

Enrolments rising

TORONTO (CUP) — Faced with increasing enrolment, some Canadian universities are resorting to tighter admissions policies for first year students.

While overall enrolment has increased in Canada in the last year, the enrolment of first-year students dropped, according to a recent survey conducted by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada.

Total undergraduate enrolment increased 3.2 per cent across the country, according to the survey. This is a continuation of a growth trend experienced over the last decade.

The drop in first year admissions is the result of the increasing use of admission caps, quotas, limited growth policies and higher admissions requirements, mainly in the Atlantic and western provinces, according to AUCC policy analyst Robert Best.

Students may be staying longer or more of them may be returning to school, Best said.

"It may be that universities are retaining a larger number of students in second, third and fourth years," he said. "Some students may also be returning to finish their degrees. The low first year rates may only suggest how total enrolment will look in a few years."

Anne McKinnon, interim director of the Association of Atlantic Universities said a 45 per cent increase in enrolment in her region over the last 10 years has made some restrictions necessary.

Although total full-time undergraduate enrolment in the Atlantic region increased 5.1 per cent this year, first-year admissions went up only 3.8 per cent.

"It's a direct effect of the economic environment," she said. "We have a high level of unemployment here. Options for finding work are not as available as Ontario or central Canada."

Dye report slammed

OTTAWA (CUP) — The administrators of the Canada Student Loans Program got a tongue-lashing in the latest report on federal government spending, but student leaders say the auditor general missed the point.

Auditor General Ken Dye ripped into the Department of the Secretary of State for failing to deal with serious inefficiencies in the CSLP in his annual report, presented to Parliament Oct. 30.

One in six students default on their loans, according to the report, which urged the department to be "more aggressive" in tracing students who don't pay their loans back.

But the Canadian Federation of Students says the department should be spending its time trying to make Canada's colleges and universities more accessible, not tracking down students who can't cough up money they owe.

"Pointing out the default rates is good but we see the number of defaults as proof that the (loan) system isn't working," said Silvia Sioufi, a researcher for the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS).

She said the current program is confusing and should be simplified. Students aren't given enough information from banks and student aid offices and the 18-month grace period is not well-publicized, Sioufi added.

Women in science

VICTORIA (CUP) — Women are invisible both in numbers and name in the science community.

For example, most people know who David Suzuki is but virtually no one knows Hilda Ching.

Suzuki studied fruit flies. Ching is a parasitologist at Simon Fraser University and holds the Ruth Wynn Woodward Endowed Professor Chair for B.C. and the Yukon, one of five national chairs in science set up by the federal government.

"It's true women have been invisible in science," Ching said during an Oct. 16 lecture at the University of Victoria. "How many Canadian scientists can you name?"

In a recent survey of 2,000 adults conducted to determine the science literacy of Canadians, 64 per cent of the respondents couldn't name a Canadian scientist.

When respondents did come up with an answer, it was inevitably Suzuki.

"The only woman scientist many people can recall is Marie Curie and her daughter Irene, but there are other women scientists — some of them are Canadian, and some of them are alive and well."

In surveys, young well-educated men who had exposure to science are most science-literate.

Older women with poorer education scored lower, indicating a strong bias in science education against women.

Look ma, no gov't bucks!

New Micmac paper born

by Jeff Harrington

HALIFAX (CUP) — A new native newspaper is hot off the presses, two months after government funding cuts killed the Micmac News.

"We're going to try to make it pay for itself," said Rick Simon,

spective on the Micmac people — not easy to find in your average history book — and a summary of researched land claims. Three Micmac groups representing 80 per cent of Nova Scotia Micmacs plan to sue the provincial and federal governments over land claims early next year.

nancially. "If you want to sit around and wait for government funding and let that decide what's written, you're a fool."

Getting the first issue out was the easy part. Now he's finished as reporter, editor, circulation manager and layout artist for awhile,



editor of the monthly Micmac Nation News.

Simon is sending 4000 free copies to native communities in parts of Quebec and all four Atlantic provinces — "the territory of the Micmac nation." But if subscribers and advertisers don't support the paper, they may become collector's items.

Simon, a former reporter for the Micmac News, is pinning his hopes on "communication at the grass roots level" — and the community support he says the Micmac News never had.

The Micmac News published its final edition in September after losing three-quarters of its funding when the federal government axed native communications programs in February. Simon says its focus on political news cost it Micmacs' support when the funding crunch came.

"Micmac News was trying to become part of the mainstream media. We're trying to get back to the issues the mainstream media have no interest in," said Simon.

Simon hopes to recruit volunteer "stringers" in the communities, to provide local coverage and, so the theory goes, support.

It's cheap, and it seems to have worked at the Bear River Reserve in Nova Scotia. Chief Frank Meuse says a story from the reserve and three local photos in the first issue are a welcome change.

"I only saw a reporter (from the Micmac News) once or twice in the last three years," he said. "I presume each household will want a subscription."

The paper is also drawing on research done by the Confederacy of Mainland Micmacs, which funded the first issue, to provide overviews of native issues. The issue contains a historical per-

Simon, who advises the Confederacy on self-government, says a self-sufficient native newspaper makes sense editorially, if not fi-

it's time to sell, sell, sell: ads and subscriptions.

"If they don't support us, we're just barking up the wrong tree."

Group aiding accessibility

by Boris Nikolovsky

Seven students and two faculty members, who are considered visually impaired, are part of a volunteer program encouraging visually impaired people to pursue education.

Obtaining an education has often been difficult for the visually impaired. The high school system has been adapting to the needs of the visually impaired and so the doors to university have begun to open.

Meeting the special needs of the visually impaired takes money. But financial problems are not preventing the university from moving forward. A group of visually impaired students recently met with Eric Mckee of Student Services as part of the efforts to develop a long and short term program and will continue to meet in the future.

Achilla Orru, a student at Dalhousie, says it often "does not take much to make a huge difference." Marking elevator buttons, as done in the Administration building, would be very helpful in the S.U.B. and in the Killam Library.

Certain dangers could easily be removed to make campus life for the visually impaired more accessible. The advertising board between the elevators in the S.U.B., which hangs very low is poten-

tially dangerous when reaching for the button. The Dalhousie Student Union has been requested to resituate the board.

Lynn Atwell, Disabled Student Advisor at Dalhousie says, "there is much to be done, but the willingness is definitely there." Atwell notes that meeting the needs of students involves many people; the faculty, the students, the Killam Library and Physical Plant services, to name a few. Atwell adds, "so far everyone has been great."

In the short term, individuals like Lynn Atwell work individually with visually impaired students to ensure accessibility. Atwell coordinates volunteers who read and act as guides, and provide resources on an individual basis. But as the number of visually impaired students grow, so does the demand for help.

Thus far, the growing pressure has been met by the dedication of Atwell. Her efforts have helped the visually impaired students at Dalhousie to be more self-reliant in a visually oriented environment.

The students, however, still encounter barriers which they are struggling to overcome.

If anyone is interested in volunteering to act as a reader or guide, they may contact Lynn Atwell at 494-7077.