

# NEWS

## Ontario professors call for elimination of tuition

by Brent Poland

The association of Ontario's professors called on the new NDP government last week to freeze and eventually eliminate university tuition fees.

The Ontario Confederation of Faculty Associations (OCUFA), representing the province's 12,000 professors, proposed in a statement that the cost of tuition for all university students be eliminated within a time frame of two provincial election terms.

Bob Kanduth, OCUFA communication coordinator, said the \$350 million dollar cost of tuition should be covered by the government with the introduction of a corporate tax, levied on the business community through a

progressive tax structure.

OCUFA maintains that Ontario should eliminate tuition fees since it is bound by a United Nations treaty, signed by Canada in 1976, which calls for "equally accessible" higher education.

Post-secondary education was not a priority issue for any party during the recent campaign, but the NDP has a long-time policy which calls for the elimination of tuition fees.

Along with the reduction of fees, OCUFA also called on the government to improve the Ontario Student Aid Program (OSAP) with special attention to the cost-of-living allowances for students living in higher-priced cities, additional aid to students of lower income levels and international students from less prosperous nations, and the continuation of

grants past four years to assist graduate students.

OCUFA also stated that levels of support expected from parents under OSAP needs to be re-examined and a new interpretation of student dependent/independent status is required.

The association also called for an immediate end to the surcharge placed upon visa students.

Reaction to OCUFA's proposals at York was mixed.

YFS president Jean Ghomeshi favours the plan, while York president Henry Arthurs thinks it is unlikely that the proposal would ever be implemented.

"When one talks about accessibility to post secondary education, on top of the list is tuition," Ghomeshi said. "OCUFA's statement is a positive step in underscoring what we have been

demanding for a long time, in the interest of all students."

Arthurs felt that OCUFA's recommendations were unrealistic. Although he is against free tuition, he said that all possibilities must be looked at.

He suggested that one solution to accessibility might be a contingency repayment plan where the government lowers tuition fees by restructuring the tax system so that university education is financed by higher income groups.

He said students could "repay" the system later when they move into the higher income groups after graduation.

Reaction to the OCUFA proposals outside of York was also mixed.

Ontario Federation of Students (OFS) president Tim Jackson felt

the elimination of tuition was important to allow students of all social backgrounds and nationalities to gain post secondary education because "we benefit from their influence as much as they benefit from ours."

OFS has traditionally supported the elimination of tuition fees.

The Council of Ontario Universities (COU) manager of communications Beverley Else said, "OCUFA has made a strong idealistic statement." But she felt the elimination of fees is not practical considering the government deficit.

"The main issue is getting enough revenue to provide quality education," she added.

COU disagrees with OCUFA in that they feel revenue should be provided by tuition, government grants, and private funding.

## Now journalist, Howard Goldenthal speaks out on Satanism

by Tina Pannunzio

Anything goes in the fight between good and evil.

That was the message delivered by Howard Goldenthal, investigative journalist for *Now* magazine, in his lecture here at York last week on "Satanism and the Politics of Mass Hysteria."

The discussion was sponsored by the Jewish Student Federation (JSF) of York University as part of its Cult Awareness Week.

Goldenthal provided research on the stereotypes used by the media and right-wing and fascist organizations in representing wiccans, Satanists and pagans.

According to Goldenthal, the "Witch Hunt" is still on, the only difference today is that the laws have changed.

"We don't burn witches at the stake any more," Goldenthal said. "We just suppress their religious freedom by creating fear of them through the national media and mass hysteria."

In his research, Goldenthal located a newsletter known as File 18. The file, which circulates through police stations in Canada



Joan Clement photo

Howard Goldenthal, investigative reporter for *Now*, rejects the mass hysteria over occultism.

and the U.S., was created to keep the police aware of child abductions, ritual abuse and other illegal activities identified as cult practices.

He mentioned that the training manual of the Balwin Park police force, for example, includes a report on "occult crime" compiled by the department's "occult specialist." In the report, several symbols are listed as belonging to occult organizations, including the Nazi swastika, the Star of David, as well as the symbols for both peace and anarchy.

Although the police and the courts emphasize that they are only concerned with whether occult groups engage in criminal activity (specifically murder), Goldenthal remains sceptical about their intentions.

Mainstream media has also picked up on the curiosity surrounding the more lurid activities of pagans, witches and Satanists.

"They [mass media] continually represent occult groups as one single body," Goldenthal said.

"They don't recognize the difference between them. Not only does this demonstrate their own ignorance but it also creates mass hysteria and the end of rational discussion."

Heavy metal band Judas Priest was recently involved in a civil suit for allegedly contributing to the suicide of two teenage boys. The band was accused of using various subliminal messages in their song lyrics which encouraged the youths to commit suicide. The group has since been acquitted of the charges.

Goldenthal rejects the current portrayal of occult groups in "Witch Hunt" literature and television. He is concerned that these groups' activities, appearance and beliefs can bring up such charges.

"Why the hysteria?" Goldenthal said. "Most of the misinformation and consequent hysteria surrounding the occult has been fed by right-wing organizations and Christian fundamentalists. By suppressing all groups and ideas they don't agree with, or those that contradict their own, they advance their own political agendas."

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