

# U of T sex ed campaign debunks big penis myth

BY DORSA JABBARI

TORONTO (THE VARSITY) — In an attempt to rid the U of T campus of sexual myths and stereotypes a new sexual education campaign has left some students speechless, some shaking their heads and others cheering.

The first myth plastered around campus, 'The bigger the penis, the better the sex,' is adorned with a picture of the statue *David* by Michaelangelo. The second myth equates sex with intercourse.

The poster elaborates. "Having sex, making love, or fucking consists of more than just one act. Sex is about sensuality, feelings, closeness and touching...it's more than just one act."

Reaction to the campaign has been swift and varied.

A third year undergraduate at Victoria College says the campaign is intriguing.

"I really don't know what to say, but they are definitely very interesting — the approach is very out there. They are not at all conservative."

U of T community member Ebove Reinberghs says he disagrees that some of the statements are, in fact, myths.

"As far as I'm concerned, [the bigger the penis, the better the sex] is not a myth, it is a fact," he said, adding that he had nothing to worry about.

"I would not be offended because I don't have a small penis. The only people that would be, are the one's that are insecure about their size."

Humberto Carolo, one of the coordinators at the sex ed centre, says it is this attitude which makes the campaign so vital.

"It's still a wide misconception, especially among the younger generation of men, that the size of your penis is reflective of your masculinity," he said, adding that this particular myth is very

destructive because it has a lot of negative effects and leads to low self-esteem among men.

But Reinberghs remains firm on his position.

"As far as I'm concerned the myths are based on someone's opinions...a lot of women do prefer large penis', and that is a fact."

A second year history student says the campaign might have gone overboard.

"The posters are eye catching,

they definitely stand out," he said. "I find the posters very inappropriate, I could see a lot of people being offended by them."

But Carolo says the purpose of the campaign is to generate open discussion about sexuality. And the posters, in particular, are in response to

some of the questions raised by members of the U of T community who use the services at the sex-ed centre.

"In the past two years there has been a tremendous increase in penile surgery, and in a sense it has become the equivalent of the beauty myth

for men." Rana Kanaan, a recent graduate of U of T says all this talk about 'penis size and sex equals intercourse' just shows how male definitions and heterosexual assumptions underlie society's concept of sexuality.

"It is very immature to pinpoint sex as an act and not as an expression," she said, adding that she's glad the centre is challenging these misconceptions about sexuality.

*"Myths are based on someone's opinions... a lot of women do prefer large penis' and that is a fact."*

# Trade agreement up for discussion

BY JEREMY NELSON

WINNIPEG (CUP) — Canadians are finally going to get a chance to tell the federal government what they think of the controversial trade agreement it has been negotiating behind closed doors for the last two years.

For six days at the end of this month, a parliamentary subcommittee on international trade will hold hearings on the Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI), a treaty being negotiated by 29 countries. The MAI has been described by the World Trade Organizations as "the constitution of a single global economy."

If passed, the treaty would extend many new powers to corporations, including the rights to sue national governments and to move operations whenever and wherever they please. The MAI would also prohibit governments from passing labour or environmental laws deemed to be harmful to the business of a domestic or foreign corporation.

Canadians will get a total of 36 hours to present their views to the subcommittee before the hearings are closed and the presentations are taken under advisement.

Critics of the agreement say they are upset that the hearings will last just six days and take place only in Ottawa.

Yves Bajard, a Vancouver resident who has been trying to raise public awareness of the MAI says the introduction of the treaty is one of the most important developments Canadians will ever live through, and because of this, broad consultations are required.

"We need a series of cross-country public hearings," she said.

Terry Cottam, a student at Carleton University, adds that the government needs to clearly outline why it is negotiating the treaty. He does not think the hearing will achieve this.

"The hearings are a fishing expedition to help Minister [of International Trade Sergio] Marchi size up the opposition to the MAI," Cottam said. "[The government is] putting the

cart before the horse. They want us to argue against the proposal. Rather, the onus is on the government to properly defend its own proposal and do so across the country, so people can fairly challenge the government's defense."

To date, the federal government has refused to issue a formal position paper on the MAI and hasn't made copies of the draft text of the agreement available to citizens. The only copies of the agreement text available are those that have been leaked to the press out of the secret MAI negotiations in progress in Paris.

Liberal MP Bob Speller, chair of the subcommittee, says he is not concerned about the duration of the hearings or that they are only being held in Ottawa. He says the limited time frame is partly a result of the fact that negotiations on the treaty are nearing completion.

"Frankly, most groups that want to be represented [at the hearings] have a national group that will present their interest [in Ottawa]," he said.

Bajard says she finds Speller's rationale for the limited hearings

"offensive and disrespectful to the people of Canada."

"It shows his contempt for the democratic process," she said.

In lieu of government-sponsored hearings, activists in Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver plan to hold their own public hearings on the MAI.


Maude Barlow, chair of the 90,000-member Council of Canadians, says she fully supports the awareness-raising efforts of Bajard and other activists across the country and adds that Canadians can put a stop to deal if they try.

"If Canadians were to put their political hands on this thing and to realize that this is a terrible deal for us, I think we could start to reassert our democratic rights, not only in this area, but in several [other] areas as well."

"The MAI would take one more layer of democracy away from us. One more whole set of citizen rights would be removed from the political landscape. And we've lost too many already."

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