## (George) Bush fires

BY SARAH SCHMIDT

TORONTO (CUP) — The University of Toronto's decision to offer George Bush an honourary degree has triggered a series of campaigns to prevent the event from taking place. Bush is due to accept the degree at a November convocation.

"It's one of the broadest faculty protests I'm aware of in quite a while," English professor David Galbraith said.

Within days of hearing the news, Galbraith had helped get over 100 professors to sign an objection letter sent to University of Toronto (U of T) president Robert Prichard.

The Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG) also launched an on and off-campus letter writing campaign to condemn the university's choice. OPIRG is a studentrun social justice organization.

"I expect the [university] will be overwhelmed by opposition," said Elena Lonero, coordinator of OPIRG at U of T. "There's no redemption in this decision. In the eyes of the community, U of T will get nothing but ridicule.'

The university's graduate students' union and the executive of the undergraduate student council have both voted to condemn the honour.

One of the critics of the decision a recipient herself of an honourary degree from U of T - is worldrenowned professor emeritus Ursula Franklin.

But while Franklin says granting Bush the degree is inappropriate, it is not the first time that U of T faculty have been outraged over the granting of an honourary degree.

In 1988, some professors walked out of a convocation when German Chancellor Helmut Kohl took the stage to receive his honour. They were protesting Kohl's record of quashing academic dissent.

U of Tpresident Robert Prichard says the decision to honour Bush, which enjoyed the near unanimous support of the university's governors, was based on sound reasoning.

"We are honouring George Bush for his distinguished public service; international and domestic," Prichard

Critics say that, internationally, in his roles as director of the CIA, as well as Vice-President and President of the United States, Bush supported oppressive and murderous regimes in Latin America and the Middle East. They also criticize Bush for his domestic policies.

"The Reagan-Bush years and in particular the Bush presidency were arguably the most harsh of conservative governments," Sylvia Bashevkin, a U of T political science professor, said. "It [was] a measurable erosion not just for what women's groups were arguing, but also civil rights groups and anti-poverty groups. It's quantifiable.'

Not all professors are against Bush's degree.

Michael Bliss, a history professor at U of T, says his colleagues and students are overacting.

"These are simply people who are protesting for political reasons. It's juvenile," he said. "We should honour real achievement and it seems like George Bush is a good candidate," he

## Liberals pledge money

BY CARLA TONELLI

TORONTO (CUP) — It may be a billion dollar pie but that doesn't mean everyone can have a piece of it.

Prime Minister Jean Chretien's announcement last week of a \$1-billion scholarship fund to be in place by the year 2000 is meeting qualified praise and outright criticism from all corners of the education sector.

While details of a Canada millennium scholarship endowment fund have yet to be disclosed, it is certain that academic merit will be one of the criteria used in awarding these scholarships earmarked for low and moderate-income students.

But some low-income students with already high debt loads say the added academic performance criteria won't provide assistance where it's needed

"That is so unfair," said Sherry MacLeod, a single mother in her first year of law school at the University of Victoria who has already accrued a \$70,000 student debt.

"I have to compete in an already highly competitive environment. I work hard for my marks. And there are a lot of parents like me, we don't have the same opportunity to spend all our time on achieving those marks," she said.

Since the Liberals took power in 1993, they have cut \$2.29-billion from post-secondary education and the average debt at graduation for those who borrow has climbed from \$13,000 to \$22,000.

In his speech on September 24, Chretien said there could be "no better role for government than to help young Canadians prepare for the knowledgebased society of the next century."

But student loans recipient and single mother Tracey Lauriault, coordinator of Carleton University's part-time and mature students' centre says this approach to student aid is unfair and discriminatory.

"What I'd like to hear is \$1billion...for students in need. Period. Not youth, not scholarly achievement, but based on need," she said, adding that there is a strong correlation between lower marks and parental responsibilities, language barriers, cultural differences and disability.

Preliminary calculations indicate that scholarships of \$5,000 each will be available for about 20,000 students a year — a fraction of the 385,000 students currently receiving Canada

Robert Best, director of government relations and public affairs for the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, says he welcomes the announcement, but has reservations about the academic merit.

"What we have here is a historical announcement," Best said. "Clearly, it was short on details, but the stress on low and moderate-income students is highly significant.

"We'll have to see whether the scholarship fund meets the needs we identified," he said.

Although Chretien specified the program was to be a reward system for academic excellence among low and moderate-income Canadians in his announcement, Pascale Montmigny of the Prime Minister's office says it's too early to talk detail.

"In the coming weeks we should know more," she said.

## Bible credits

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environment, Crowell says students and faculty are not required to conform to any religious faith.

While Crowell acknowledges that the religious basis of an institution might affect the way courses are taught, he says secular institutions are no different.

"Every ideology has to struggle with [biases] to some extent," he said. "I wouldn't want to suggest at all that there wouldn't be an issue where an individual's faith doesn't have a way of colouring perspective, but no more so than if I was a Marxist or a feminist or a conservative or a liberal. And professors are allowed to have those opinions," Crowell said.

ABU is privately owned by the Baptist Churches of Atlantic Canada, and has been recognized as a degree-granting institution by the New Brunswick government since the early 1980s. It last inquired about AUCC membership five years ago, but was turned down because the association had placed a temporary moratorium on all new members while it was doing a periodic review of its membership policy.

Crowell says ABU has not looked into membership since then, but will probably investigate it again soon.

Until then, Collins says MUN's position on recognizing ABU courses for transfer will remain the

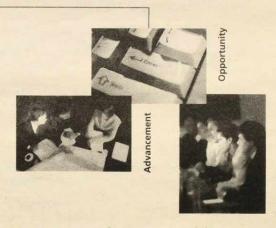
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