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BRIEFS

University for the North

WINNEPEG (CUP) A university for native northerners may soon become a reality, but it won't be built in Tuktoyaktuk.

Chiefs of the 25 Indian bands in the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakinak (MKO) reaffirmed last month a commitment to build a university in Northern Manitoba.

"MKO has wanted a university for a long time," says MKO chair Rodney Spence, chief of Nelson House. He said a university might be built in Thompson, 800 km north of Winnipeg.

Chief Pascal Bihetty of the Nathias Colomb band in Pukatawagan says negotiations for the northern university began in July. He said a proposed feasibility study would determine how the university would best benefit the northern community. "We're talking about (either) a native-controlled university or a university open to everyone in the north," he said. "We will be working on the most popular proposal."

Bihetty said a university in the north is very important to native people. "Only some of our people can make it in the southern universities because of the high cost of living, the difference in the way of living, and being separated, often for the first time, from our families."

"Finding funding for the physical buildings actually scares a lot of people off," said Emma Jane Crate, student services director of the Cross Lake band. "Part of the feasibility study will be addressing IUN's mandate with hopes of incorporating their programs in our university."

While the feasibility study is hoped to take a thorough look at questions such as location, programming, funding and structure, some proponents of a northern Manitoba university are looking even further to the future.

"We need high school level teachers as well as doctors, lawyers and engineers," said Split Lake band councillor Larry Beady. The overall chances for native self-government, he said, would increase with a more educated people.

Governors back down

KAMLOOPS, B.C. (CUP) The Board of Governors of Cariboo College has decided to back down on a threat made six months ago to stop collecting student fees. Shortly following the unanimous Sept. 2 decision, college president Charles W. Brewster resigned.

The seven-member board, appointed by provincial cabinet, had threatened since March to stop collecting fees and make membership in the student association optional.

Student Council business manager Garry Osborne says the board was influenced by 20 letters of support written by other student councils, including those from Carleton, McGill and Memorial universities. The letter campaign, co-ordinated by the Canadian Federation of Students, "made a difference to us and the board," says Osborne. "We didn't feel we were working in a vacuum."

However instrumental the letters were in swaying the board, they appeared to have little effect on president Brewster. In response to a letter from a student union executive of the University of Saskatchewan, Brewster wrote, "Either you have been smoking funny cigarettes or you have been misinformed."

The case is not without precedent. At Memorial University in St. John's students 13 years ago occupied the administration building for 10 days when the then-president moved to stop collecting fees. The threat was dropped, and the president resigned shortly thereafter.

Divesting or Re-investing?

MONTREAL (CUP) Although McGill University voted to divest from South African companies almost a year ago, the university recently acquired stock in companies with South African interests.

Today McGill's apartheid-linked investments have only decreased by about 20 per cent. The university has also bought new stock in companies such as IBM, Seagram's and Noranda.

Guy Thompson, co-ordinator of the McGill South Africa committee, said the complications arose because the university's investment committee was not given a definitive list of corporations from which to divest until April. "The university is working on the premise that all companies are innocent until proven guilty, so that a company will not be checked until after the stock is purchased," Thompson says.

McGill has acquired 1200 new shares in Seagram's, which runs a separate South African sales and distribution network, 4500 more shares of IBM, which manufactures computer and office products in South Africa, and 30,000 shares in Noranda, which has extensive mining, smelter and pulp operations in South Africa.

Abbott Conway, vice-chair of the Committee to Advise on Matters of Social Responsibility, said divestment must be based on research. "Divestment could not be an irresponsible thing" he said.

Instead of relying on outside sources, Conway's committee wrote to each company asking for a list of their holdings, and approved or rejected them based on these findings.

The social responsibility committee will advise the investment committee to sell stock in unacceptable companies, although Board of Governors policy allows investment managers to not sell until it is "financially prudent."

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