

Differential fees harm or help UofA

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developed while my country is still developing. I would like to contribute to the development of my country", he said.

However, Okoro would like to see some provisions in the immigration regulations concerning the employment opportunity of foreign students and their spouses.

"My wife is a qualified nurse, but she can't work here because of immigration regulations. It's disheartening."

Permits are granted only if no qualified Canadians are available for the job which is a rare occurrence.

"In Nigeria, we don't discriminate. A Canadian student's wife can work if she's qualified", said Okoro.

During his undergraduate studies in the U.S., Okoro worked in a factory in the summer.

Allan also believes that the foreign students should be given the opportunity to work in Canada if they want to and are well qualified.

"I worked while I was studying in the U.S. and nobody even worried about it", said Allan.

"I believe that if the student and his or her spouse is permitted to work, there will be more positive feelings", Okoro said.

Okoro and his wife have two children. They live on Okoro's savings and his teaching assistantship salary.

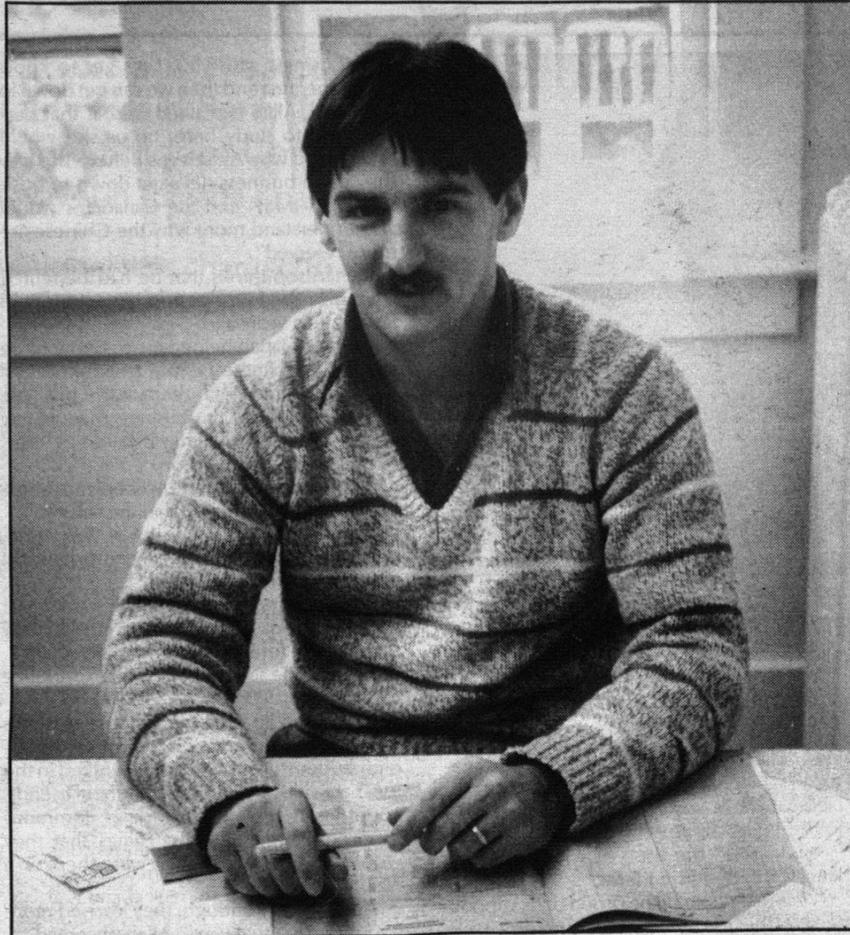
"If I want to revenge, which I don't, and have the authority to do so, I would probably say: 'No, don't give jobs to the Canadian students [in Nigeria] because when I was there, they did the same thing.' It certainly does not help both parties", Okoro said.

Allan cited the benefits of Canadian students who are able to work in order to get the necessary training during their studies.

"One of the benefits is Canada ends up with a better graduate".

"Unfortunately, we don't have the opportunity to get the necessary training", said Chan. He refers to the Co-operative Education Program in the Faculty of Engineering.

"In this program, a total of twenty months of paid work experience is inserted between the academic terms. These work terms are scheduled in the summer".



Barry Tonge "(W)e should pay (foreign students) for being here"

photo Tim Kubasi

Canadian Immigration rules preclude visa students from taking this program.

Otto raised another aspect of foreign students' employment in Canada.

"Even though we pay into the Canada Pension and Unemployment Insurance just like everyone else, we have no right to claim the benefit if we are out of work", said Otto who has a teaching assistantship.

Revenue Canada has also added a new rule requiring the foreign students to prove that 90 per cent of their global income is from Canadian sources in order to receive personal exemption on income tax.

"It's quite irritating and the income is small anyway", said Otto.

At present, 4 separate bodies within the federal government — Employment and

Immigration Canada, External Affairs Canada, CIDA and the Department of the Secretary of State — have mandates in the area of foreign student policy.

Constitutionally, education is a provincial responsibility, however, responsibility is blurred even in regard to Canadian students' education.

"This is a gray area", said Tonge.

"Provincial governments regard fee increases primarily as cost-recovery measures", said Randy Dawson, assistant to the Minister of Advanced Education, J.D. Johnston.

Canada has negotiated three major educational contracts with Venezuela, Libya and Nigeria. Two additional contracts have also been negotiated with Kenya and the People's Republic of China.

These contracts, known as contract placements, hold out the possibility of substantial economic benefit to Canada at a relatively low cost.

Contract placement is an arrangement between one country and another for the education of a large number of its students, usually on a full or partial cost-recovery basis.

As an example, the Nigerian government spends \$25 million over five years on fees, accommodation and other expenses in Canada.

Though their number might be small, foreign students certainly have created quite an impact on Canada. Their presence has generated mixed feelings among many Canadians.

"The bottom line is, I would like to see foreign students on campus and I think differential fee is not outrageous", Richardson concluded.

"Foreign students help to increase the status and influence of Canada in the world through personal contacts they make and the goodwill created by a receptive attitude toward their presence", said Tonge.

"We hope that together we can foster a spirit of trust and understanding among nations. By knowing each other better we could possibly help to decrease the international tensions and one day... perhaps we can all achieve international peace and security", Allan said.

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