

# Transition Year Program all about development

BY SALLY THOMAS

A little-known program to help black and aboriginal Nova Scotian students get ready for university has a new director and is getting close to celebrating its 30th anniversary.

The Transition Year Program, known as TYP, is intended as a year of non-credit university preparatory courses for some Nova Scotian black and Mi'kmaq students.

"TYP gives people the chance and opportunity to find their potential and believe in that potential again," said Patti Doyle Bedwell, the program's new director.

The program began in 1970 as a way to offset the years of damage segregation and residential schools had done to Nova Scotia's Black

and Mi'kmaq communities.

And as it challenges prejudices, it provides support for students getting ready for university.

"The rest of the university isn't as friendly as we'd like, so we give [TYP students] a safe space," Bedwell said.

And she says that although things are better, barriers to equal education still exist.

"People think you're not smart enough, and there's always racism and sexism, but we try to teach coping mechanisms."

Most of the students that enter the program are mature students

who have been out of school for some time. The oldest student this year is 55.

On average, the program admits 30 students a year, although the program has admitted up to 50.

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The numbers are kept low, Bedwell says, so that each student can get the personal attention they deserve.

Vicki, a student who went through the program, says it helped her in lots of ways.

"It helps you financially, [and] it helps you get back in the swing of going back to

school," she said.

Danielle, who has also gone through the program, agrees. She says the program and the people involved are like an extended family.

"I had the opportunity to go to TYP after high school and Saint Mary's, but I was intimidated with the whole thing. It really makes a big difference to have people help you out."

Both Vicki and Danielle are also single mothers. And that, they say, makes going back to school even harder.

"It's hard to adjust, you just always feel guilty for leaving your child," Vicki said.

But Bedwell credits the success of the program to the students' successes.

"TYP creates people who are

contributing to their communities... and the Dalhousie community. We are strong ambassadors for this program," she said. "Our most successful students are single moms. They're already committed to success and they have time management skills."

TYP is funded through the university, but Dal's 10 year commitment to fund the program ends this year. Bedwell says she is optimistic about continued funding.

"Dalhousie recognizes its responsibility to these two groups in Nova Scotia, [and] has gone a long way in recognizing the communities and the need for its involvement," she said.

Eric McKee, vice-president Student Services, agrees.

"One of the first concrete initiatives Dalhousie had was to make [the school] accessible to the black and Mi'kmaq communities."

Next year, TYP is celebrating its 30th anniversary. And Bedwell says things just keep getting better.

Next year the program is incorporating a science component, and Bedwell says it will also accredit Black and Native Studies courses.

TYP is also working on a book that chronicles the successes of past students, and a new webpage.

Some students who have been through TYP have gone on to be lawyers, teachers, social workers and police officers.

Bedwell and the students say this program is all about development. TYP gives students a chance to develop academically — and to develop their potential as people.

"We help them develop that potential and we see that potential — or they wouldn't be here."

## Imaginus traces social trends

BY NATALIE MACLELLAN

Dal students waited in lines of 40 or more to buy prints of Klimt and Monet Friday evening.

The Imaginus poster sale, supposed to close Friday night at 5:00, was open until almost 6:30 to fill the orders of the students who waited to the last minute to make a purchase.

But the last minute rush isn't unusual for Imaginus sales — employee Fabian Keane says the last day at a location is always the busiest.

"We have this poster called 'Procrastinator's Creed'. When people buy it on the last day we like to remind them it's an appropriate choice," he said. "Sometimes people buy it on the first day and it doesn't seem to fit."

Imaginus has been hawking their posters across Canada for more than 20 years now, selling everything from fine art to world maps and portraits of Brad Pitt.

And it gives Imaginus employees a unique vantage point — watching trends in wall decoration change with trends in

politics, technology, and art.

"Non-depictive art is very popular right now," Keane said. "Students have moved away from impressionist art to fine art."

Apparently movie posters are also big.

"Males go for the very aggressive movies like *Braveheart*," he said.

But when pressed, Keane can list lots of big sellers.

"There's the 'perennial art' like VanGogh and Dali, and there's native art which has become more popular in recent years, and romance is another thing that has always been very popular," he said. "[But] photography is not as popular as it used to be."

And what were Dal students buying at this year's sale?

A quick survey showed no trends, just a wide range of choices, including a lot of "not so popular" photography. When you come down to it, Keane says there isn't much difference in poster preferences from one part of Canada to another.

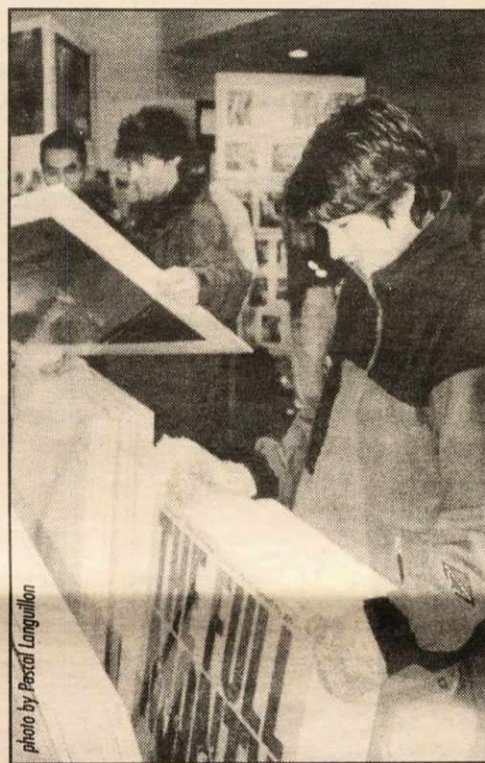
"Different schools have different tastes. [But] sometimes it depends on how you're set up. You

don't even intend it, but if you set your displays up a little differently, different posters will sell.

Natalie Jones, a Dal psychology student, was buying four posters: the *Beastie Boys*, *Grease*, *Yoda*, and *Scarface*.

But when asked what her favourite poster was, her choices were more artistic, including "Sweet Rose" by Waterhouse, and some Picasso works.

"I like Monet a lot," she said. "And I was really impressed that I saw some of the Group of Seven in there."



Shopping for posters at Imaginus.



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(North and South Island from Auckland return)

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