



Focus needed in N.S. education goals

By OM KAMRA

THE RECENT STATEMENTS of the Minister of Education and the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission indicate an urgent need to inject into the discussion on university financing a focus on the goals to be achieved by Post Secondary Education. The short-sightedness of the MPHEC recommendations and government policy makes it apparent that goals are being ignored.

● **What are the goals for post-secondary education?** Nova Scotia Faculty believe the province should strive to ensure that a quality post-secondary education is available and accessible to all those who are qualified. We can justify such a goal on social and economic grounds, we also know that universities contribute to economic growth through the development and dissemination of knowledge and as centres for research. There is evidence that individuals with university training will have higher average salaries and substantially less risk of being unemployed. Post-secondary education is of benefit not only to the individual graduates but also has an even greater value to the community. The level of public benefit is such that support for higher education is a vital public policy objective for the province.

● **Can we assess Nova Scotia's record at meeting the need for education?** The proportion of Nova Scotians of "university age" attending university can be compared with the experience of other provinces and countries. Ontario's Bovey Commission found that 15.6 per cent of persons aged 18-24 in that province were attending university as full time students in 1983-84. The comparable "participation rate" for Nova Scotia was 14.7 per cent. By this measure, one thousand Nova Scotians are being denied the opportunity to attend university by current government policies on finance, access to universities and tuition fees.

Further tuition fee increases, such as those recommended by MPHEC, cannot encourage more of the people of this province to seek post-secondary education. Nova Scotia has already established notoriety for demanding the highest tuition in the country. In the view of Nova Scotia faculty, these fees are a barrier to those seeking to attend university and an inequitable burden on those who do.

Nova Scotia's universities have been forced to rely on tuition fees to make up for declining levels of government support. Student fees in Ontario cover 16.1 per cent of operating costs, while Saint Mary's, Mount Saint Vincent and

University College of Cape Breton already rely upon individual students for more than one-fifth of their operating income. In our view, the social and economic benefits of post-secondary education justify increased public support of the universities. Nova Scotia faculty believe the tuition fee barrier should be lowered to allow access to universities for more Nova Scotians.

In addition to financial barriers, there are problems of access due to distance. Where are the MPHEC or government proposals to apply the lessons learned at University College of Cape Breton to assist the people of Shelburne and Yarmouth counties to pursue higher education. These counties have participation rates of 9.3 and 6.0 per cent which must rate as a regional disparity worth addressing. It is time to turn attention to the task of expanding the post-secondary education system to meet the needs of the province.

● **Can we assess Nova Scotia's record on ensuring quality of post-secondary education?** The MPHEC claims that the equivalent of an entire university larger than Dalhousie has been added to the Maritime post-secondary education system in the five years 1979/80 to 1984/85. While over 8,600 students have been added, the additional physical and human resources of another university have not been provided. In fact, these extra students have been accommodated at the cost of over-crowding and deteriorating facilities. In Nova Scotia, over 4,500 more students are being served by faculty who continue to assert that laboratories, libraries and other facilities are inadequate to the demand. An increase has been evident in class sizes which is a continuing threat to the quality of education. The number of students per full time faculty member has grown 13.7 percent in that five year period.

The policies which have restrained support in the face of rising enrollment have eroded the quality of education. We can measure the extent of underfunding by examining the operating grants per student stated in "constant" dollars. This demonstrates that actual support per student has been declining in Nova Scotia since 1976/77.

Operating Grants to Universities per Full Time Equivalent Student (1981 \$)

Year	Grants (1981 \$)
1976/77	5,132
1977/78	5,120
1978/79	5,092
1979/80	5,023
1980/81	4,904
1981/82	4,869
1982/83	4,496
1983/84	4,273

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Human rights issue

To the editors,

Reactions to the recent visit of Dr. Henry Morgentaler were numerous in the March 28 *Gazette*. I would like to clarify and comment on a few points given in that issue.

First of all, in David Olie's review entitled "Morgentaler plans to move to Maritimes", the writer summed up the pro-lifers' protest in one very inaccurate statement. The rally did not contain "about 250 pro-life supporters" but rather, over 1000 pro-life individuals. This estimate was cited by various observers, including a patrolling policeman, the CBC, and the *Halifax Herald*. I might also add that this protest was peaceful, undaunted by jeers from the other side.

With regard to Gregory Hardy's letter, I would like to clarify the position of local pro-life members. We are opposed to violence and threats of any kind in the pro-life movement. Unfortunately, however, there are fanatical members within every movement who work to the detriment, rather than the good,

of their cause.

I would also like to respond to a few statements made by Kimberley Whitchurch in her article "A few choice words". She asks if pro-life people care about neglected, malnourished and abused children. The answer is 'yes'. Many pro-life supporters work in various occupations and volunteer organizations which promote the health and well-being of all human life. Certainly abortion is doing nothing to help neglected, malnourished and abused children. What is abortion if it is not the outright neglect of and abuse of the rights of unborn children?

Whitchurch also stated that men will never have to make the choice about their bodies, to have an abortion or not. No, men never will experience pregnancy directly, wanted or unwanted. But a pregnancy involves two expectant parents—a mother and a father. Where is the father's choice in the decision concerning his unborn child's future? The man who deserts the woman who is carrying his child is looked upon with scorn. But the man who wants to speak for his unborn child is told that it is not 'his body', therefore he has no rights.

It must be realized by all that abortion is not a woman's rights issue; it is a human rights issue.

Sincerely,
Frances Flinn

DSU shouldn't have sponsored Morgentaler visit

To the editors,

I understand that Tuesday evening's lecture by the infamous Dr. Morgentaler was sponsored by the Dalhousie Student Union. In the interests of impartiality, are they now going to sponsor a talk by a pro-life advocate? I doubt it. Yet the student union is supposed to represent the viewpoints of all the students.

If I were a full-time student, having paid student union fees and helped to elect a representative, I would object to sponsorship of this kind of meeting, supposedly on my behalf, without my view also being represented.

As a former student, I can only hope the biased presentation was not an attempt to shape student opinion.

Yours truly,
Charmaine Wood