

Ontario university students to get soaked 7.5 per cent

Tuition fees to increase above inflation

by Cathy Majtenyi

TORONTO (CUP) — Tuition fees will go up 7.5 per cent next year for Ontario university students, and a lobby group says this will start a dangerous trend in funding for post-secondary education.

"You have to look at the context of the larger picture of acces-

sibility," said Duncan Ivison, researcher for the Ontario Federation of Students. "They (the government) are starting on a trend that tuition will increase above inflation.

"It's a large increase when you take into account that (Ontario) tuition has never been raised above inflation (in recent years),"

he added.

An undergraduate arts student in Ontario will have to pay an average of \$1518 per five-course year, an increase of \$107.

Ministry officials say students should take more responsibility for funding their education, because students benefit from the increase in operating grants.

"It's fair to have students pay the same percentage as the increase in operating grants," said James Mackie, operating grants co-ordinator for the ministry.

But critics say the actual operating grant hike is about 4 per cent, with the rest of the money designated as "catch-up" funds for previous underfunding and unexpectedly high enrollment.

Next year's tuition fees will contribute 18 per cent, or about \$30 million, to Ontario universities' total funding.

The ministry provides 80 per cent of the funds. The remaining two per cent comes from private donations.

William Sayers, communications director for the Council of Ontario Universities, a lobby group, said the increase should be manageable for most students.

"I find it hard to believe that an

increase of that order would be a disincentive for a student to continue," he said.

Tuition fees have doubled and sometimes tripled at Canadian universities over the past 10 years, according to a September Statistics Canada survey. The Consumer Price Index has risen by only 93 per cent in the past decade.

Only Quebec has avoided the inflationary trend, where tuition fees were frozen in 1969.

Upon the release of the Statistics Canada report, Rob Clift, chair of the Pacific region of the Canadian Federation of Students, said students "have been squeezed too much already".

And while tuition fees continue to increase, the students' ability to make money doesn't. "Wages are just not going up enough to allow students to earn enough money," said Clift.



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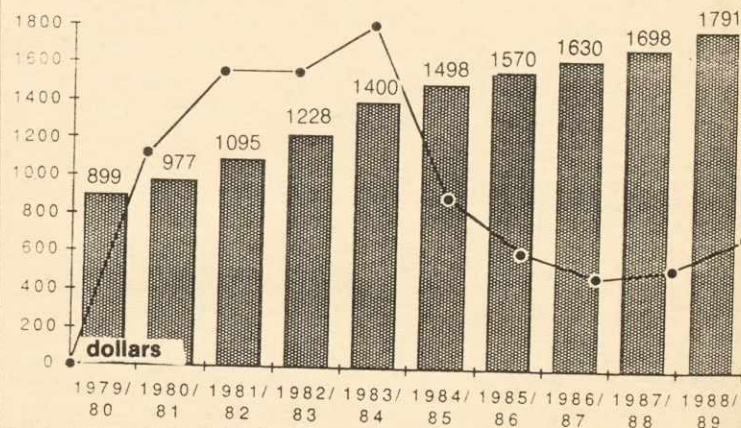
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DAL TUITION FEES 1979-1989

Columns show tuition amount in dollars. Line shows rise in fees in per cent. Note the drop after 1985, when DSU/Administration tuition fee agreement was signed.

The deal is: From 1985/86 to 1990/91 administration limits fee hikes in return for a DSU contribution to the capital campaign amounting to approximately 750,000 over the 6 years. Increases are factored on cost of living for that year.



A clearer look at the fee hikes between 1980/81 and 1988/89. Figures on columns show per cent increase over previous year's tuition.

