

National

Mount A's Education and Engineering programs cut

MARTIN PATRIQUIN, THE ARGOSY
MOUNT ALLISON UNIVERSITY

The Education Department at Mount Allison is no more, and the Engineering program is to be phased out by 2000. The controversial motions to eliminate both these programs were put to vote by secret ballot at a Senate meeting last week, and both were passed by votes of 29-19 and 34-14 for Education and Engineering, respectively.

The decision to eliminate the Education program came about despite fervent protest by Education head Basil Favaro and the fact that a similar motion was struck down at the last senate meeting in December of last year. Favaro told the Argosy last night that he felt that the decision was "very disappointing for the university. There should have been a comprehensive review before this decision was made."

He said that the administration was "shooting itself in the foot" by discontinuing both Education and Engineering. He further noted that the administration had put no new issues forward in the January meeting that hadn't already been discussed—and rejected—at the Senate meeting on December third, save for the issue of certification of the Education students, which he called a "non-issue."

"There should have been a comprehensive review of the impact of such a decision. It is hard to believe that until October 24th, our program was

secure," Favaro said that Vice-President Academic William Driedzic had assured the department that the Education program was safe until the year 2001.

For his part, Driedzic was quick to note that the decision to cut Education and Engineering was not based solely on economic aspects. "Our primary obligation is to the four year undergraduate students." Concerning the loss of reputation many students and faculty believe the university will suffer because of the elimination of these programs, Driedzic stated that "this is a no-win situation. To say that there would not be a loss would be an insult. The quality of the program is not under question [but] there needs to be vertical cuts in order to maintain existing programs."

The cutting of various faculty appointments over the next four years—one of the suggested alternate motions that would have been set forth had Education and Engineering been kept—would "unquestionably [and] absolutely compromise the quality of the existing programs at the school," Driedzic stated.

Both Favaro and Dr. Peter Varma, head of the Engineering department, made impassioned pleas to the Senate to keep their respective positions. Favaro said that he was happy with "the very good fight the Education and Engineering students fought."

"We're not giving up," Favaro added.

<http://argosy.mta.ca/argosy>

Carleton blames unions for soaring \$25M debt

CHINTA PUXLEY, THE CHARLETON
CARLETON UNIVERSITY

Carleton has been caught counting its fiscal chickens before they're hatched, according to a six-month budget review released in December, and the result is a massive increase in the university's debt.

The university had banked on getting \$7 million in compensation cutbacks from the university unions in its 1996-97 budget. In addition to the \$7-million loss, Carleton is also going \$5 million in the hole for severance pay to cut employees in an attempt to make up for its failure at the bargaining table.

Since the university didn't get the expected compensation from university unions, its \$14.4 million debt will have ballooned to a total of \$25 million by the end of this year.

Spruce Riordon, Vice-President Finance and Administration, says the university counted on the cutbacks from unions as part of an overall savings plan. "Since salaries are close to 80 per cent of our costs and since we had been cut \$13.5 million by the province, it didn't seem outrageous, to take some of this in salary costs," says Riordon.

But Alton Craig, a retired University of Ottawa professor and labor relations expert, says counting on salary cutbacks is not a common budgetary practice. "If there were going to be reductions, that would be decided on after lengthy negotiations between the union and the university," says Craig. "The budget is usually prepared well in advance to tell you what's going to happen next year or the year after and that's long before negotiations take place."

Bill Pickett, the director of Carleton's Office of Budget Planning, agrees it's not

common practice to count on employee cutbacks. But he says it seemed like the best option.

Carleton isn't expecting any further reductions in the provincial education grant for next year, but with a \$25-million debt hanging over the university, Riordon says changes are expected in the number of faculty and in the size of their salaries.

"Since 80 per cent of our budget is people, it will mean either lower salaries or fewer people working for us. Those are the two possibilities," says

Riordon. He added that the university will be raising these possibilities in future union negotiations.

Patricia Finn, business agent for the Carleton University Academic Staff Association, Carleton's faculty union, says although unions haven't taken as much of a cut as the university had banked on, they have still taken some.

"If you ask how much money was spent on each unit in the previous year and how much was spent this year, you will find that there's a considerable

decrease," says Finn. "It may not have been the size of the decrease they wanted, but nonetheless the total compensation costs of this university have decreased."

Finn says CUASA will be negotiating with the university in February when the union's contract expires. She says she expects the university to ask the union to take further cuts. "I assume they'll be coming to the table with their hand out," says Finn.

<http://www.carleton.ca>

Sackville police find assault claims were false

CATLIN HAYWARD, THE ARGOSY
MOUNT ALLISON UNIVERSITY

The assaults that sparked a huge debate over campus security in the fall of last year were revealed to be false after the two alleged victims admitted that they had made up the attacks.

The two women, who reportedly did not know each other, admitted on December 6 that they had fabricated the stories. Both were 19-year-old females.

The first victim alleged that she had been assaulted in late October, near Palmer and Harper Halls, and that her room had been broken into on November 4. When she later reported a third incident on December 6, she was confronted by authorities, and admitted that all reports of attacks were false.

The woman was seen for a follow-up after the "assault" by counsellor Kris Trotter, who says the alleged victim was never treated as if she were lying. The Sackville police had launched a full investigation. Police say that they were not suspicious until the second report of a break-in to the student's room was received. From the point of their arrival

on the scene of the break-in, they felt that it had been staged. They interviewed several of the young woman's male friends, and brought them in for questioning, but ultimately believed that none of them were involved.

Consequently, when the student reported a third attack, the police, with the help of Mount Allison authorities, confronted her. She admitted to having made up the attacks. Her reasons were not made public.

The second student claimed she had been attacked on November 14, just outside the Sackville Police department. This time, however, the police were suspicious from the beginning. She claimed to have been attacked in broad daylight, in an area of heavy traffic. Her story apparently changed several times, and the details were sketchy. On the same day that the first victim admitted her attacks were false, the police confronted the second woman, and she also admitted to having made it up.

Chief of Police Stuart McFee says that though he is not happy these situations arose, he is "glad to know that our community is fairly safe." He stressed that

everything was done with the utmost of sensitivity to the two alleged victims.

Mount Allison counsellor Kris Trotter agreed. "At all times the Sackville Police were compassionate, professional and congenial," she says, adding that she was impressed that the police asked her to stay at the police station in case the women needed support.

Both Trotter and McFee said that both girls had "complex" motives and issues to be dealt with, and that the police are delaying the decision of whether or not to lay charges until some of these motives have been examined.

The attacks were central in moving the issue of campus security to the forefront of student politics last semester. The S.A.C. released a report entitled "Are We Safe?" which revealed that Mt. A was lacking many of the security measures other Maritime schools used. There was also much public debate, including a widely attended demonstration when several hundred students demanded better security measures.

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