a thing of the past. Apparently it is

becoming more difficult to maintain a small university with a limited field of study.

Half-way measures, such as making STU a part of UNB, but retaining its separate entity, will not be sufficient to overcome the difficulties. It might be feasible to make STU a school of Arts within UNB, but the duplication of administration and double bureaucracy would be a drawback that would ruin the benefits of any such union.

At present, STU must either enlarge so it can offer degrees in other faculties, or it can look forward to several lean years if the present enrollment trends continue.

However, we doubt that such expansion would be feasible for

the university. It is already surrounded by UNB buildings, and UNB has recently begun to exhibit a great deal of reluctance to part with land north of the Trans Canada Highway. The provincial government has approached UNB to obtain land for the proposed French Cultural Centre, and the administration has taken a stand that it will no longer part with land that can be used for future expansion of the university. It is not likely that they would feel any less reluctant to sell land to another university.

There is no doubt that the future of Saint Thomas University is closely tied to that of UNB, so we feel that putting off discussion about merging the universities would be useless procrastination.



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