

Equal accessibility ?

The Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission has made its annual recommendations to the Council of Maritime Premiers. Their requests for fairly substantial increases in funding for the next fiscal year were undoubtedly well received by the administrations of the region's universities.

For students, however, the MPHEC's recommendations are most discouraging. The commission's report states quite categorically that tuition fees can be expected to increase with the cost of living. This in itself is alarming to students who already pay the highest tuition in the country. But placing them in the context of the commission's recommendations of just twelve months ago, one must seriously question their credibility.

At that time the MPHEC requested a three year freeze on tuition fees. They justified their request by stating that tuition fees in the Maritimes were anywhere from 2 to 3 hundred dollars higher than in any other area of the country. The Commission's new recommendations taken at face value would suggest that this situation no longer exists. The fact is, however, that the MPHEC recommendations for tuition freeze were completely ignored by the council of Maritime Premiers and university administrators. As a result tuition went up 6% at most institutions last year. Instead of improving, the situation has gotten worse.

If you have never heard the phrase "equal accessibility" before, think about it, because whether consciously or unconsciously, the MPHEC is supporting a system of higher education for an economic elite, and ironically, a generally poor and below average one at that.

Students have recourse to action, you have student **UNIONS**, regional federations, National unions, and numbers. All you have to do is care.

If you have any doubts about paying higher tuition next year, think about the record of government, and think about the higher fees you paid this year.

Don't say you haven't been warned, because this is a warning. The universities know where to go to get the money they need, and unless you do something about it, they'll keep coming to you.



Letters

French schools unnecessary

To the Gazette:

Your recent report on the speech of Mr. Comeau, president of the Acadian Federation, brings up the issue of language rights in Nova Scotia. Mr. Comeau proposes establishing a separate school system for French speaking Nova Scotians. What he neglects to point out is that 95% of Nova Scotia's population is English speaking, according to Federal Government statistics. Would not tax-payers money be better spent on employing people in a new Cape Breton steel industry than in establishing expensive schools for a small elite group? When Quebec is enforcing a language bill that is driving English-speaking schools to ruin, and forcing English-speakers out of jobs and the province, is it not time for Nova Scotia to apply its financial resources to better purposes than expensive language training?

Yours truly,
Robin Reid, B.A. Law II
[Dalhousie]
President of APEC

Dal bookstore no profit

To the Gazette:

Jim Young's letter in the November 3 issue of the **Gazette** describing different bookstore prices for different editions of the same title suggests several conclusions which are worthy of responses from the bookstore:

Possible conclusion No. 1: The bookstore is negligent in shopping for the cheapest available edition of a book.

Response: In many cases, and in the instance described by Jim, the instructor specifies the edition she/he wishes the student to buy and presumably to read. Only when the instructor does not specify a particular edition does the book-

store then assume the responsibility for selecting the cheapest edition available.

Possible conclusion No. 2: Prices "under the sticker" represent a suggested retail price while sticker prices possibly represent an inflated and arbitrary bookstore price. Response: Almost all bookstore prices are publishers suggested retail price, and variant prices on and beneath the sticker represent the fact that the publisher had so many copies printed that his supply is lasting through currency changes and his own changes in costs and pricing. The policy in the bookstore is to price books at the publisher's suggested retail price.

Possible conclusion No. 3: The bookstore is insensitive to the increasingly tight budgets with which students are expected to survive.

Response: Not true at all! The university, through the bookstore, attempts to make textbooks available to students at reasonable prices, and although freight charges, communications charges, and overhead expenses are increasing, these are not added to the price of the book. Add to these the costs of buying books back from students, shipping charges for returning these to the publisher, and further shipping charges should the publisher choose not to accept the returns. In stationery supplies and other gift items the bookstore does attempt to sell below suggested retail price to enable the student to stretch her/his few and shrunken dollars.

While it may not always be apparent to Jim and possibly to others, the objective of the bookstore is not to show a profit, but equally, to keep losses at an absolute minimum. It reasonably follows that community support and patronage would enable us to extend this service identity to result in greater savings for individuals' "already straitened budgets."

Sincerely,
Irving Kirk,
Acting Director, Bookstore

the dalhousie gazette

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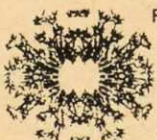
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