

cross-canada briefs

Universities sell out

BY SARAH SCHMIDT

TORONTO (CUP) — Private executive MBA programs operating out of Canadian universities threaten the future of public post-secondary institutions, say education policy analysts.

Executive Masters of Business Administration (MBA) programs, currently offered at 12 Canadian universities, charge students the full cost of the program, and are designed to make a profit.

The price of the programs range from \$23,500 for a one-year science and technology MBA from Queen's University, to \$60,000 US for McGill University's 12-week international MBA.

"Governments are no longer able to fund us. It becomes the institution's responsibility to find ways to make money to allow it to happen," said Joseph Macdonald, coordinator of Dalhousie University's financial services MBA.

Brad Lavigne, national chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students, says corporations which sustain these programs should help finance our post-secondary institutions, but through the tax system.

While Royal Bank and Alcan Aluminum are currently paying for nearly 10 of their employees to take McGill's program, the former owes the government almost a \$1 billion US in deferred taxes and the latter paid no income tax on profits of \$63 million in 1992.

Ed Finn, research associate for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, says it is the private sector's direct involvement in these programs which is the greatest threat to a quality education.

"I can't conceive of balanced instruction from banking institutions on monetary policies. I'd be very surprised if it wasn't providing self-serving positions on these subjects," said Finn with reference to the partnership Dalhousie University has with the Institute of Canadian Bankers to offer a specialized MBA course.

McActivists take on McDonald's

BY SHELLEY COMER

LONDON, ENGLAND (CUP) — Using civil court as their soapbox, two unemployed English activists are calling for the abolition of the right of multinational corporations to be able to sue for libel.

Affectionately known as "The McLibel Two," Helen Steel and Dave Morris are being sued by McDonald's for defamation.

McDonald's is suing Steel, 31, and Morris, 42, over a leaflet allegedly produced in the mid-1980s by London Greenpeace, an activist group not associated with the larger Greenpeace U.K.

London Greenpeace, a small environmental protest group, distributed a leaflet called "What's Wrong with McDonald's: Everything They Don't Want You to Know". It claimed that the company sold food that could be linked to cancer or heart disease, and that it exploits its workers.

Morris and Steel say they cannot lose. McDonald's has admitted to hiring private detectives that entered the group's offices and took documents. They also helped distribute the leaflets in question in order to pass themselves off as sympathizers.

Queer scholarship at U of O

BY STEPHANIE POWER AND RACHEL FUREY

OTTAWA (CUP) — Although there aren't a lot of courses with queer content offered at the University of Ottawa, a scholarship will soon be available for U of O students who want to study issues affecting the gay and lesbian community.

The Lambda Foundation for Excellence, a national organization for the promotion of queer issues, is offering a \$1,000 scholarship for graduate students working in the area of lesbian and gay studies at the U of O. The scholarship will be open to all graduate students or university researchers who are undertaking research projects relating to gay and lesbian studies. The recipient doesn't have to be queer.

Jackie Henley, Student Federation co-commissioner for lesbian, gay and bisexual students is excited about the scholarship.

"[In undergraduate studies] gay and lesbian stuff is usually covered like women's issues," said Henley. "So they're relegated to a small section or chapter at the end of the course."

Gerald Wile of Lambda said that the scholarship may help to encourage more lesbian, gay and bisexual course content at the U of O but says the queer community at the U of O will be even more of a more driving factor.

"There has to be a demand for this," said Wile. "As with women's studies, which has now become part of most universities, this tends to be driven by a perceived social need to do it."

Grad council investigates firing

BY GINA STACK

The Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students has set up a review committee to investigate the dismissal of a former employee of the Grad House.

Mary Hamblin was dismissed in August because she is in the Law year of a joint MBA-LLB program.

The Grad House policy and regulations state that all employees must be graduate students currently registered with the Faculty of Graduate Studies at Dalhousie University and participating in studies in which the majority of courses are at the

graduate level.

Currently Hamblin is registered with the Faculty of Graduate Studies, but she is not taking any graduate level courses.

The Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students (DAGS) council has set up a committee to determine if students in a joint graduate-undergraduate program should still be considered graduate students by the Grad House in the years that they are taking undergraduate courses.

Students in joint programs can sit on the graduate council and pay fees to the graduate society regardless of the year of their program, but to date have been dis-

qualified from working in the Grad House.

The review committee, chaired by councillor Naomi Andjelic, will determine whether the Grad House acted appropriately in firing Mary Hamblin.

"Let's get our butts in gear," Andjelic said at DAGS' last council meeting.

"I feel kinda bad, but I'm not doing anything wrong," former Grad House manger Zdena Cerny said in reaction to the review committee.

"The staff agreement is there to protect me, and to protect you (DAGS councillors)," Cerny said to council.

Source of gas remains a mystery

BY ADEL ISKANDAR

University officials are no closer today to explaining what caused high carbon monoxide levels in the Student Union Building than they were five weeks ago.

More than a month has past since the gas leak in the Student Union Building (SUB), but officials are still puzzled by the astronomical levels of carbon monoxide (CO) reported in the basement of the SUB.

On September 30, the University Avenue Fire Station was called to the SUB after a Physical Plant and Planning worker noticed that the regulator on an acetylene cylinder was broken. Knowing that the gas was leaking, he immediately activated the fire alarm.

The SUB was evacuated, and a tactical five-unit, which deals with dangerous goods, entered the building to check gas levels.

The unit's meters detected a low acetylene reading, but revealed exceedingly high CO levels.

At the time, Fire Captain Ray Cannings said that CO levels in an isolated area near a kitchen storage room were 107 parts per million (ppm). This is an extremely high reading. People working in levels of CO as low as 30 ppm become disoriented and cannot function intellectually in less than eight hours.

Dr. Bill Louch, director of Environmental Health and Safety at Dalhousie, explained recently that there are three main sources of CO on campus. Carbon monoxide is found as a product of incomplete fuel combustion, it is used in labs, and it is released into the air as a byproduct of several exotic chemical reactions. Louch said the levels of CO found in the SUB could not be attributed to any of these sources.

With the aid of a series of concise diagrammatic representations, Dr. Louch demonstrated the possible scenarios by which the CO could have entered the building. The investigations indicated that there is no CO source in the ventilation systems that would

cause such an accumulation of the gas in the SUB. As well, the theory that a drift of air gusting into the SUB carried 107 ppm of CO from the exhaust of vehicles parked behind the building is not plausible.

For a week and a half after the incident, Dr. Louch monitored CO

levels in the SUB with his own equipment. He checked levels several times a day and found no trace of high CO readings.

Dr. Louch says that CO levels in the SUB are safe, but he cannot rationally explain the high readings reported by the fire department in September.

Dal and CUPE reach stalemate

BY GINA STACK

Part-time employees and teaching assistants at Dalhousie University want job security and better pay.

Members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) local 3912 have reached an impasse in their negotiations with Dalhousie to create a collective agreement.

CUPE 3912 was certified as a union in 1994. The union represents part-time workers and teaching assistants at Dalhousie, Saint Mary's University (SMU) and Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU).

For the past 13 months, the local has been negotiating with Dalhousie to create a collective agreement. About one month ago, negotiations reached a stalemate.

National representative for CUPE 3912, Kelly Murray, said that the union has applied to the provincial government's Department of Labour for a conciliation officer. The officer should be in place by tomorrow, and will meet with both sides separately to aid negotiations. Murray said that he hopes negotiations with Dalhousie will resume after these meetings.

Murray said job security is the most important issue for CUPE employees.

"Without a union contract in place, people are hired for a term,"

said Murray.

"They sign a contract and when it is over there is no guarantee they will be able to return to their job."

Murray said the local union would like part-time workers and teaching assistants to automatically be rehired if their job exists in the new school year.

Rate of pay is another important issue for the local. Presently, part-time professors at Dalhousie earn \$5,000 per full credit course. Murray said that part-time instructors across the country on average earn between \$8,000 and \$12,000 for the same amount of work.

"Any pay raise is important, but we are going for the Ontario average which is around \$8,500."

Because this will be the local's first collective agreement, there are a number of other issues that need to be dealt with.

"Other issues of importance are going to be benefits and pensions if possible...union securities, grievances," Murray said.

Andree Gillis, coordinator of faculty relations and contract administration, is representing Dalhousie in its negotiations with CUPE.

Gillis was not available for comment.

The union has yet to meet with officials from SMU and MSVU. Murray said that he expects negotiations to begin with the other two schools in a couple of weeks.