

Faculties support tuition boycott

MONTREAL (PEN-CUP) -- Seven faculties at the Université de Montréal have voted overwhelmingly to boycott payment of tuition fees in an attempt to force the university administration to waive the regulations imposed this summer.

Students at the U de M must pay tuition fees by Oct. 25 or their registration will be invalidated, a change from last year when students were simply required to pay fees according to their financing means. The administration has also stipulated that students must pay last year's tuition fees before Sept. 30 or leave the university.

Norman Lapointe, a spokesperson for the federation of student unions, FAECUM, said Sept. 22 that "privileged students are able to pay immediately. Those students who could not find work over the summer, or come from working class backgrounds, have to go into debt to be able to attend the university." Lapointe said that the administration move is unfair to financially deprived students.

The new regulations place many students in a difficult situation. Quebec loans and bursary money is only available in late October, which for some is too late to meet the university's deadline.

FAECUM has charged the administration with seeking a conflict with students at a time when the university's professors are negotiating their collective agreement. "If

the university so urgently needs money, then it can approach government to advance its subsidy."

Seventy per cent of the Université de Montréal's budget comes from government sources, while only slightly more than seven per cent comes from tuition fees.

Several general assemblies are planned for the coming week to gain the support of those faculties that have not yet voted. The students are demanding that the university return to its old method of fee payment, allowing students to pay when they are able.

According to Lapointe, this is not the first time the U de M administration has tried to force students to pay more promptly. In 1970 and in 1973 students went on strike over the issue and the university was forced to grant the students' demands for flexible payment.

FAECUM, the fédération des associations d'étudiants du campus de l'Université de Montréal, represents 85 per cent of the institution's 35,000 total student population.

The federation successfully fought with the university administration last year over control of student services on the Montreal campus.

Lapointe predicts that all students will support the boycott and move to the greater issue of accessibility to post-secondary education.

Gays unprotected

TORONTO (CUP) -- The National Gay Rights Coalition plans two days of protest later this fall for John Damien, a racing steward fired by the Ontario Racing Commission two years ago because of his homosexuality. The Coalition has set Oct. 21 and 22 for demonstrations in Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto, Ottawa and Halifax.

Damien's dismissal has prompted protest from across the country. Major periodicals have run free advertisements demanding justice for Damien and for his case.

Much of the protest now centres on the exclusion of gays from protection under the Canadian Human Rights Act. While politicians claim that the Canadian public

is "not ready" to protect gays from job discrimination, a Gallup Poll released June 29 said 52 per cent of Canadians favoured granting protection and only 30 per cent were opposed.



Computer election

SCARBOROUGH (CUP) -- Students at Centennial College won't get ballots when they go to the polls Oct. 3, 4, and 5 to vote for a student union president and six representatives -- instead, they'll be handed computer cards.

In what may be a first in Canada, people will vote for the candidate of their choice by filling in computer cards which will be fed through the campus computer.

Bob Gordon, who is running the election, says the main advantage is security -- every card is numbered and students must sign voting lists as they cast their cards and the machine will be programmed to reject unauthorized cards.

And while the computer counts the votes, it will also analyse how

many students voted at each of the college's three campuses, what percentages of voters were men, women, first-year and returning students and what program they are enrolled in.

The analysis and counting is to take 10 minutes -- Gordon says the longest part of the procedure will be picking up cards from each of the campuses and getting them to the computer. He says that it would take a group of people several days to count votes and analyse voting patterns, with less accuracy than the computer will provide.

"We could even tell how many people wore blue underwear if they wanted to fill it out on the cards," Gordon added. However, there are no plans to include such a question on the ballots.



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