

U of T economist claims Tuition fees immaterial

TORONTO (CUP) — A new report commissioned by Ontario's universities says tuition fee hikes would not stop most people from attending university.

The study, written by University of Toronto economics professor David Stager, says the current method of funding post-secondary education — 80 per cent of university costs are paid by government grants — is regres-

sive, since lower-income Canadians end up subsidizing a largely middle and upper-class student body.

Stager's report advocates the so-called Australian model of student loans. That program, introduced just last year, allows students to pay their tuition costs up front.

Those who cannot pay, still attend. But after they graduate,

provided they earn at least \$22,000 Australian, they begin paying one to three per cent of taxable income per year until their tuition is repaid.

"There is very little sensitivity to tuition fees on the part of students," said Stager in an interview. "If it's been your lifelong objective to get a university education then a small boost won't affect most students."

The Ontario Federation of Students disagreed.

"They (tuition fees) are more important than any other cost because they represent the user cost, which people latch onto," said OFS official Duncan Ivson.

Paul Anisef, a sociologist at York University who specializes in education issues, worries that groups in society that are already under-represented in universities would be worse off if tuition fees went up significantly.

"A fee increase wouldn't hit all students the same way," Anisef said. He feels it may have a greater effect on women and ethnic minorities.

The study contends tuition is not the largest cost associated with going to university, but the amount of money a student would make if they went directly into the labour force after high school, is a student's largest cost.

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CUP BRIEFS

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OTTAWA (CUP) — When most students think of photocopying ripoffs, they think of machines that don't make change, or 25-cent copies.

But when textbook publishers think of it, they think of 428,000 more textbooks they could have sold, and more than six million hours of unpaid research.

Those statistics are conservative estimates of how much publishers lose to photocopying every year in Canada, according to Barbara Mendel. Mendel is associate director for the Canadian Book Publishers' Council, a trade association of 45 publishers accounting for most of Canada's book sales.

The statistics are also alarming, she says. The council, along with the Canadian Reprography Collective, are funding a national advertising campaign against illegal photocopying of post-secondary textbooks.

Mendel said the campaign was not necessarily aimed at all photocopies of copyright text, which is technically illegal.

"We realize there are certain practical problems students face, like limited access to textbooks, out-of-print texts, and so on," she said, "but we're hoping the ads will make people realize what they're doing, and make them do it less."

"It's a low sort of thing to do. It's a sort of theft, the exploitation of scholarship."

Mandel admits the practice is too widespread to halt altogether, but said her organization wants to arrange reproduction licenses with colleagues and universities.

"We're mostly opposed to people who buy textbooks, photocopy them, and return them the next day."

Academic joint venture

TORONTO (CUP) — University of Toronto business students could be sipping tea on the banks of the Thames if a proposal to open a business school in London gets the go-ahead.

Deans at the U of T and University of British Columbia business schools with Toronto entrepreneur Sam Blyth are finalizing the proposal for a joint venture before submitting it to both universities' governing bodies for approval.

Blyth said he is ready to invest approximately \$20 million in the project.

He said his company plans to buy the land, build the facility, operate the dormitories and handle the arrangements for North American students.

Blyth's company also operates a university campus in the south of France, in affiliation with Laurentian University in Sudbury.

"The universities involved have total autonomy concerning the academic portion, which means it's a joint venture in which we are effectively the landlord but the universities can do what they want with the academics," he said.

U of T and UBC students will get first crack at enrolling at the centre, and will pay Canadian tuition fees. Travel and housing will be extra.

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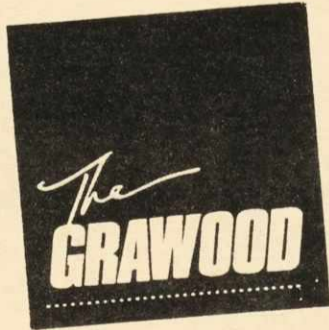
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