

# NEWS

News Editor: Jonathan Stone, Deadline: Wednesday Noon

## Minister outlines changes in Education Degree program

by Karen Burgess

Changes being made in the university's Bachelor of Education program will put UNB's grads in "very good shape" in regards to a new teacher certification program proposed this week by the provincial government, said Dean of Education Laverne Smith.

Starting next September, students taking Education can enroll in the program after a first degree, or complete a BEd concurrently with another degree, finishing in five years. Under the new proposal, new teachers entering the education system must have a minimum of two degrees.

Smith says she thinks the government's initiative to revise the certification process undergone by the province's teachers is a good idea in principle, but said she wished to reserve further comment on the specifics of the proposal until she had time to study it in more detail.

She has been asked to make recommendations to the government on the feasibility and structuring of the proposed system, which would see teachers certified at three levels, and recertified every five years pending evaluations. The proposal would also see changes made to the process through which new teachers can attain permanent employment within the province.

Education Minister Paul Duffie explained that New Brunswick, like other provinces in Canada, has been considering revisions to the certification of its teachers for some time, and that the discussion paper released this week is part of the ongoing Excellence In Education initiative.

Currently, teachers are placed in one of six categories, depending on their level of academic training and experience. The first three categories, however, are largely defunct as they apply to certificates received at the now inoperative Teacher's College. The fourth, fifth and sixth levels of certification are given to teachers with university degrees, with the highest level being attained by those who hold Master's degrees.

If the government's proposal is implemented, Master's degrees will be required for all but the first level of certification.

A Certificate I or Beginning Teacher will need to have two degrees from an accredited university. After graduation, teachers cannot be hired on a permanent basis until they undergo an induction year wherein they would be evaluated on their work within the education system.

"What would be immediately (students) concern is that under the Excellence in Education initiative—the Downey-Landry report—they have suggested that we have an induction year. What happens now, when you've got your degree and your practice teaching, now you get

your certification and go out and try to get hired. This wouldn't happen any more under this proposal," explained Duffie.

"First of all, you've got your induction year, and that would mean you'd be on a probationary period. After you've done your evaluation period, and you pass your education degree, the school system would have one more year to really examine you under teaching conditions, monitored by other teachers, evaluated by the system. If you successfully complete that then you get your first level of certification."

A Certificate II or Accredited Teacher must have a Master's degree, and a Senior Teacher will have to have a Master's degree, a minimum of 10 years experience, and must have demonstrated educational leadership and exceptional teaching ability. It is expected that only about 10 per cent of the teachers certified will reach the Certificate III standing. Teachers wishing to achieve a higher certification level must obtain academic upgrading on their own time, taking a leave of absence or sabbatical to complete a Master's program.

Duffie believes that each certificate will likely have several subdivisions for salaries and contractual terms and conditions, but he stresses that these details will all have to be worked out through negotiations with the province's teachers.

The minister feels that the main point of contention in the certification debate will be the government's proposed recertification program under which teachers must be re-evaluated every five years to maintain their certification level. This is to ensure that the professional development of teachers is ongoing throughout their careers, he explained.

"The major issue here when it comes down to it is recertification. The fact that you become a teacher, does that mean there's nothing else you have to do to maintain that certification? That will be the subject of debate," said Duffie.

"The argument of teachers will be 'well, that's a tough deal. How are you going to do it because nobody's found an instrument to determine who's a good teacher and who's not a good teacher?' That will be the challenge. Recertification—do we do it at all, is there merit to it, is there an objective way, do we simply say you must do (a certain number of hours) of professional development every five years?"

Duffie says his government knows that most teachers are highly professional, and continue to maintain high standards throughout their careers. In light of this, he says, teachers should be able to reap some reward for high levels of commitment to educational and professional upgrading. He admits, how-

ever that the proposal could not be applied to teachers currently holding jobs in the province, and that a transitional period of implementation will likely be part of the final package after negotiations with the teachers and their representatives.

"It appears to me that there's a mixed bag here that this policy could not just be brought in and say that it applies to everybody overnight. I can appreciate some of the older teachers not even wanting to take advantage of this, because I think when this is all banged down there may be some advantages to this," he said.

"We want this to be good for teachers at the end of the day, and yes, good for the students and for the quality of teaching in the long-term because there are safeguards or checks and balances to a certain extent, without making it offensive to teachers, without making it draconian as they are arguing now. We can make this a very fair reasonable process of how you become a teacher, how you maintain your status as a teacher."

Duffie says that a revised version of the proposal should be ready by early April, and will then be subject to negotiations with New Brunswick's teachers. The discussion paper had to be compiled to stimulate discussion before any consultation could be made with the teachers, said Duffie, who explained that the move was not intended to be seen as "policy by ambush."

"That's why the document is out there, for consultation. It's a little complex here, when we try to define the principle, plug in all the terms and conditions and all that. Just imagine, if you had to sit down with the people it really affects—the teachers—and agree on a consultation document, that could take years to do," he said. "Now we're prepared to meet with them night and day or whatever the deal would be to discuss this issue. So there will be full input."

Duffie admitted that changes would have to be made in the terminology and specifics of the report. Continuing to classify a teacher with two degrees and 15 years experience as a beginning teacher for his or her career solely on the basis that the individual doesn't have a Master's degree, for instance, "is not right," he commented.

He stressed that teachers currently teaching will not be subject to salary cuts or layoffs because of the proposal.

"The steps achieved under the present collective process would have to be respected, there's no question about that. We cannot go and impose new rules on people now and go 'Aha! You don't have this so we're going to shut you down, or go home.' That's not the objective here."

## Students hold Law Week

by Melanie Messer

UNB's Law Faculty held its annual Law Week March 14 to 18. This year's theme was "Perceptions of the Justice System."

The event, organized by a committee of 80 students from the faculty, involved seminars, speeches, and activities geared toward aiding students, faculty and the public in their exploration of the legal system and some of the present perceptions that people have of it.

The week began with two presentations by members of the legal community. Judge Graydon Nicholas of Woodstock, a former student of the law school, spoke about "Aboriginal Justice for the Future" in the morning session.

During the evening, Alan Reid, a member of the Ottawa Law Firm Gowling, Strathy & Henderson, gave a talk entitled, "Lawyers: Problem Solvers or Part of the Problem?"

Cecilia Johnstone, President of the Canadian Bar Association, was also one of the guest speakers. She spoke about perceptions of the Jus-

tice System and challenged students to work toward promoting a more favourable perception on the part of the public through accountability and accessibility as lawyers.

Tuesday through Thursday were just as event-filled, with discussions and activities in keeping with the spirit of the event.

Members of the legal profession, media personalities, and other guests spoke to students on topics ranging from the media's perception of the Justice System, family violence and the Justice System, and civil disobedience and the environment.

Student involvement and response to the event has been quite praiseworthy according to Susan Gunter, co-chair of the organizing committee.

The week will conclude with the annual Harrison Shield Moot Court competition on Friday, March 18th at 7:00pm in Ludlow Hall, Room 2.

The points of law to be argued by UNB law students are consent in sexual assault and the mistake of misunderstanding consent.

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Daigle and second-year Council representative Linda Gionet want to be VP external.

In what could turn out to be the best race, Jacqueline McLean, current VP External, is being challenged by Harrington House Committee President Darren Priest and Harrington Representative John Desmond for VP Activities.

VP Finance could also prove to be interesting. It is a four-way race between Michael Allen, Treasurer of the Harrington House Committee, student Senator Tanya Clark, Aquinian Advertising Manager Darren McIntyre and Cynthia Rae Kenny.

Four hopefuls are vying for three off-campus representatives on Student Council.

Kari Burkhardt, Steven Morrison, current first-year representative Mary Kim Shriver, and Orientation '94 Chair Heather Smallwood have filed nomination papers.

Two other seats on council have been acclaimed by all.

Natasha LeBlanc will serve as second-year representative while Sally Cogswell will be third-year representative.

Terri Ensor, currently Finance Manager for *The Aquinian*, has been acclaimed as the newspaper's Editor-in-Chief for next year. Darren Priest has been acclaimed for a one-year term on the CHSR-FM Board of Directors.

Nominations were being accepted until late this week for the other seats on the CHSR-FM Board, and for mature student representative and Grad Class representative on the Student Council.

A five-way race is shaping up for Valedictorian of this spring's STU Graduating Class.

Harold Coughlan, Rachel Jones, William, McKibbin, Kelly Lamrock, current VP of the STU SU and Collen Moore, former VP Finance of the SU filed their nomination papers by the deadline.

