

Atlantic universities need more government funding: report

BY AMANDA LABONTE

ST. JOHN'S (CUP) — A report released by two Atlantic asso-

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ciations is calling for increased government funding for the region's universities.

The report, called Our Universities: The Key to Atlantic Canada's Future, was a joint initiative between the Association of Atlantic Universities (AAU) and the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council.

Among other things, the report looks into the economic impact that students have on the region's economy, the relation between a university education and the unemployment rate, and the growing enrolment in Atlantic Canada's universities.

The report says universities are one of Atlantic Canada's greatest resources. It cites several benefits to having a university education including greater access to full-time rather than part-time employment.

The report also says a well-educated workforce is critical in a globally competitive environment.

While the necessity for more people to obtain a higher education has been growing, the report says funding from both the provincial and federal government has not been increasing with the need.

"Despite the demands being placed on our universities, the public resources which support them are increasingly constrained," said the report. "There are concerns that if this persists, the quality and availability of a university education in Atlantic Canada may suffer."

Anne Marie MacKinnon, the executive director of the AAU, says the report is meant to give an overview of what is happening in the region.

She says the association hopes to use the information in the report to support their case for more government support for universities.

"It's a baseline report, a good background information," she said. "There's nothing terribly new about it, but it will, I think, be useful to us when we use it to support our cause."

MacKinnon also says the report provides a good look at the advantages of having a university education.

Student lobby groups, such as the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Students (NLFS), have expressed their interest in the report, as it supports many of their

views concerning the importance of post-secondary education and their stance against government cutbacks.

Allison North, NLFS chairperson, says the report brings together different groups with an interest in university education including students, faculty and university administrators.

"I think that the most important thing that [the report] does is it ties together a lot of different interest groups, people who have stakes

in education at different levels and we've really been trying to break down those walls," she said.

While the report focuses on Atlantic Canada, North says the issues it addresses are not unique to Atlantic Canada. She says there's a lack of priority on post-secondary education that has created a national crisis.

"I think this is a universal issue, I think it's a national issue and things are as bad here as they are anywhere else," she said.

Dal charity drive

continued from page 1

graphic area.

The idea for SPUNC evolved after Giles and her sister Audrey, both actively involved in Cross Country, noticed a lack of sporting equipment during their time up North.

Problems such as this one occur less frequently in the southern areas of Canada.

"We live incredibly privileged lives and a small donation would brighten their futures," said Giles.

Giles says she first began to recognize the problems when she took her campers to a swim meet where she found that while children from larger communities jumped eagerly into the pool wearing their swimsuits and goggles. The kids Sarah was in charge of, however, wore t-shirts and shorts. Her participants stared at the unfamiliar goggles. Their efforts in the meet were severely hindered by their inadequate swimming attire. Even worse, they were embarrassed and one girl initially refused to compete.

Despite such setbacks the kids Sarah met were always "looking for new things to try and were nuts for sports."

The reason there's a lack of equipment is that modernization and computers were more of a priority in the North than recreation

supplies, like canoe paddles and volleyballs, so the children aren't exposed to different activities.

Giles has high hopes for the used sports gear, which she says will "expand [the children's] horizons."

The project has obtained the full support of the Dalhousie Athletics Department. Dalhousie will soon be paired with 1 of 3 towns in Nunavut.

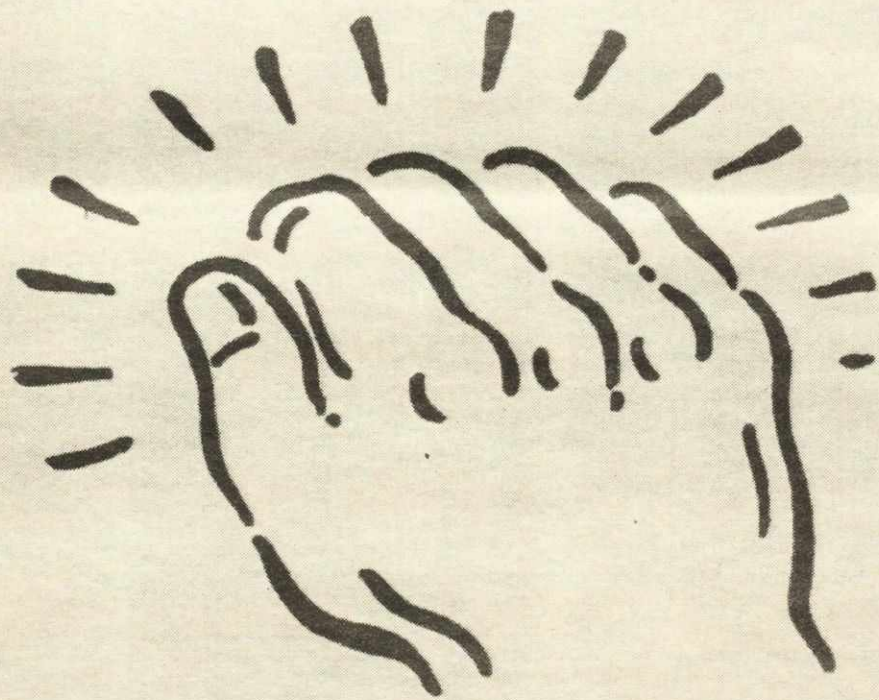
March 6-10, there will be collection boxes for new and used sporting material at Dalplex, Studley Gym and Memorial Arena. SPUNC is requesting that all varsity athletes, community groups, Dalplex members and university community members donate any equipment they no longer use.

The drive is timed to come after reading week so students can bring back any equipment from home.

Since the cost of shipping to the North is four times more expensive than anywhere else in Canada, the governments of the NWT and Nunavut, along with First Air and North-Wright Air have donated money.

SPUNC is looking for sources of transportation to their two jump-off points Montreal and Edmonton because of the expense.

Dalhousie is one of nine Canadian universities participating in SPUNC.



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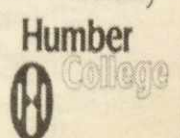
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