

Catholic school divided over AIDS education

HALIFAX (CUP) — While most first year students at Nova Scotia universities will be handed AIDS education packages at registration or orientation tables, some of the schools involved in the blitz are removing the free condoms and explicit safe-sex explanations included in the packets.

"This is a Catholic university — there's no way (we'll hand out condoms)," said a secretary employed by the Mount Saint Vincent's University student council. "It's fine to tell people how they can get it, the basic information. But not condoms."

Ten of the province's 14 universities, colleges and technical schools are participating in the publicity programme, co-ordinated by the Halifax Metro Area Committee on AIDS. Only four schools are accepting the safes.

The legal-sized, pale blue envelopes to be distributed are emblazoned with the grim message, "AIDS: What you don't know can hurt you". In addition to a free prophylactic and a bookmark with guidelines to safer sex, the give-

way includes a blood-donor brochure from the Red Cross, a pamphlet from Health and Welfare Canada, and instructions on the proper way to use a condom.

This is the second attempt by AIDS educators to reach a mass student audience and inform Canadians about AIDS, an incurable sexually-transmitted disease which has claimed the lives of 635 Canadians. Two years ago, the Federal Centre for AIDS placed advertise-

ment coupon package.

Two universities — including St. Mary's in Halifax — have refused to allow students access to the bookmark, which lists safe and risky sexual activities.

Metro Area Committee on AIDS co-ordinator Madeleine Comeau is concerned the loss may hurt students.

"I don't quite understand why they would make such a fuss," says Comeau. "We want them to read the printed material. The brochure

from Health and Welfare Canada says AIDS is transmitted through bodily fluids. That's not enough for 18- and 19-year-olds. They want to know whether it's safe to kiss someone, whether it's safe to have oral sex, whether it's safe to hug someone with AIDS."

Meanwhile in Hamilton, Ontario, McMaster University's student council is backing a series of "safe sex versus no sex" ads in the campus newspaper. The announcements are being forwarded to the 46 newspapers represented by Can-

adian University Press through its co-operatively owned advertising agency, Campus Plus.

"University students are still very promiscuous. It doesn't seem that the safe-sex message has been sinking in very much," says council vice-president Steve Longo. "We want to get a consistent message to the students."

Longo is also setting up a week-long AIDS awareness campaign, with educational materials, speakers and condom give-aways heading the list of activities.

More fee legalities

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Advanced Education Dave Russell. "Ten per cent is a guideline."

The SU did not seek an injunction to block the university from collecting the extra fee. "We felt the court wouldn't necessarily accept an injunction," said LaGrange. Also, the SU will "save on extra legal fees and hassles."

As a result, students must now pay the first \$30 fee by September

30, according to the comptrollers office.

"They're payable as all the rest," said Michelle Phinney, a University senior accounts clerk. "They're part of the compulsory fees."

Though the court date for the case has not been set, LaGrange anticipates a mid-October hearing.

University President Myer Horowitz declined to comment, saying the case was before the courts.

Student lawsuits nixed

MONTREAL (CUP) — Two lawsuits against the imposition of incidental fees at Concordia university were both rejected this spring by the Quebec courts.

Both suits argued that the university could not impose the incidental fee after some students had already signed their contract.

The first case, brought to small claims court by student Bettina Rosenberg, was defeated when judge Michel Desmarais ruled that the Concordia calendar, which says that the university has the right to change the published scale of fees without notice, was a part of the student contract.

The second case was a class-action suit taken in the name of all Concordia undergraduates by student Frederic Allali. It was turned down by superior court judge Charles Gonthier who said that Allali needed a mandate from the Concordia student council. Allali's lawyer said her client will appeal the decision.

"We took the case to small claims court to prove that the school cannot make new regulations after people had signed their contract," said Rosenberg.

"I am not opposed to a fee on academic materials if that is really where it is going," she said. "But I heard a lot of complaints, people saying that it was not really where it

went — even profs were complaining."

The Concordia incidental fee was adopted by the university's board of governors in June 1986. Called the "academic materials fee", it was set at \$3.50 a credit and was to cover the costs of class handouts, photocopies and audio-visual, computer and lab equipment.

"It makes things a lot clearer to understand if you look at the evolution of the fee," said Karen Takacs, former co-president of the Concordia student council.

"Initially, it was called the 'academic excellence fee'," Takacs said. "When it was not possible to use that, the administration linked the fee to student services and called it a service fee; then, they got word from the government that they could not do that. They were only allowed to charge for class materials. So they called it 'academic materials fee'."

"At no time did the (university) budget reflect that additional money was to be spent on course materials," Takacs said. "The fee was just designed to go toward the school deficit."

Concordia administrators, however, were happy about the outcome of the court cases.

"The calendar states that the university reserves the right to change the scale of fees," said Concordia

official Lucie Beauchemin. "The university demonstrated good faith in informing students of the decision taken."

Takacs said that the timing of the fee could not have been worse for students.

"They informed students with a letter in September, which was after the date students had to pay their fees," she said. "They weren't exactly acting in good faith: they passed the fee in June then waited till the fall to ask students for up to \$100 at a time when they have to buy school books and pay the rent."

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