

Down with tuition

The Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission's (MPHEC) recent recommendation of increasing tuition fees according to the cost of living merits more concern than just another consumer-good price hike in our inflationary society.

Education is the cornerstone of a society; it is ironic the MPHEC would call for its further erosion to be tied to the cost of living.

Today's students are financially over-extended. They are further in debt and faced with bleaker job prospects than at any time in Canada's history. To expect that students would be willing to increase payment for an expensive undertaking that has become more and more questionable is a false perception of student realities. Shorter library hours, the loss of quality professors because of uncompetitive salaries, support staff strikes, and hidden xerox fees; combined with the increasing food and housing costs everyone has to pay, has made higher education a financially unappealing prospect. Students are unable, nor should they be obliged, to assume responsibility for these cutbacks.

That a person would be denied an education because of their lack of money should be unheard of in a democratic society. Research has shown there is a definite correlation between raising tuition fees and enrollment. Higher tuition limits accessibility to those who can afford it. Tuition to law school in New Jersey is \$8,000 a year; it would only make sense that the only people who become lawyers in that state are those who are from the higher social classes. A 1971 Canadian report states that, "whereas over one half of taxpayers had incomes less than \$5,000, only one quarter of the families attending university were at that level."

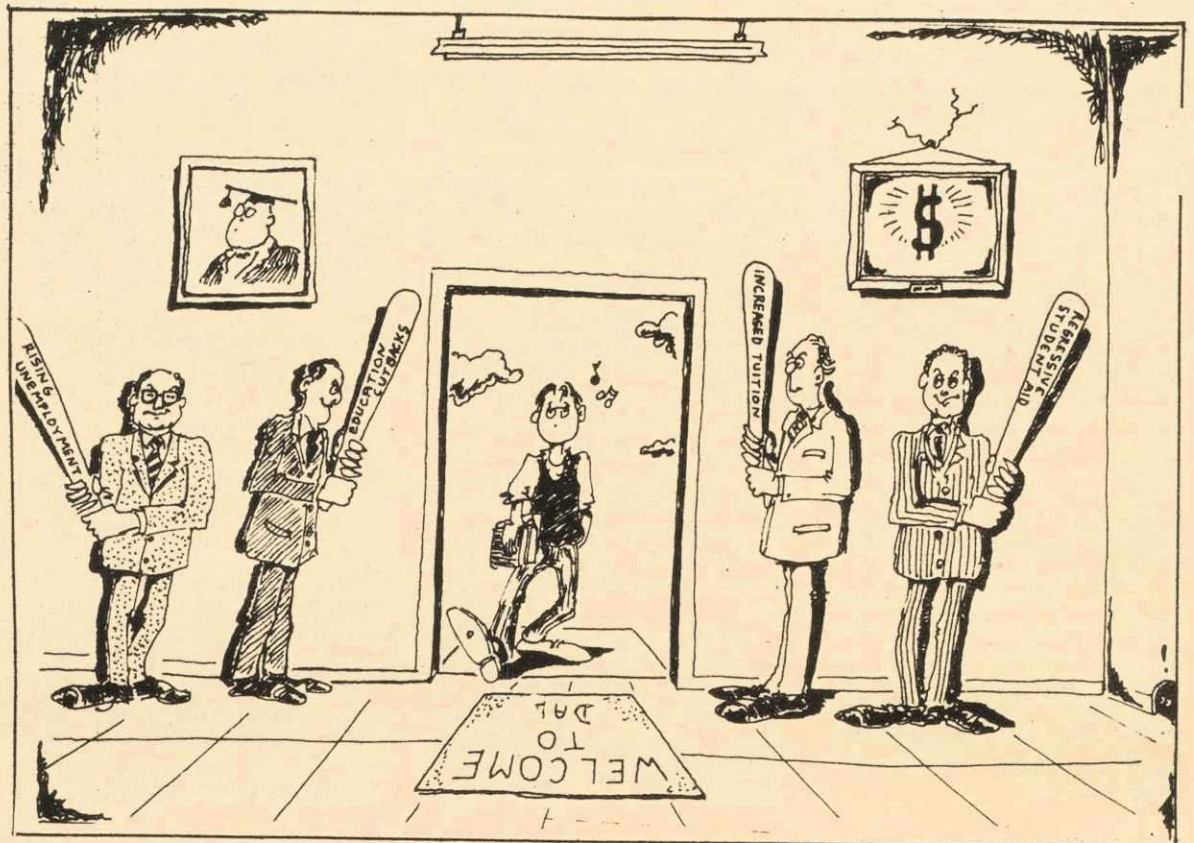
That government should fund post-secondary education is not shifting the burden on to the average taxpayer. At this point institutions are 80-90% publicly funded while not even half of Canadian families can afford to send their children to them because of the high ancillary costs. Removing tuition as a barrier would enable Canadians to use a service they are already paying for.

Some people argue that those who attend post-secondary institutions are the only ones who benefit from it so they should pay the costs. Others say that by raising tuition, enrollment would decrease and that would stop the problem of having so many unemployed Bachelor of Arts or Commerce types around.

High unemployment is the result of economic conditions and poor government policies, not the individual's level of education. Many economists argue that Canada needs more, not fewer, skilled workers. They say high unemployment results from inefficient organization of the economy. But education does more than provide skilled workers for industry. It also gives people the tools they need to understand and cope with today's complex problems such as unemployment, inflation, and urban renewal. Without this knowledge it is difficult to play an intelligent role in understanding the future.

Last year the MPHEC said education in the Maritimes was at the crossroads. But the cutback / stopgap measures that are being initiated now do not have any direction. It's time for those who are concerned with post-secondary education to face up to the problem squarely. The MPHEC, even with all the data needed to make this case, have turned the other cheek. Provincial and federal governments have historically refused to lead in the education field. Our student council has not shown any real interest.

In the coming weeks students will have to look among themselves to formulate and articulate a solid student position.



Letters

Disgusted with neutrality

To the Gazette,

We are writing in response to the decision by the Dalhousie Student Council to continue its position of neutrality with respect to the strike of CUPE Local 1392. We are shocked that the Student Council feels that it is in its best interest to remain uncommitted on this issue. It is important that students realize that the CUPE strike in a broader sense represents the

same struggles that we will be faced with as future members of the work force. More immediately, it represents the same frustrations that will be facing us in the form of tuition increases when (and if) we re-enter Dal next fall.

Cutbacks are going to be felt by all of us. Students are just as affected by the CUPE strike as the workers themselves and it is irresponsible for the Student Council to

declare itself detached from the entire situation.

It has been clear from day one, that Student Council's position has been purely political in reflecting and **condoning** the total apathy which has been so beautifully exemplified by the Dalhousie student population during the course of this strike.

Sincerely,
Cheryl L. Vicker
Leslie J. Chandler

Tree incident

To the Gazette

The article on CUP 41 is mis-leading and in need of clarification. You reported that a \$20,000 damage bond was requested after the Christmas tree incident. Partial pre-payment is always required at the beginning of any conference and as a result of an over-sight of the hotel management, the Edmonton Plaza did not ask for the money until the second day of the conference.

Yours truly,
Alan Adams
Leo Jacobs



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The deadline for advertising is the Friday noon preceding publication. Articles and letters are due Monday noon. No unsigned material will be accepted but anonymity may be granted on request. Letters should not exceed 500 words and must be typed on a 64 character line.

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