

National Briefs

McGILL STUDENTS VOTE IN FAVOUR OF STUDENT DAYCARE

TORONTO (CUP) — Not a lot of students cast ballots, but those who did voted overwhelmingly in favour of a student daycare at McGill University.

"I'm ecstatic," student union president Tara Newell said. "The daycare is one of my major projects for the year."

Just over 2,300 of eligible McGill students voted last week in favour of paying \$3 per semester to help fund the construction and maintenance of the centre. Four-hundred and twenty voted against the levy. Voter turnout was approximately 17 per cent.

McGill already has a daycare, but it is primarily used by faculty and staff. A university Senate advisory committee recently reported that 15 per cent of incoming students at McGill have children, and the present facilities are inadequate to meet demand.

While the student union executive was confident that students would vote in favour of the levy, there was concern that the necessary quorum of 2,000 voters would not be achieved. Part of that concern revolved around the fact that there were only eight polling stations across the entire campus.

But there was a last minute campaign, spearheaded by Lara Leigh-Wood, head of the Yes committee, to get the vote out. She spent the week prior to the referendum handing out fliers.

Newell stated before the referendum that getting a student daycare on the McGill campus was important to improve accessibility.

"It is a reflection of changing demographics and it is one step forward on the issues of accessibility in post-secondary education," she said.

The new daycare will cost parents \$5 per child per day. Its services will be designed to accommodate student-parents, who will be able to leave their children at the centre for either part of the day or a full day.

Though student funding for the centre has been secured, several more steps must be taken before the daycare becomes a reality.

A license and government funding must be secured, and staff must be hired and trained in consultation with the present daycare centre.

The referendum was held November 11 through 13.

MISQUOTE ANGERS STUDENT DEMONSTRATORS

VICTORIA (CUP) — Students at the University of Victoria are concerned about an erroneous newspaper account of a campus demonstration which reported that a student leader led 1,000 students in chanting death threats against the school's president.

A news article and editorial, both written by David Lennam, news editor of the Oak Bay News, reported November 12 that students shouted "Kill Dr. Strong" during a rally protesting the deteriorating quality of education at UVic.

The students were in fact chanting "Bill Dr. Strong" at the Nov. 5 protest.

"I think [Mr. Lennam] has an obligation to his readers to get the facts straight before he reports anything," said Anita Zaenker, the student leader named in the paper. "This is defamation of my character, and more importantly, the character of the [University of Victoria] Student's Society."

The story appeared after an estimated 400 students staged a noisy, but peaceful protest in front of the school's library. Students started chanting "Bill Dr. Strong" after fourth-year political science major Rebecca Whitley addressed the crowd.

Whitley told the crowd that six of the eight political science courses she had registered for over the summer had been cancelled in September and vowed that if she were forced to remain for another year at UVic she would "Bill Dr. Strong".

"The Oak Bay News interpretation of the story is very unfortunate as it distracts from the important issues the students were raising," said Bruce Kilpatrick, director of communications at UVic, alluding to the recent decline in post-secondary funding.

UVic president David Strong has accepted Zaenker's assurances that the protest was peaceful, according to Kilpatrick.

The UVic student union plans to register a complaint with the B.C. Press Council after consulting with their lawyer, says Zaenker.

While Lennam acknowledged concerns with the way he covered the story, he has refused to comment until officially contacted by the UVic student union.

MONTREAL LOSES BID FOR 2002 GAY GAMES

MONREAL (CUP) — Though Montreal lost its bid to host the Gay Games in 2002, organizers say they are proud of how the community came together to support the effort.

"We are disappointed, yes, but we are proud of the heterosexual community and their openness towards us," said Genevieve Paris, spokesperson for Montreal 2002, the organization preparing the bid. "All we want to do is open some doors, and I think we did."

The games will be going to Sydney, Australia in 2002. Toronto, Dallas and Long Beach were also vying to host the event.

The Sky pub in Montreal was filled to capacity Nov. 13, as both gay and straight supporters of the bid mingled in a frenzy awaiting the decision, which was announced via satellite from Denver, Colorado.

After Sydney was named the winning bid, the room fell silent. But people soon started applauding for the city down under and cheering, "La prochaine fois!"

Spirits rose even higher when Christian Bolduc, president of Montreal 2002, came over the loudspeaker from Denver, congratulating everyone for their efforts and swore that Montreal would get the games next time.

Paris echoed Bolduc's sentiments in a speech after the announcement. "This was the third time that Sydney put in their bid, and it was only Montreal's first," he said. "They have had time to improve. We haven't."

That's why we will try again."

Organizers worked almost three years on Montreal's bid for the Gay Games, and over 3,000 volunteers were enlisted to help out. The city was the runner-up to Sydney, and is in a good position to make a successful run at the Gay Games being held in 2006.

Over 12,000 athletes are expected to attend the Gay Games taking place next year in Amsterdam.

Mass protest over Bush degree

BY DORSA JABBARI AND
CARLA TONELLI

TORONTO (CUP) — About 1,000 protesters managed to make so much noise outside of the University of Toronto's honorary degree ceremony for former American president George Bush that it was impossible to ignore them indoors.

Guests for the ceremony were unable to get past protesters as pounding drums and flying snowballs accompanied their journey up the tightly secured walkway outside Hart House, the campus building where the event was held.

But authorities were prepared as one of the largest security forces U of T has ever seen, including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Metro and campus police forces and the American Secret Service, descended on the campus for Bush's visit.

Inside the ornate hall where the ceremony took place, the tone was congratulatory and affectionate beneath the crowd's din. Guests included Ontario premier Mike Harris and former Canadian prime minister Brian Mulroney. U of T benefactor and Barrick Gold CEO Peter Munk was also in attendance. Bush acts as special advisor to Barrick Gold's international advisory committee.

Over 30 faculty, dressed for the occasion in academic gowns, stood and walked out when Bush rose to receive his degree. The procession was led by world-renowned U of T scientist Ursula Franklin.

Bush took the stage reassuring the guests he was not upset.

"It doesn't bother me one single bit. Barbara walked out when I read her this speech last night," Bush joked.

"As for the people outside, it reminds me of happy hour at the Baghdad Ramada Inn," he laughed.

Bush added the protest was a kinder and gentler form of dissent than others he had witnessed — launching into a description of his role in bringing down communism, protecting freedom of speech and the right to protest for one and all.

He spoke about his role in ending the Cold War, telling stories about the huge phone bill he racked up talking to world leaders and his joy at seeing young people dancing on the Berlin wall.

Bush also had high praise for former Soviet Union leader Mikhail Gorbachev and former Canadian prime minister Brian Mulroney, before ending off with a brief mention of his upcoming book.

Outside, people did not find Bush quite so charming.

"I'm here to protest against this dishonourable degree," said philosophy professor James Robert Brown, adding that he would have cancelled his

classes if any had been scheduled during the protest. "This guy is a murderer. Had I been invited into the ceremony, I would have walked out. I applaud those who will walk out today."

"I'm disgusted with U of T and its decision to honour George Bush with this degree. It's such an obvious conflict of interest given his connections with Barrick Gold," said PhD student Ian Clarken. "It's no accident that Bush is receiving this degree. It plays right into...a relentless corporate agenda."

Jacob Glick, a student representative on the Governing Council, the body which ultimately decided to grant the degree to Bush, tore up his invitation on the steps of Hart House and started to eat it just before the ceremony began.

"I was chewing on it, but then I spat it out because it tasted like crap. It's ironic that it tastes like crap. Maybe that's how they made them. They're certainly tainted," he said.

To the east of Hart House,

speakers from a variety of student and community groups addressed the protestors while nearby, several students burned American flags.

"Everything the American flag stands for has been completely violated by George Bush," said second year philosophy student Matt Butler as he tried to get his lighter working to resume sending the Stars and Stripes up in flames.

A student from York University was detained by Metro Toronto police for an hour and a half after the protest for "possibly assaulting a police officer", but she was later released and no charges were laid. Another student was arrested at a store that the former president visited later in the day, but he too was released with no charges laid.

Protestors managed to block the executive limos trying to whisk dignitaries away for over 25 minutes, while others made their way to U of T president Prichard's residence where Bush dined that evening.

The Gazette.

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