

Peer Mentor Program successful

(UNBPRI) A university campus can be a bewildering place for new students, but a program initiated last fall at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton may eliminate some of the confusion for campus rookies.

"In the Peer Mentor Program, upperclass students act as mentors to incoming students to help them make a smoother transition into their new academic setting," said Judith Potter, UNB's assistant dean of students. "Throughout the first year, the peer mentors act as guides or friends, meeting with the new students and being available for advice and assistance."

This initiative is one aspect of a larger academic orientation program being developed by Ms Potter in conjunction with the faculties and student service units. Since her appointment in September 1990 as assistant dean, Ms Potter's mandate has been to change the notion of orientation from one week of social adjustment and information to a program that addresses the whole range of adjustments new students must make.

"We wanted to start with a

small-scale pilot for the Peer Mentor program so that we could readily monitor its progress and identify areas for improvement," Ms Potter explained. "The deans of the faculties of administration and science were the first to indicate an interest in participating in the pilot."

Following a special training session in the fall, the mentors contacted the eight to 10 students on their lists and invited the new students to attend an information session and call on the mentors for advice or assistance. In the second term the mentors were to make a round of calls to see if the first year students required academic assistance and to explain the process of preregistration and offer assistance with it.

Peer mentor Kari Beyea, a fourth-year physics student, volunteered as one of the science faculty's 27 peer mentors because she believes in the idea of students helping other students. "I got to talk to other students about science and physics and to discuss academic questions," she said. In her telephone calls to the students

she mentored, she found the chatting and general response good.

Lynn Arris, who is in her final year of the bachelor of business administration program, served as co-ordinator - or peer mentor to the peer mentors - in the faculty of administration. She calls her 21 mentors regularly to ask how they're doing. "The peer mentors are happy to be meeting the incoming students and they feel good that their roles are helpful," she said. "For example, one new student didn't know he could drop a course or switch a section, and the peer mentor was able to tell him." Some mentors have said they were able to share information about instructor and course expectations.

"From the beginning we were aware of the challenges in developing a program using students as peer mentors and the need to develop strategies to improve it," Ms Potter said. "Next year, we will put out the call for peer mentors much earlier and expand the program. Also the engineering faculty has shown interest in participating."



BBA student Lynn Arris, left, and BSc student Kari Beyea are both involved in the new peer mentoring program on the Fredericton campus of the University of New Brunswick. Joy Cummings-Dickinson photo.

Lasking Moot Court Competition

(UNB-PRI) One of the nation's premier moot court events will help the faculty of law at the University of New Brunswick celebrate its first 100 years of legal education.

"The Lasking Moot Court Competition will be hosted by the law faculty Feb. 20-22," said Thomas Kuttner, co-ordinator of the 1992 competition and a professor in the law faculty. Dedicated to issues of constitutional and federal administrative law, the competition is bilingual. "Eighteen teams of four students each from across Canada will present briefs and arguments in both official languages on the problem, Language Rights under the Federal Official Languages Act and the Charter of Rights," he explained.

According to tradition, the Laskin competition will be mooted in the court facilities of the host jurisdiction. From 8:30 am to 5:30 pm on Friday, Feb. 21, and Saturday, Feb. 22, judges from all levels in the provincial and federal courts, as well as practitioners from New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba, will hear the problem argued in courtrooms 5, 6 and 7 in the Justice Building on Westmorland Street. The public is invited to spend a day in court with the mooters.

"This year, for the first time, a one-day symposium will be held in conjunction with the Laskin Moot Court Competition," Prof. Kuttner added. It is scheduled for

Thursday, Feb. 20, in Ludlow Hall on UNB's Fredericton campus. The issues raised in the moot problem will be addressed, also in both official languages, in a symposium forum on the theme, *Law, Language and the Courts* - which is particularly appropriate in Canada's only bilingual province. There is no admission charge, and the public is invited to attend.

The morning session from 9:30 am to 12 noon will feature Pierre Patenaude of l'Université de Sherbrooke in Quebec who will present a paper on *Les Droits linguistiques et les valeurs en conflit*.

A round table from 2 pm to 4 pm will constitute the second session in which the

practice before the courts of select jurisdictions across Canada in dealing with the mixed language issue will be reviewed.

"Not since 1980, when the UNB faculty of law hosted to the Canadian round of the Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition, has a moot court event of this magnitude been held in Fredericton," Prof. Kuttner observed. New Brunswick's Chief Justice Stratton has agreed to dedicate the court facilities of the Justice Building to the moot and Associate Chief Justice Jerome of the Federal Court of Appeal has lent the facilities of the new Fredericton Federal Court Building.

Bissoondath speaks at UNB Art Center

(UNB PRI) Canadian author Neil Bissoondath will read from his work on Tuesday, Feb. 25, at 4:30 pm in the Art Centre Studio of Memorial Hall at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton. The reading is open to the public and free of charge.

Born in Trinidad in 1955, Bissoondath emigrated to Toronto as a teenager to attend York University, where he majored in French. His writing focuses on contemporary themes of dislocation and revolution, and on the shifting

politics of the Third World. Among his most recent offerings is *Digging Up the Mountains*, a group of short stories that *Maclean's Magazine* called "one of the most remarkable collections to come out of Canada in the past decade." His novel, *A Casual Brutality*, has been hailed as a landmark achievement in Canadian literature. It deals with a man's failure to come to terms with the moral disintegration of the Caribbean island of his birth.

The Laskin competition is one of a year-long series of events celebrating 100 years of legal education in New Brunswick. Over the 12-month period, dinners, receptions, lectures, symposia, moot court competitions, and a book launching have been

scheduled to commemorate the founding of the law school.

The School of Law became the UNB faculty of law in 1923 and remained in Saint John until 1959. The festivities will culminate with a special homecoming and convocation on Oct. 8, 1992.

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