

cross-canada briefs

Sit-ins, protests and blocks of ice

BY RACHEL FUREY

OTTAWA (CUP) — Angered by the provincial government's recent announcement that universities can hike tuition fees by 10 per cent next year, students across Ontario are taking action.

After students at the University of Toronto occupied university president Robert Prichard's office last week, students at York University and the University of Guelph also occupied their presidents' offices to demand a freeze on tuition fees.

In the meantime, students at Ryerson sent thirty 55 kilogram blocks of ice to President Claude Lageunesse's office on Feb. 10. It was their way of showing Lageunesse they wanted tuition fees frozen.

Nearly twenty students occupying Prichard's office at U of T left the building on Friday after 97 hours of occupation. On Sunday, the 22 York students in President Susan Mann's office were forced out by police.

The momentum that's been built by the occupations remains alive at Guelph where over 500 people rallied last Friday in support of the protesters.

User fees on the rise

BY DAVID-JAMES FERNANDES

TORONTO (CUP) — Confronted by government-imposed tuition caps and student backlash every time they increase tuition fees, university administrators across Canada are quietly imposing user fees to cover everything from computer upgrades to increased sewage costs.

Earlier this school year, the University of British Columbia considered slapping a \$35 levy on students to offset the rising costs of pumping UBC's sewage from its property.

The fee may have gone through but for the intervention of B.C. deputy education minister Garry Wouters who insisted ancillary fees be limited to core academic activities, and a sewage fee did not qualify.

Carleton students may face a fee as large as \$70 to upgrade the school's telecommunications infrastructure. David Holmes, assistant vice-president of Carleton's information resources, says he has approached Carleton's student council for money to upgrade the current system before it becomes obsolete.

"Funding comes from two places — the students and the government," he said. "If the government stops, students have to make up the difference."

Brad Lavigne, chairman of the Canadian Federation of Students, disagrees.

"There's nothing wrong with spending revenue on upgrading an institution's technological infrastructure, but when it comes on the backs of students, that's a problem," said Lavigne.

Sports harassment awareness raised

BY CRAIG BABSTOCK

(CUP) — The impact of the Graham James sexual assault case is being felt in the athletic departments of Canadian universities, says the president of the Atlantic Universities Athletic Association.

"I certainly think it's raised the level of awareness and raised the level of concern that people have, which I think is good," said Barb Mullaly.

"We tend to think that we're isolated. I don't think that's a good attitude. People in all aspects of sport and life have to be pretty vigilant about this type of thing."

Sexual abuse of athletes became a hot issue for sports administrators across the country when former junior hockey coach Graham James was sentenced to prison for sexually assaulting young hockey players.

According to Tom Allen, the president-elect of the Canadian Interuniversity Athletic Union (CIAU), a new atmosphere dominates university athletics.

"From what you say to a student athlete to how you deal with a student athlete, I think (this incident) has turned on the light in a lot of coaches," said Allen.

Allen says the CIAU is on the leading edge of Canadian athletics, as far as protecting athletes is concerned. As evidence he points to the CIAU's codes of conduct and zero tolerance policy, along with the sexual harassment policies and officers of member institutions.

Some athletic officials, however, say that change is required below the university level.

"I'd say where it's going to have the biggest effect is at the grass roots level, which has a lot of volunteers," said Walt McKee, president of the Great Plains Athletic Conference.

McKee said that school systems are going to have to evaluate the backgrounds of their volunteer coaches. He also added that the days of taking any volunteer for the sake of being able to operate a program are over.

Advocacy service swamped

BY BRANDON BUTLER

A large rise in the number of cases of plagiarism and other academic offences has swamped the Student Advocacy Service. As a result, the service is finding it difficult to keep up with demand for its services.

The Student Advocacy Service (SAS) works on behalf of students accused of academic offences. It has been confronted this year with close to three times the number of cases as it had last year. SAS has received thirty to forty new cases since the month of December alone. For the same period last year, it dealt with only fifteen cases.

The service is additionally troubled by the fact that its ten unpaid volunteers require new equipment so as to better deal with these cases.

"We need a new computer," said Josh Judah, a student advocate volunteer. "but our current number of staff is fine."

The startling offence rise is the result of a new policy develop-

ment within the Dalhousie administration. While previously many offenses would be dealt with privately (between professor and student), now a complaint is required to go straight to the Senate's disciplinary committee.

"It's being done in the interests of uniformity, but that's best overall," said Judah.

"The extra cases are better than having an uneven system. The main responsibility of the matter still rests with the student."

Of the cases, a large portion — about three quarters — concern undergraduates. These students face, when found guilty, anything from a damaging notation on their transcript, to expulsion.

What may also be contributing to the rise of cases is the lack of education of the first and second year students on such matters as plagiarism.

Tyrone Duerr, director of the SAS, believes that professors could do more to stem the tide of cases.

"Often, the case is that the pro-

fessor has not properly explained the policy, or what is classified as plagiarism," Duerr said.

He suggests that students and professors take more class time to discuss the matter openly and clear up any grey areas.

The current situation at the SAS has made it difficult for when cases come to trial. In some instances, students are only informed a week beforehand, creating difficulties for the SAS working on their behalf. However, Duerr believes that the overall outcome does not suffer from this.

"The courts are still receptive as they should be," he said.

The Senate, in response, is looking to establish a new assistant director for the service, and Judah believes that by next year, things should be much better.

"By next month, there should even be an improvement," he said.

"The system will by more prepared. The most important thing is that students realize that with these cases concerning them, we are here, and can help."

River

Continued from page 1

time to deliberate on whether it would be appropriate for Hill to serve her sentence in jail, or to spend the time within the community.

The conditional sentence sought by defence lawyer Don Presse would have allowed Hill to serve no jail time, and spend her sentence at home. This is a new option for judges, less than a year old, and can be applied to those who receive a sentence of less than two years.

"She set out to deliberately defraud her employer, and just so that she could 'Act the Big Shot'," Mason argued.

"A serious sentence was definitely warranted. Is one year enough? I don't know. Everyone will have to decide that for themselves."

Hill was originally fired by Dalhousie for submitting false invoices to Henson College over an eight month period. The invoices were

from a bogus company, supposedly in New Brunswick, and were for both consulting fees and travel expenses which Hill collected.

An irregularity was discovered in the Dalhousie accounts during an internal audit last summer. The university was reimbursed for the money by its insurance company, and when Hill is released she will have to repay the remaining money to the company.

"We were hoping that [the repayment] could happen immediately, but maybe it's going to have to wait for a period," Presse said.

Mason maintains that this is a first for Dal: "In anyone's living memory, no one can remember anything like this ever happening."

Mason also assures that steps have been taken so that such an incident can never reoccur.

Budget

Continued from page 1

Hough says the optional plan will be developed with "interested provinces, lenders, and other parties." He argues that although the program could in theory benefit students, it is CASA's fear that there will likely be regional disparity with respect to the availability of such a scheme. CASA also fears that the plan will serve as nothing more than a justification for provinces to raise tuition levels.

"The most alarming fact of the proposed scheme is that for those

students who choose the new repayment option, it is clearly stated that a student would be expected to repay the whole of a loan over time, without any interest relief or subsidy during the repayment period," said Hough. "This would basically render useless any new repayment assistance that the government has proposed in this year's budget."

Unaddressed by CASA or the CFS is the reality that students who have lower paying jobs, and therefore choose a pay scheme over a longer period of time, will end up paying more in interest than students who receive higher paying jobs and are able to repay their loans at a faster rate.

The DSU election campaign period begins the day we get back from Reading Week, and boy, are we excited at the Gazette. Come sing a special holiday song with us.

It's our favorite time of the year at the Gazette, and we need people to come share in the Spirit of the Season.

Come write for the Gazette. Staff meetings Monday at 4:30 p.m., SUB 312.

Because after all, when you get right down to it, we're really petty people who hate popularity contests.

*'Tis the season when we slander,
Fa la la la la, la la la la,
Got to sling the mud with candor,
Fa la la la la, la la la la,
Don't they now their finest clothes,
Fa la la, la la la, la la la,
Candidates who buy our votes,
Fa la la la la, la la, la la.*