

Booze means legal problems

by Rory McLean and Lynn Marchildon

WINDSOR (CUP) — As four Ontario universities face legal suits for alcohol-related deaths or injuries, students around the province are feeling the effects of tighter liquor controls on campuses.

Robert Solomon, a law professor at the University of Western Ontario said currently there are outstanding suits arising from campus alcohol policies against Wilfrid Laurier, Carleton and Western universities and Waterloo.

And he added there is only one thing keeping other universities out of alcohol-related liability suits: luck.

"It's just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the potential liability of universities," said Solomon who has travelled throughout Ontario speaking to university administrations and student councils on the legal aspects of campus alcohol policy and practice.

According to Solomon, Carleton University is being sued for a fatal

motorcycle accident involving a man returning from an outdoor concert held during Orientation festivities three years ago. Carleton's Liquor Operations Manager Gord Aiken said there is no proof the man was actually drinking at the concert.

Solomon said the University of Western is involved in a minor suit for not properly enforcing its campus alcohol policies.

Cathy Whyte, manager of the campus pub at the University of Waterloo, said the mother of a man who suffered an aneurysm while dancing at the pub is suing for "improper medical attention."

Whyte said the man hadn't been drinking. "He was stone cold sober but he was in a licenced establishment, therefore liability law says we're liable."

Another law suit is pending against the administration and student union at Wilfrid Laurier University, after one student was killed and three others injured in a rush for a school bus at an orientation event in the fall of 1985.

The possibility of being held liable for alcohol-related deaths or injuries is forcing the University of

Windsor pub to firmly enforce their policy of refusing to serve patrons who are at or beyond the point of intoxication.

David McMurray, the university's director of student services, said the university is "not suggesting you shouldn't drink," but is concerned about protecting the pub's liquor license and educating students in the appropriate way.

In addition to the stricter policy, University of Windsor pub staff were required to attend a four-hour course on alcohol awareness and supplied with a server's manual from the Addiction Research Foundation.

A handbook entitled "Appropriateness" is also being distributed to first-year students to make them aware of the programme.

McMurray said the program has a two-sided approach designed to educate students as to the risks and health aspects of alcohol consumption and to protect the university from liability.

Pub manager Chuck Blewett focuses on the legal aspect — recent legislation makes the licenced establishment liable for the safety of its customers. Intoxicated customers who injure themselves after leaving the pub could sue the waiter, the management, and the university.

Staff members have already started to refuse patrons, Blewett

said, and "if in the estimation of any staff member, a person will become intoxicated through further service, they will be denied that service but will be allowed to stay drinking pop or coffee until they are sober again."

Blewett said a student pub could close due to high liability costs, adding the servers, who are students themselves, could be fined,

Dr. Headroom, I presume

MONTREAL (CUP) — science students at McGill University may be watching videos instead of attending classes this term.

Unexpected increases of up to 80 percent in student enrollment forced the Political Science department to organise a system of "video instruction" to relieve overcrowded classrooms.

According to the plan, half of the students enrolled in a course would attend lectures while the other half would later watch videotapes of the class. Each group would rotate

every two or three weeks.

"I came to McGill to get a personalised service, not to watch TV," said first-year student David Heath. "It seems to me that I'm paying for a very expensive TV programme."

"Unfortunately, it's a negative trade-off that students must pay for low fees," said Professor Paul Noble, head of the Political Science department.

"Videotaping will act simply as a band-aid for wounds which we did not see," Noble said, adding that the measures are temporary.

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