

Job program geared to private sector

by Neal Watson
and CUP News Services

Federal employees have three weeks to find companies and institutions to hire 12,000 students in the Montreal area, under the Canadian government's Challenge Defi '85 job creation program.

Under the program, Ottawa will pay 50 per cent — up to a total \$3 an hour — of a student's salary when they are hired by a company for the summer.

The program is geared to private sector job creation, but municipal governments may also apply for subsidies.

A non-profit corporation will

receive funds to cover 100 per cent of a student's salary, but "priority will be given to career-related jobs for students."

The federal program for student jobs was announced much later this year than last because the Tories "spent a lot of time studying the problem before they announced their program," said Richard Desrosiers, one of the supervisors of the Montreal Challenge '85 operation. The forms which every employer has to fill out only arrived last week. Last year the employers had more than twice the time to submit applications.

But Desrosiers says there will be

no problem because the bureaucrats will be working "nights, weekends," whatever it takes to make sure all the applications are in by Friday, Mar. 22.

They will have to. Desrosiers says the analysis time for each summer job application will be much shorter than last year. But promotional material promises priority for career-related jobs, and also guarantees the government will not fund a job which replaces a worker already laid off.

When first asked about streamlining and speeding up the analysis, Desrosiers said there will be "no consultation with local manpower." Later, when asked about verifying if students will take away jobs from full-time laid off employees, he said: "We will go through the local manpower office to check this does not happen."

Desrosiers said Challenge '85 has "sent representatives to each of the universities, working with the manpower services and student unions to make sure the program is a success."

Roland Morin, an employment counsellor at the U of A Canada Employment Centre in SUB, said there has been a good response to the program, particularly because of Challenge '85's career-related nature.

"The fact that the program is career-related and there is a good variety of positions has resulted in a

good response from students," said Morin.

Morin also said that almost twice the funds from last year's program had been committed to this year's Challenge program. The Liberals allocated 5.7 million dollars last summer and 12.7 million was committed by the federal Tories.

Morin indicated that the enthusiasm of response would determine if the program's April 1 deadline would be extended.

But Francois Desrosiers (no relation), Concordia University students' association vice-president external, who would have met with the representatives said no one came to Concordia.

"The government should have come around and explained the program," Desrosiers said. But they didn't. All I know is what I get from reading newspapers."

Martine Gagnon, McGill University student vice-president, said the federal representatives had not visited McGill either.

At Dawson College, a few Challenge '85 posters, looking like

promotion for a bake sale, have been posted on bulletin boards.

The head of Dawson's employment centre, who refused to give his name, said "it's a bit late admittedly — I hope they extend the deadline."

But he said he thinks many students will benefit from the program., two professors at Dawson, one in engineering and one in finance, have special deals and will be wrangling federal subsidies so students in their classes can get Challenge '85 jobs.

Students in other disciplines are less lucky. In most cases Challenge '85 officers are asking them to take the forms around to employers themselves, to get companies to sign up for the program.

On Mar. 12, 300 applications had come in. The office expects 5,000 by Mar. 22. But Desrosiers, the supervisor, looks on the bright side.

The fact that we've got a program to work with is much more advantageous than saying 'no, there's nothing for you this summer.'"

Fee hike hurts

HALIFAX (CUP) — Foreign students may have to drop out of Nova Scotia universities next year because of the latest provincial government

hike in differential fees, according to a student politician.

Alex Gigeroff, Dalhousie university student council president, says foreign students in the province already pay more than double the tuition fees paid by Canadian students and cannot bear the strain of a 29 per cent increase.

"This increase will make it more difficult for these students to attend Nova Scotian universities," says Gigeroff.

Foreign students will pay a differential fee of \$1,700, in addition to regular tuition fees next year, which are in the \$1,400 range.

Gigeroff said the province ignored a provincial education board recommendation to limit the increase to \$60.

"I don't think the provincial government realizes the harm the increase will cause international students," says Gigeroff. "There is already a decrease in the number of foreign students from poorer countries."

The move also drew sharp criticism from Tim Shaw, a Dalhousie African studies professor.

Said Shaw: "It is hypocritical for the provincial government to sympathise with the situation in Ethiopia and then do this to foreign students. This is discrimination against those who can least afford it."

"Are universities going to be self-financing on the backs of the Third World?" asks Shaw.

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