

Ontario universities may close by 1995-96

by Eric Whitmore

TORONTO(CUP) -- Two large Ontario universities will close by 1995-96 if current trends in provincial funding of post-secondary education continues, according to the province's advisory board on universities.

Ten years of the provincial government refusing to raise university operating grants to match the rate of inflation has made the system vulnerable, the Ontario Council on University Affairs says in a recent report.

Although OCUA has recommended that the province raise funding by up to eleven percent yearly, increases have usually been about seven to eight percent. The government last headed OCUA's suggestions in 1977-78.

Now, OCUA says, overcrowding, equipment deterioration, and reduction of course selections are reaching the breaking point. At the present rate of decline, for example, it says student/faculty ratios will reach twenty-to-one within five years, up from the ratio of fourteen-to-one that existed in 1977-78.

"The kinds of effects on quality cannot be sustained indefinitely," said Richard Cummins of OCUA. "We are optimistic this report will be better received. We know the report is

being read and listened to."

OCUA came to these conclusions after asking Ontario universities in the spring of 1990 to examine what the effect the government's funding policy of the 1980s would have if it continued into the 1990s.

Members of the university community agree with the OCUA's dismal projections.

"It's a devastating indictment," said University of Toronto president Rob Prichard.

"We have a crisis in 1991," said Jeffrey Keay, a York University administrator. "Without increased funding, eventually something must give."

For 10 years, donor support, privatization of academic programmes, property development and increased endowment levels have helped bring money into the university system, but they are no longer enough, said Keay.

Richard Criddle, vice president of administration at U of T, agreed.

"Sure there remain opportunities to better use resources, but commercial enterprises are having problems and we must expect some as well," he said. "These resources are not enough."

The OCUA report mentions the need for the government to

adopt longer range planning to deal with the funding crisis, instead of deciding funding on a year-by-year basis.

Although Bob Kanduth -- an official with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities -- said he had not yet read the report carefully enough to comment on it, he agreed that longer-range planning will be necessary this year.

"That's something that will

be attempted," he said.

But the fact that universities are low on the public's list of concerns means they are also low on politician's list of funding concerns, he added.

Even OCUA's most dire predictions may not be able to change this reality, Kanduth said. "Regrettably, university issues aren't the type of problems that are regularly talked about."

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New guide to obtaining divorce launched

Press Release

A Guide to Obtaining Your Own Divorce in New Brunswick has been launched by the New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

"This Guide will help people who otherwise could not afford a divorce," said Jeanne d'Arc Gaudet, Chairperson of the Advisory Council.

"It is only recommended for people whose divorce will be uncontested and who have been separated for at least a year. We know the level of poverty of women and children especially following a separation and we have witnessed an increased demand for such a guide. We believe it

will answer a need that is not being met."

The cost of a divorce using the Guide is estimated at between \$115 and \$200. The recommended minimum lawyer fee for an uncontested divorce in New Brunswick is \$600 and the Canadian average for an uncontested action is between \$1700 and \$1900.

The Guide, written by Moncton lawyer Ginette Theriault and funded by the New Brunswick Law Foundation, will be available for loan through all public libraries in New Brunswick. Some copies are available at \$10 from the Advisory Council office in Moncton. It is available in both official

languages.

Legal aid in divorce cases is only provided to poor persons who have been victims of physical or mental cruelty. Most divorce petitions are requested based on the separation of the spouses, without fault being attributed.

The Guide says, "You may prepare your own divorce proceeding if you can establish that there has been a breakdown of the marriage, you can serve the required documents on your spouse and you have settled the issues of child custody, support and division of marital property." The Guide also suggests when to abandon the do-it-yourself method and to consult a lawyer.

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