

Big bucks from Bell for two Ontario universities

BY MEG MURPHY

TORONTO (CUP) — The University of Toronto has announced receiving \$13.5-million in research and development funds from a division of Bell Canada before a written agreement of the deal has even been drafted.

"There is no mystery about the announcement's timing," said Heather Munroe-Blum, vice-president research and international relations at U of T.

"We just did it as soon as it was humanly possible."

Although Bell's board of directors has yet to okay the promised investment, Munroe-Blum says the university received a letter of intent Jan. 30.

Bell Emergius, a new division of Bell, will see a chain of research labs set up in its name at both U of T and the University of Waterloo, which is expecting \$9-million from the corporation. The labs will focus on developing breakthroughs in the computer industry. Both universities expect the cash to be delivered over a three-year period.

Administrators and business gurus alike are applauding the collaborations as a "win-win-win" situation. And they describe the partnership as cutting-edge because it is based around exploratory research, rather than specialized projects.

"We made the case that creating a new company with an R&D concept with an exploratory mission is the key to success in the future," Munroe-Blum said, adding the \$13.5-million for U of T will go towards faculty and administrative staff upgrades and lab enhancement.

She adds that U of T expects another promise of \$13.5-million in the near future, although Bell Emergius does not seem equally assured of this arrangement.

"I don't think there is an expectation of ties to another investment, whether it be \$13.5-million or zero," said Jeff McNamee, vice-president Bell Emergius.

Munroe-Blum also insists that the interests of Bell Emergius are completely in line with the university's

academic agenda.

"What makes this a strong and good partnership is that our academic and research interests converge. If there is a steering effect it is us to them, there is no concern that it is them to us," she said.

Academics say millions of dollars in funding is good news, but they would like to see the contract outlining what Bell receives in return. Few details are

currently available since it does not yet exist.

"This should go to the academic board [of the university's main governing body]," said Bill Bruneau, president of the Canadian Association of University Teachers. "It makes me nervous because we have a track record of universities, including the University of Toronto, who get into a secretive frame of mind and sign the deals only

to realize they made a big boo-boo and it should have gone to the academic board."

Munroe-Blum says the contract will be made publicly available once signed.

U of T will not release how much money it will be putting towards the initiative. But critics of this sort of arrangement claim the public ends up paying for the creation of research labs that benefit private interests.

York sociology professor Janice Newson, who has authored a book on the corporatization of universities, says the details of the deal are too sketchy to gauge what impact this deal may have on the public purse—but that it is worth pondering.

"[University] funding becomes a public subsidy of private business," she said. "It would be interesting to see the numbers."

Transgendered would be protected

BY BESS LOVEJOY

VICTORIA (CUP) — British Columbia could become the first province in Canada to recognize discrimination based on gender identity if a proposed amendment to the provincial Human Rights Code is approved.

The proposal — one of 11 recommendations made by the B.C. Human Rights Commission earlier this year — evolved from the Transgender Law Reform Project, which was sponsored by the B.C. Law Foundation.

According to the commission, the proposed amendment is meant to assist people — including transsexuals, transvestites, and people often mistaken for the opposite gender — who challenge what society considers "gender norms".

Deputy chief commissioner Harinder Mahil says the Human Rights Code is currently not specific enough

to sufficiently protect the rights of the group.

"Although we had accepted a case of a transgender person who had been discriminated against, none of the [existing parts of the Code] were really to the point... [I]t can be argued that they are not protected.

"If the recommendations are accepted, then B.C. will be the first jurisdiction in Canada to protect transsexuals and transgender people," Mahil said.

Nicolas Demers, a member of "Out on Campus", a gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender group at Simon Fraser University, supports the proposed amendment.

"I think it's the next logical step, after protecting against discrimination due to sex and sexual orientation," he said.

A spokesperson for the Vancouver-based Zenith Foundation, which represents transsexuals, says the group is also in favour of the amendment.

"It's something which is badly needed in order to bring a marginalized group of people up to speed with the rest of society. It's way overdue.

But not all members of B.C.'s queer community agree that the Human Rights Code needs to be amended.

"There are many more important...and universally relevant issues that need addressing before we waste time on [gender] appearance-oriented discrimination. Let's face it, in many careers your appearance is crucial to the industry, and therefore in many cases discrimination is justifiable whether we personally agree with it or not," said Logan Lundie, another member of "Out on Campus".

Other recommendations made by the Human Rights Commission for changes to the Code include prohibiting discrimination based on "social condition" — aimed at protecting the poor — and extending protection to people over 65.

Provincial Liberal human rights critic Jeff Plant opposes the amendments proposed by the commission. He says the timing is wrong.

"We just went through a very difficult and expensive reorganization of the commission... it would be better public policy to wait and see if that reorganization is working," he said.

Plant adds that the changes to the Code may be detrimental to business.

"If these changes were to be implemented, they would have an effect on business — hotels, restaurants, every business. I think that there is a general sense in the population that businesses are already over-regulated... Frankly, it's one more burden," he said.

But Mahil says proposed protections like the one afforded society's less fortunate are needed.

"There is quite a bit of poor-bashing going on in our society, and there is no expressed protection for the poor in the Human Rights Code," he said.

Crime book bill threatens research

BY STEPHANIE POWER

OTTAWA (CUP) — A University of Ottawa criminology professor says he fears that if a federal bill currently before the Senate passes, it may hinder his academic research.

Robert Gauthier teaches undergraduate classes at the University of Ottawa and is editor of the *Journal of Prisoners on Prison*, which publishes articles written by prisoners about prison life.

Gauthier says bill C-220 would allow the federal government to

seize the ownership and profits of articles in his journal and interfere with its publication.

"We're concerned that the copyright changes that are proposed in this bill would actually curtail our ability to publish the materials that we do," he said.

C-220 was introduced as a private member's bill by Liberal member Tom Wappell and passed unanimously by the House of Commons last September. The legislation would turn the copyright and earnings from anyone writing

about a crime of which they were convicted — or people who collaborate with them in the writing — over to the government.

Under the bill, the publication restrictions would be built into the sentences of people convicted of indictable crimes, Wappell says.

The bill was introduced, the MP says, so people like Paul Bernardo, Karla Homolka and Clifford Olson could not write books about their crimes and profit from them. Wappell added that the Canadian public supports the motivation behind the legislation.

"I think it goes against the fundamental values that we stand for in Canada to allow a person to commit a crime and then make money from it," he said.

Writers' groups have expressed opposition to the legislation.

Representatives of the Writers' Union of Canada and PEN Canada, when they appeared before the Senate Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs on Feb. 12, said the bill would violate Canadians' constitutional right to free speech and inhibit the writing of valuable literature.

They added that books like Michael Harris' *Justice Denied*, about Nova Scotia aboriginal Donald Marshall's wrongful conviction for

murder, or Globe and Mail journalist Kirk Makem's book which helped clear Guy Paul Morin of Ontario of his wrongful murder conviction, might never have been written if the bill had been in place.

But Wappell says although freedom of speech is a right, getting published is not.

"Who says there's a right to get published? This bill doesn't stop you from writing," Wappell said.

Gauthier says giving the federal government the power to seize copyright rights would interfere with a lot of the academic work done in criminology.

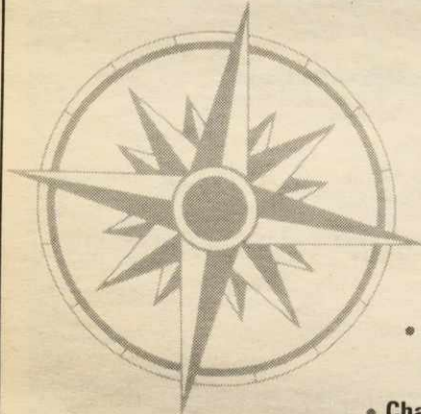
"How in the world can you talk about a criminal justice system when you leave out the understanding, the version of reality of one of the major players? That's just poor social science, let alone all the political ramifications of it," Gauthier said.

"If what we're doing is critiques of the state and you've just given the state copyright control, you've just said to me that the state can censor my work, my academic work, any time they want and I find that totally unacceptable," he said.

Gauthier says if the bill becomes law, he will initiate a Charter challenge against it. It is presently being considered by the Senate.

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