

CROSSCANADA

Visa students exploited

TORONTO (CUP)—A private firm may be exploiting international students at colleges and universities in Ontario.

In the past few weeks, advertisements have been found on bulletin boards at Toronto post-secondary institutions announcing the "Foreign Study Immigration Program".

Visa applicants who enrol in and complete the program are promised "100 per cent guaranteed success" in obtaining landed immigrant status, a claim that immigration officials say is utterly untrue.

The course, based at Seneca College, can take up to three years to complete, and can cost a student well over \$110,000.

The program is being offered by the Overseas Canadian Education Foundation (OCEF), run by director Kelly Sullivan.

OCEF's ads claim that with this program, visa students can "directly immigrate to Canada in as little as 10 weeks" and that "no business background is required."

These claims are apparently false.

According to Immigration Canada spokesperson Wendy Bontinen, applicants applying through the Business Immigration Program must have business experience as well as business skills.

"The Business Immigration Program stresses previous business experience as well as business skills," she said.

Also, direct immigration in 10 weeks is not likely. Under Canadian law, one must apply from a foreign country.

"I know of no immigration program where someone can apply from within Canada. There are some exceptions made on humanitarian and compassionate grounds, but these are not common," said Bontinen.

Bontinen also criticized private immigration programs for charging exorbitant amounts for information that can be obtained at no cost.

"To a Canadian citizen, it may seem a little high," said Sullivan, "but that's because they're used to paying \$2,000, \$3,000 per year in tuition. Visa students pay around \$10,000 for two-thirds of a year at colleges in Canada. Our tuition is only \$15,600 for a full year."

Sullivan failed to mention that OCEF also charges \$11,400 per year for business training fees and a \$28,400 fee for an "Immigration Package".

Tuition waiver unfair

TORONTO (CUP)—There are many benefits of having a parent work on campus. Not only can you see your mom at lunchtime, but tuition hikes and loan burdens are for other students to worry about — your tuition is free.

Well, not exactly free.

Unions on campus trade wages and other benefits, negotiated with the administration, so that employees' children can attend university tuition-free.

Sheldon Levy, a vice president of York University, said his university spends \$850,000 a year in tuition fee waivers.

Students aren't generally impressed.

"I think the benefit is unfair because most people do not have access to such a perk," said Tania Cologne, a first-year music major at York.

This year, out of approximately 50,000 York students, 732 used the waiver.

The fee waiver is one among many benefits sought by campus unions. It is negotiated no differently than, for example, a dental plan. Like many other benefits, it is taxable.

"Many of our current staff members take courses while employed," said Jim Streb, vice-president of the York University Staff Association, one of the many unions on campus. "They earn degrees that qualify them for higher positions."

Western says no to cuts

TORONTO (CUP)—Supporters of Western's graduate journalism school were jubilant when the university's board of governors unexpectedly voted to keep the school open.

"Pandemonium broke loose," said dean of journalism Peter Desbarats, "people started crying and screaming."

The University of Western Ontario board of governors met on Oct. 29 to debate a proposal to close the 48-year-old school. The highly charged debate on the issue ended with a dramatic final vote.

In a tight 13-12 decision, the board rejected the senate's recommendation to close the school.

The board meeting was the last chance for supporters of the school to defeat the proposal. A confirmation of the plan to close the school had been widely anticipated.

The decision not to accept the senate's recommendations is "quite unprecedented, as I know," said Desbarats.

During the debate, board members said they had the constitutional right to overturn the senate's decision, despite much skepticism on the subject.

Business will now continue as usual for the school of journalism. Since Desbarats' term is up, a new dean will be appointed.

As well, problems have arisen with applications for next year's enrollment, which are usually due at the end of September.

"In light of the decision, we will extend the deadline," said Desbarats, "although we already have close to one hundred applicants, with the most agonizing letters hoping the school would stay open."

The defeat of the proposal puts the future of the school on a solid foundation.

Canadian University Press (CUP) is a national organization made up of over 40 student papers from St. John's to Victoria. CUP enables student papers to exchange stories and ideas through the wire service, regional and national conferences. As a founding member of CUP, the Dalhousie Gazette makes sure that our university news becomes national news.

news



Nora Bednarski eyes the view from the bottom of the stairs at the Disabled Students' Advisor's office. PHOTO: MEG MURPHY

Dal flunks on disabled access

by Tamara Dinelle

You are in a mad rush to get to class. You whip up University Avenue, past the Student Union Building and head towards the front lawn of the university. After what seems like an eternity, you reach the Arts and Administration Building and bound up the stairs to get to class. Sound like a familiar situation?

However, for many of the disabled students at Dalhousie University, this scenario would end at the bottom of the stairs. Dalhousie's inaccessibility to disabled students has literally become a mounting problem. The architecture of many of the buildings on campus such as the Life Sciences Centre, and the age of buildings such as the Dunn and Chase buildings, are not favorable to the disabled community.

With only three fully wheelchair-accessible bathrooms, Dalhousie is hardly a model example of a fully accessible facility. While it is expensive (the cost of making a fully wheelchair-accessible bathroom is up to \$12,000) and unrealistic for the university to convert the entire campus overnight, one would expect the Administration to provide some services for the disabled and to make annual improve-

ments around campus.

In an ironic twist, the university has failed to provide these students with disabilities with a centre that is accessible to them. The office of Lynn Atwell, the Disabled Students' Advisor, which is located at 1394 Edward Street, is completely without wheelchair access, and with eight or nine steep stairs up to the front door, is completely inaccessible to students with physical disabilities.

The location, which also houses the International Students' Centre, has no sign marking it as a facility for disabled students. The house was allotted to the disabled students as a temporary location over three years ago, and has been the cause of much strife between them and the administration.

Nora Bednarski, a fourth-year bachelor of science student who uses a wheelchair, is the secretary for the Dal/Kings Association of Students With Disabilities (DKASD). She feels that there is a "lack of education towards students with disabilities" and that the "university has been completely insensitive in dealing with this matter."

In a November 8 press release on the subject of the Edward Street location, the DKASD stated that "the concept of having an office intended to

serve the needs of students with disabilities in an inaccessible building is absurd. This situation demonstrates Dalhousie's disrespect and insensitivity towards the dignity of students with disabilities."

The DKASD has talked to several people in the Administration, including President Howard Clark and Vice-President (Student Services) Eric McKee. Both have promised to do something about the location of the office.

The administration has considered relocating the office to where the Student Housing office is currently located, behind the bank machines on the main floor of the SUB. However, mediation between the DSU and Dalhousie administration over a myriad of issues, including the SUB, has put any such prospects on hold for the time being.

Bednarski and the DKASD do not feel that the mediation between the DSU and Dalhousie's administration is an excuse for their intolerable location. "The mediation has only been going on for a maximum period of six months," said Bednarski. "The office has been on Edward Street for more than three years. There is no excuse for this kind of treatment."

Where is Dalhousie's heart?

by Jen Horsey

Now you see it, now you don't.

The sign that loudly advertised the plight of Dalhousie's arts is no longer hanging on the outside of the Dalhousie Arts Centre.

University staff took the sign down Sunday, November 7. The Theatre department's construction and properties crews had installed the sign on October 27, to protest the proposed program cuts.

In September, President Howard Clark proposed closing Dalhousie's performing arts programs, besides recommending other cuts.

Bill Lord, Dalhousie's Director of Physical Plant and Planning, received a call on Friday afternoon from his supervisor Bryan Mason, Vice-President (Finance and Administration). Lord said the direction that he received from the President's office was to have his staff remove the sign from the Arts Centre "as soon as possible." The sign was taken down on Sunday morning because the storm on Saturday made working conditions unsafe, but Lord said it is not unusual for the

staff of the Physical Plant to work on weekends.

The Chair of the Theatre Department, Lynn Sorge, was not contacted prior to the removal of the sign, and was not aware that it was going to be taken down. Sorge said she was told that someone had contacted the Theatre Department about removing the sign, but insists this did not take place. "We had never been asked, never, by anyone," said Sorge.

Sorge defended the Theatre Department's installation of the sign, saying, "We see the President's recommendation to close theatre, costume studies and music as a public issue, so we felt we wanted to express ourselves publicly."

The wall has been used as advertising space in the past, and prior to this time there has been no objection to the use of the space. "It is quite obvious" said Sorge, "that it is the content of the sign, and not the sign itself, [that is the problem] since for the past four years we've had a sign in place."

Lord reasoned that "there was some concern that [the sign] was sending a conflicting message" and stated that

no permission had been sought by the Theatre Department to post it on the university property. Even though he agreed that "the wall is used regularly to advertise theatre productions," he said that "you'd have to be naive to believe that this sign has been seen in the same light as an ad for a play."

Concern has been expressed by the Theatre Department that certain freedoms are being infringed upon and that the removal of the sign is censorship. "Academic freedom is supposedly of paramount importance at this university," said Sorge. "If they come along and take down a sign like this, are they going to decide they don't like any other advertising we put up, and remove it?"

"I think the significant thing here is that it was the President's office who demanded that it be taken down" said Sorge.

Students are annoyed that their sign has been removed, but one, at least, sees a silver lining. André Davey, a first-year theatre student, said the removal means those opposing the cuts have touched a nerve.

"It shows that we're making an impact."