

NEWS

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SMT proposes 4.5% hike in bus fares

by Gordon Loane

Irving-owned SMT (Eastern) Limited wants to increase bus fares in New Brunswick by an average of 4.5 per cent. But the company's application faces opposition at a public hearing in Saint John late this month.

UNB Student Union Vice-President Tammy Yates says the New Brunswick Motor Carrier Board should turn down the application. "Students are the company's biggest customers, yet they get only a ten per cent discount on a return fare while seniors get a 25 per cent discount on one or two way tickets," Yates says this is not equitable.

"Furthermore, student loans have not been increased in two years. Students who depend on the bus cannot afford transportation cost increases in the middle of the school year, especially just before the March Break."

But a bus company official sees the situation a bit differently.

Aubrey Morrell says the company has not received a fare increase in two years, and terms the average 4.5 per cent increase "reasonable" under the circumstances.

Morrell says labour, general maintenance, and other costs have all increased and the company needs the revenue to keep pace. "The company cannot afford to discount student tickets like it does for seniors," he said. "Student travel peaks on Fridays and Sundays and SMT must put more buses and personnel on the road on weekends."

The company official says: "We guarantee every passenger a seat without reservations, so often the company must put more buses on the road on short notice."

"Senior's tend to travel throughout the week requiring little extra personnel and equipment other than what is scheduled," Morrell said.

Morrell says three years ago

the Motor Carrier Board agreed to allow the company to phase out student discounts. "The three years for the phase out are up but we've decided to retain a 10 per cent student discount anyway."

"We want to encourage students to travel on return tickets," he says. Morrell also pointed out that SMT is the only bus company in the region with student discounts. He says the Acadian bus line in Nova Scotia does not have a student discount.

In part, Student Union Vice-President Tammy Yates is skeptical. She says SMT should plan to put extra buses on the road to accommodate students and let their overall fares reflect the situation. "I'm sure they do," she says.

The company application contains rates calculated on a per mile basis for the first time. The fares would be calculated at 19 cents per mile for the first 150 miles and at 17 cents per mile

thereafter. Morrell says the company is trying to attract customers planning longer trips. "We're also trying to remain competitive and attract customers who might choose alternatives like airlines, via Rail or car rentals."

Meanwhile, the Secretary of the New Brunswick Motor Carrier Board, Douglas Saunders, says once the public hearing is completed January 28th it should take a few weeks before a decision is handed down.

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If the application is granted, Saunders says bus fare increases could take effect immediately in accordance with the bus company's request. For example, a one way fare from Fredericton to Moncton would cost \$23.50 if the proposed increase takes place. A one way fare from Fredericton to Newcastle would cost \$19.50. A student travelling one way would not receive a discount, similar to the company's current policy.



SMT is proposing a 4.5% increase in fares in New Brunswick. The proposal still has to go to the New Brunswick Motor Carrier Board. Mark Bray photo.

Four Canada Scholars honored at UNB Industrial Scholarships Program

(UNBPRI)

Two engineering and two science students at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton were honored recently through the Industrial Scholarships Program for Canada Scholars.

The five awards, designated for students working toward an undergraduate degree, are each valued at \$1,000. Their purpose is to foster excellence and innovation in the areas of natural science, engineering and related studies.

Scott Brown of Fredericton, a fourth-year electrical engineering student, was awarded two of the industrial prizes: the Sciex Inc. Award and the General Electric Award. Eight Sciex Inc. Awards are given nationally to students entering their last year of study. Criteria for this award are an outstanding academic record and a strong interest and ability in the design of high quality, creative instrumentation. Mr. Brown was also one of 10 national recipients of the General Electric Award. The winners of this award must

maintain excellent marks and possess a keen interest in and aptitude for process design and innovation.

The Nova Corporation Award was established in an effort to encourage the advancement of women in engineering. Lisa Thomas of Fredericton, a fourth-year mechanical engineering student, is this year's recipient. The scholarship is granted to 12 women in Canada who have an outstanding academic record and have demonstrated a commitment to helping make engineering an attractive profession for women.

Fourth-year science student Bao Tang of Fredericton was awarded the Her Royal Highness The Princess of Wales' Canada Scholarship in Biological Sciences. The program's objective is to promote excellence in the field of AIDS treatment and prevention research. Twenty of these prizes are awarded nationally to students entering their final year of study. Conditions for this award include demonstrating a commitment to AIDS treatment and prevention through courses, research or work with organizations involved with AIDS.

The Merck Frost Award was presented to third-year science student Peter Bance, also of Fredericton. These scholarships are awarded annually to 10 students in Canada who have outstanding abilities in chemistry and biochemistry. The recipients must be entering their second to last year, possess exceptional marks and have maintained first-class standing in all science courses.

All recipients of these industrial prizes must hold a Canada Scholarship, an award that provides \$2,000 per year and is renewable for up to three years.

UNB discontinues Bar Services on campus

by Erin Campbell

UNB's bar services has become the latest victim of the recession.

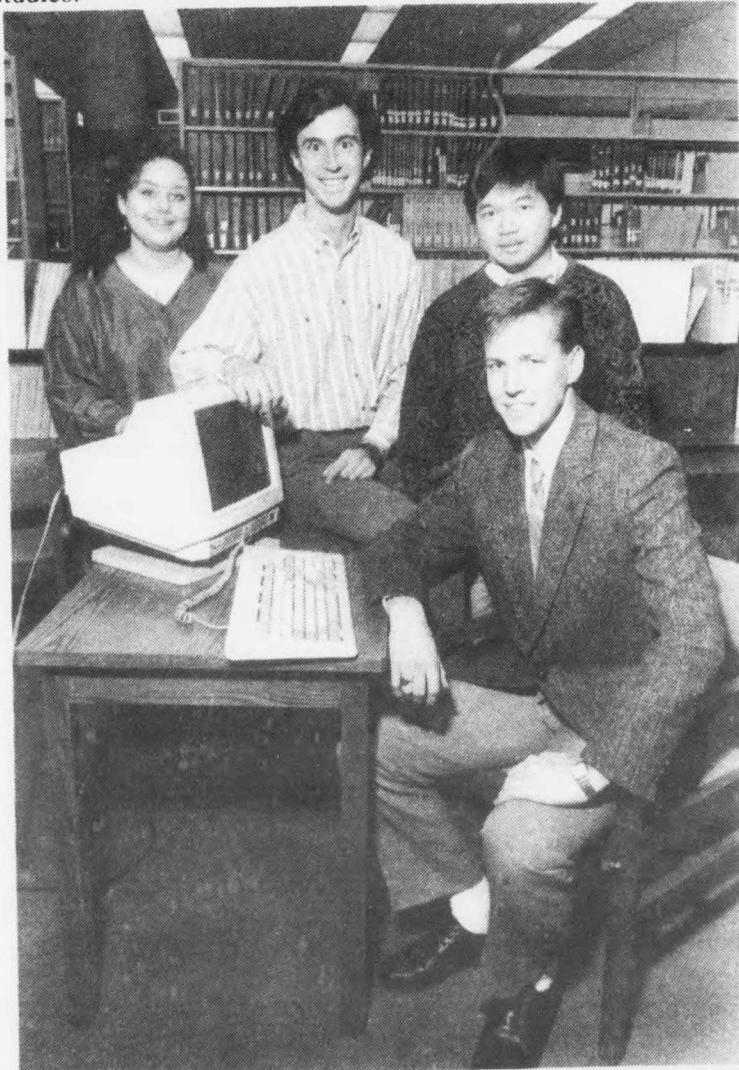
James O'Sullivan, Vice President (Finance and Administration) states that in order to simply "break even" in this scholastic year, the university "must look at everything it is doing". He adds that the decision to terminate the bar services was regretful. In accordance to UNB's by-laws, the employees were given a two month notice in December.

UNB has offered an elaborate bar service in over 100 locations, including the Pub in the Sub, for almost ten years. Although the bar service usually does not operate at a profit, O'Sullivan says it has become apparent that it will lose even more money this year. He attributes the loss of business to an increase of

competition in Fredericton and a decrease of spending on the part of students. He says that fewer organizations are using the operation this year.

Eric Burchill, foresees no difficulties for student organizations who wish to use the bar services for their activities. Although the university has no concrete plans for a new bar service, he is confident that one will be implemented in February. He states that the university is currently studying "a few different ideas".

O'Sullivan confirms that the university will continue to offer a bar service to the student population. He says that the university is now reviewing a number of options. He adds that the closure of the bar services has led to "an awkward situation".



Shown are students awarded Industrial Scholarships: standing (L-R) Lisa Thomas, Peter Bance, and Bao Tang; seated is Scott Brown. Joy Cummings-Dickinson photo.