

New aid program urged

OTTAWA (CUP)—The National Union of Students (NUS) re-emphasized the need for an all bursary student aid program August 26 at a hearing with the Federal provincial task force on student assistance.

Representatives from the national student organization outlined their criticisms of the present system and presented their proposal for changes to it.

students.

For the coming academic year, Ontario's universities will increase their tuition levels by 7.5 per cent with the option to increase tuition a further 10 per cent if they so choose. Full use of the option will mean an increase of 22.5 per cent over the past two years, a much higher rate of increase than has been provided for in the provincial student assistance program.

the massive six-year study of Grade 12 graduates in Ontario is this: two in 10 people from the poorest quarter of society attend university while six in 10 from the richest quarter go to university.

Other important findings in the report were that urban youth use the post-secondary education system much more often than rural youth, and young women still tend to be pigeon-holed into traditional



Under an all bursary system, students would have access to post-secondary education regardless of their financial background, said NUS spokespersons.

Debbie Thiell, chairperson of the NUS central committee, said the present system of grants and loans reduced the participation of people of lower socio-economic levels.

A national bursary system would not cost more than the current system, according to NUS researcher Jeff Parr.

"We have done preliminary research and such a system is possible," said Parr.

NUS representatives said the present student aid does not reflect the actual needs of students. Lorraine Mitchell, Alberta member of the central committee, said the cost allowance for students must be standardized across the country.

"These are all important recommendations, the kind that are often overlooked, but now everything is pointing to the need for a further study of the real financial barriers to post-secondary education and their effect on accessibility," says Chris McKillop, of the Ontario Federation of Students.

Jeff Parr, of the National Union of Students, agrees that the Anisef report is a good start but adds that it was not undertaken to deal with the important issue of individual financing for university and college students.

"It's just not enough," says Parr. "For the real reasons behind these trends, you have to look at the barriers that the cost of post-secondary education place in front of the poor."

The Ontario College and University Faculty Association is another group that has long been on record calling for a comprehensive accessibility study dealing with both financial and psychological barriers to higher education. They also take the position that tuition levels should never rise unless there is an equal rise in financial assistance to poorer

"The Ontario ministry of education has given us a commitment to do further studies on the gaps that the Anisef report was not designed to deal with. We intend to keep the heat on this issue," says McKillop.

Education Minister Bette Stephenson gave the federation assurances last February that further studies would be undertaken, and McKillop is expecting further action from the ministry in the near future. In a recent statement, the ministry reaffirmed its intention to deal with the problems not covered in the Anisef report.

A good education is the key to landing a fulfilling job, and social background still affects the type of education that an individual is likely to receive.

These might not be earth shattering revelations, but before the release of the provincially sponsored Anisef report dealing with the work and educational destinations of Ontario youth, no statistical proof of the importance of these factors in the job market existed.

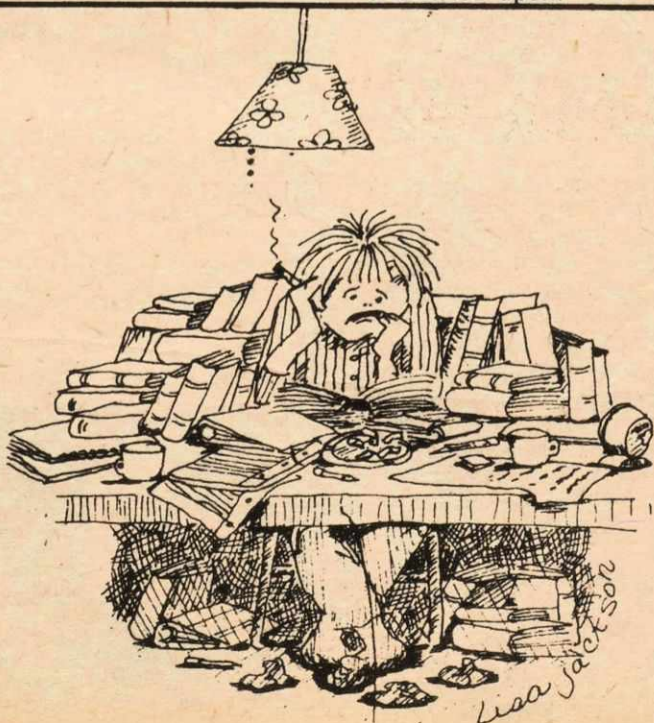
The most revealing figure in

occupations such as nursing, teaching and clerical work.

The report traces the origins of these trends back to early high school when the choice of programs is made in Grade 9, and it is at this important juncture that the report suggests changes to the system be made. The report recommends:

- bringing parents into the guidance system,
- co-ordinating secondary school programs more closely with those of post-secondary institutions,
- more publicity for student aid programs to enable poorer students to go to universities and colleges,
- broadening career opportunities for women through increased affirmative action programs to increase equality of use within the education system.

Reactions to the findings and sociological analysis of the report have generally been supportive, but a number of the province's educational lobby groups feel that more work still has to be done before the imbalanced use of our schools can be understood and acted upon.



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