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FitzPatrick pleads not-guilty to fraud

GORDON LOANE
THE BRUNSWICKAN

Editor's Note: Pat FitzPatrick is a staff photographer for The Brunswickan.

A former Acting National Director of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations has been charged in provincial court in Fredericton with fraud under section 380(1)(a) of the Criminal Code of Canada. Pat FitzPatrick, 24, currently a student at UNB Fredericton, pleaded not guilty when he appeared before Judge G.W.N. Cockburn last Friday.

He elected to be tried by provincial court judge. A trial date has been set for September 8th, 1997.

If found guilty as charged, the maximum sentence that FitzPatrick may face is a term of imprisonment not exceeding 10 years as outlined in Section 380(1)(a) of the Criminal Code. The Criminal Code does not set a minimum sentence for fraud.

Fredericton Crown Prosecutor Kevin Connell, who is handling the case is offering no comment until the matter goes to trial.

FitzPatrick's lawyer, Daniel Watters, told The Brunswickan this week that he is professionally unable to discuss the case until trial.

The charge in provincial court is the latest chapter in a long saga that began fifteen months ago.

CASA officials say FitzPatrick was asked to leave the Ottawa office of the National Student lobby group in January 1996.

After conducting an internal investigation CASA members alleged that \$10,325 was unaccounted for in total.

Approximately \$8,100 of that is alleged by CASA members to have been associated with a Fredericton conference on Post-Secondary Education that had been slated for February 1996.

As Acting National Director of CASA, FitzPatrick was the chief organizer of the conference, which never took place.

FitzPatrick told The Brunswickan in October 1996 that the total amount in dispute for the Fredericton conference is more like \$7,000, not the \$8,100 that CASA officials allege.

Also part of the dispute has been about

\$2,000 in petty cash that CASA officials say was to be used to pay hotel and meal expenses for a National Board of Directors meeting that occurred in Ottawa in December 1995.

FitzPatrick disputes what CASA officials are saying, claiming that he paid the hotel bill in Ottawa in the early morning hours of December 24, 1995. "I know where the receipt for that one is, but no one has asked me, no one has talked to me," said FitzPatrick in an exclusive interview with The Brunswickan on October 4, 1996.

"CASA can dispute that money as much as they want, but the bills that were issued to us were paid the day we left for the Christmas Break after the meeting," FitzPatrick emphasized in the October interview.

CASA officials also allege FitzPatrick signed an unauthorized cheque for \$225 while at the Ottawa office. The cheque was subsequently cashed. For his part, FitzPatrick has said that a mistake may have occurred but that if it did it was someone else's. "This matter can be easily resolved should this thing ever go to court or come to an investigation," he said in October 1996.

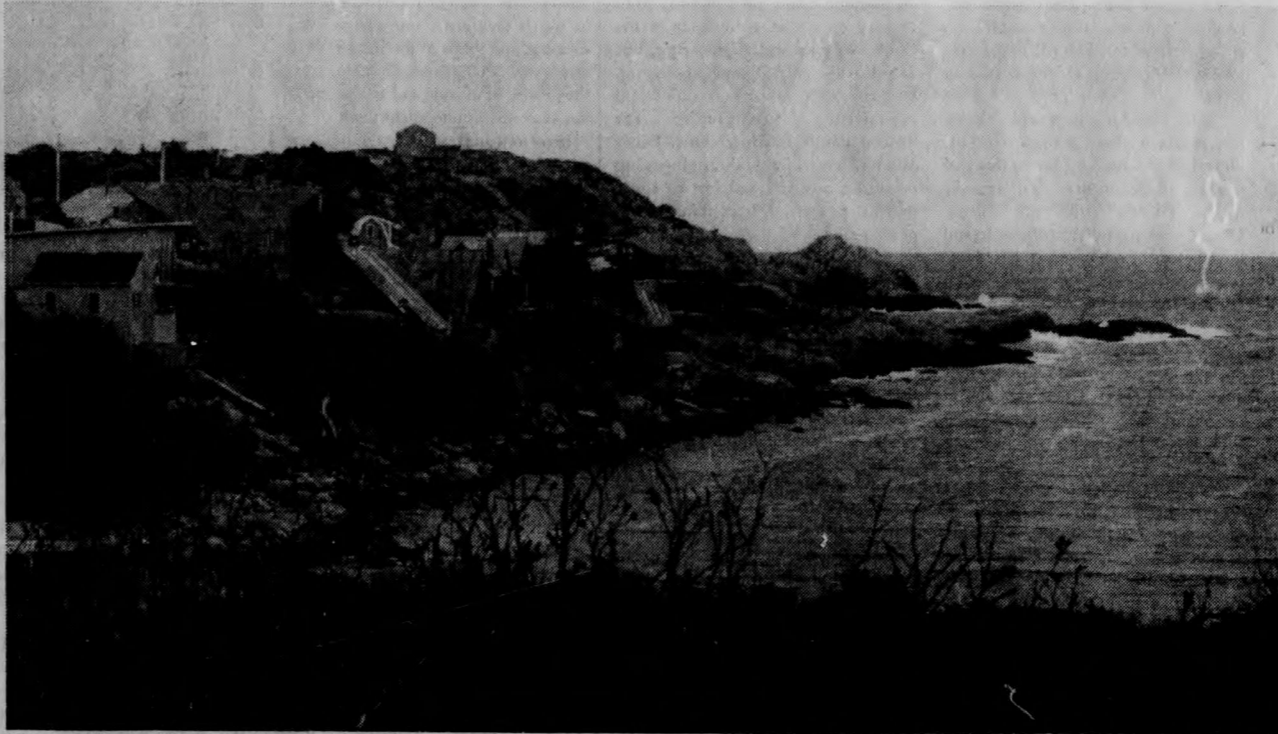
All of the CASA allegations sparked calls for an investigation that eventually wound up in the hands of the Fredericton City Police. After that, the file was turned over to the Fredericton Crown Prosecutor's Office.

The length of time it took for the Police investigation and a decision by the Crown Prosecutor's Office began to frustrate CASA National Director Matt Hough and the member Student Unions of CASA across Canada.

At a policy conference held last October in Fredericton, the eleven members of CASA in attendance, who represent over 150,000 students from universities across the country, including UNB (Fredericton), UNB (Saint John), and St. Thomas, issued a joint news release.

They demanded to know at that time why charges had not been laid by the Fredericton Crown Prosecutor.

Charges have now been laid and FitzPatrick will get his day in court on September 8th.



I know, this has nothing to do with any of the stories which appear on this page. However, our photo editor takes good photos, and I'm proud to put a picture of a beach on the front page, because, hey, it's the last issue, and here's hoping that we'll soon have scenes with no snow around here. JUDSON DELONG PHOTO

Per course fee would cause student aid problems

GORDON LOANE
THE BRUNSWICKAN

If UNB had decided to implement a per-course tuition fee structure this Fall, it would have caused real problems for officials at New Brunswick's Student Aid Branch, says Shawn Rouse, President of the New Brunswick Student Alliance.

"Right now the Student Aid Branch allocates funds not only to UNB students but all university students in the province based on a flat tuition fee and certain measurements of what it is going to cost a student to attend university for a year," Rouse said.

But a change from a flat tuition fee to a per-course fee would force student aid officials to do individual calculations for every single student based on how many courses they are

taking and what program they are in at UNB, according to Rouse.

"From what we have seen of the Student Aid Department and what officials themselves told us, they are not in any way prepared to take on that kind of challenge."

"They don't have the bureaucratic framework and their computer systems are at this time not able to compensate for the new system," Rouse said this week.

"So for the forty-two percent of students at UNB on Student Aid I think it would have been very hard for student aid officials to deliver on this," he said.

Rouse also thinks UNB officials made a wise move in putting off implementation of a per-course tuition fee, claiming extra fees will affect accessibility to post-secondary

education.

"It was formulated without any student representation which is an essential part of building university policy," Rouse said, in referring to the initial discussion paper released in January by the Task Force on Future Tuition Fees and Other Student Fee Policies.

Rouse also claims other universities in New Brunswick have faced similar provincial grant funding cuts as UNB.

"I don't think any of them is thinking of proposing such massive increases for next year as UNB was and none ever proposed distributing the fees for certain programs so unevenly," he said.

Still, Rouse feels students in New Brunswick and specifically at UNB, have probably not seen the end of per-course tuition fees or differential fees. Rouse claims there are two main

justifications for differential fees- it lowers the cost of programs and eases out the burden of programs that cost less than others and secondly it makes university more accessible.

On the first point, Rouse said UNB was proposing to hike the tuition fees for some programs but he did not see any talk of fees for other programs going down.

"We also know that the income generated by this proposal more than compensated for any cuts that UNB would have received from the provincial government," he said.

On the issue of accessibility Rouse doesn't think as much as a thousand dollar increase in tuition fees is proposed for certain Science students would have in any way aided in attracting and retaining students.

Student leaders relieved UNB delays per course fee

GORDON LOANE
THE BRUNSWICKAN

UNB Student Union Vice-President Anthony Knight believes the administration of New Brunswick's largest university has done the right thing in announcing that a proposed per-course tuition fee structure will not be implemented this Fall.

"The university listened to students, faculty and administrators by allowing a proper academic discussion to take place and not rushing the Task Force in presenting its report to UNB President Elizabeth Parr-Johnston," Knight said.

Students rallied together and let the decision makers know that there is strong opposition toward the proposed tuition fee structure and our administration listened," he said.

At the same time, Knight questioned whether the provincial operating grant cut of some \$1.7 million dollars to UNB in 1997-98 will be passed on to students in tuition fee increases for the second

year in a row.

Knight claims the university passed its provincial operating grant cut this year directly on to students in the form of an 8.8 percent increase in tuition last September.

Knight believes that by raising tuition both government and administrators are compromising accessibility to a post-secondary education.

Business Representative on Student Council and Student Senator Matt Hanrahan thinks the UNB administration needs to review the per-course fee system specifically and in depth before jumping into it too fast.

"In general, the per course fee could be a detriment to Business students who want to do a concentration or perhaps a double concentration," Hanrahan explained.

In the long run Hanrahan is hoping any tuition fee system adopted can be something more generalized rather than specific to some faculties or some departments.

He does not want to see a situation develop in which price would discourage students from pursuing additional degrees, concentrations or certain majors and minors.

At the moment though, Hanrahan feels students have been reassured that their concerns over the last several months have been listened to by the administration and that communication remains open.

Tim MacEwen is Engineering Representative on the UNB Student Council. As a fourth year student in Geodesy and Geomatics Engineering MacEwen is in a program that would be one of those most seriously affected by a per-course fee system because of the higher number of credit hours needed to graduate.

"Along with Chemistry and Geology we would be among the hardest hit so naturally none of the students in our Department were too happy about the proposed system," he said.

He wonders whether first and second

year students in his department really know or are really thinking about this.

"They are the ones that are really going to be affected by these proposed changes in the long run," MacEwen told the Brunswickan this week.

MacEwen was one of a group of students that recently met with four members of the Task Force on Future Tuition and Other Student Fee Policies.

He got the feeling that the Task Force had yet to take a close look at things like student loans and how any changes in the tuition fee structure would affect lower income people and mature students returning to university.

He also felt the Task Force had not looked at how an increase in tuition fees might affect the quality of students being attracted to several of UNB's programs such as Engineering.

"I think the Task Force will have to look a lot more into these problems and consider solutions before any proposed per-course tuition fee structure is adopted," MacEwen said.

Dean of Forestry search over, Education ongoing

A search committee set up to select a new Dean of Education is nearing a final decision.

"We expect to make a final selection in the next three weeks," said Louis Visentin, UNB Vice-President Academic and Chair of the Dean of Education Search Committee.

"The Search Committee has developed a short list of four candidates- 3 external to the university and 1 internal," Visentin told the Brunswickan last week.

The Dean of Education is expected to assume office July 1st. Deans are usually appointed for a term of five years.

Meanwhile, the Search Committee for a New Dean of Forestry and Environmental Management has made a final decision.

"A candidate has been recommended to the President and the appointment is now under consideration," Visentin told the Brunswickan last week.

The candidate is believed to be external to the university.

Visentin, who also chaired the Search Committee, confirms that a meeting with faculty members in Forestry and Environmental Management will be held within the next month.



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