

Millennium Scholarship board under fire

BY ALEX BUSTOS

OTTAWA (CUP) — The newly appointed board of the \$2.5-billion Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation had to wait only a few hours before being criticized by student leaders.

In a press conference Monday in Montreal, foundation Chairman Jean C. Monty announced the makeup of the 15-member board.

Also revealed was a separate 15-member panel group that will act as a liaison between the public and the foundation directors.

But the low level of student representation — only four students, divided equally among the panel and board, were chosen — immediately raised eyebrows across the country.

"To have more university presidents than students on the board is totally wrong," said Brett Dawe, vice president external of Memorial University's student union in St. John's.

"Where are the students who are going to get the scholarships? And who better to distribute it than the ones who are going to get it?"

Nine university and college presidents — three on the board and six on the panel — were appointed.

Also nominated were four chief executive officers, former New Brunswick Premier Frank McKenna and an executive vice-president from BCE Inc.

Together, the board and panel are responsible for implementing Bill C-36, a federal bill requiring the privately-run millennium fund to provide roughly 100,000 students with an annual average scholarship of \$3,000 beginning in the year 2000.

The strong presence of university administrators and corporate leaders made some question whether student concerns will be properly addressed.

"The students who were chosen [to sit on the board and panel] were chosen because they fit

the criteria of a privately run, pro-business agenda," said Simone Saint-Pierre, communications coordinator of the Canadian Federation of Students, which represents 400,000 students across Canada.

But a student sitting on the panel wasted no time in rejecting this assertion.

"That statement is ridiculous," said Heather Wilkey, president of Calgary's Mount Royal

College Student Association. "The [CFS] doesn't know me. I am a single mom and have \$30,000 in student debt."

But according to CFS National Chairperson Elizabeth Carlyle, what's at issue is not the good intentions of the student representatives, but whether they have the necessary resources to implement student concerns.

"I don't doubt that these students have important personal

experience, but I'm not sure if they have the institutional background to support them," said Carlyle, noting her disappointment that none of the CFS nominees were chosen to sit on the board and panel.

"It is going to take a year for these [student representatives] to be brought up to speed on the available resources, and this is ridiculous when there are dozens of people working in grassroots student groups nation-wide."

Mount Allison faculty strike

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for salary on that *Maclean's* list," he said.

But Mount Allison's vice-president administration, David Stewart, says the university simply cannot afford the salary increases.

He says the difference

between what the university is offering and what the faculty are demanding constitutes four percent of the university's total operating budget.

"It is unfortunate that the professors have chosen to withdraw their services in support of a demand of that magnitude," he said.

He says the professors'

demands are unrealistic and potentially damaging.

"We are very concerned that the salary demands are going to put a strain on the university, and what we are trying to offer students."

This is Mount Allison's third strike since 1990. Faculty went on strike in 1991, and support staff went on strike in 1994.

Tenant act

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undergraduate residences covered by the legislation when the province revised it in 1997.

But Harden says the Canadian Federation of Students submitted proposals to the Progressive Conservative government asking that residences be included in the act.

The lobby group also submitted a research paper showing how hard students were hit by rent increases, he says.

"Basically it was ignored," said Harden.

Students living in Ontario residences aren't the only ones with no formal housing protection.

Students living in undergraduate residence apartments in Alberta, Newfoundland and British Columbia also lack formal protection under their province's tenancy legislation.

Even though they're not covered by provincial tenancy law, however, these students still have options.

They can't lodge complaints with the provincial housing tribunal, but students living in undergraduate residences can still turn to small claims court if they have problems, Ram says.



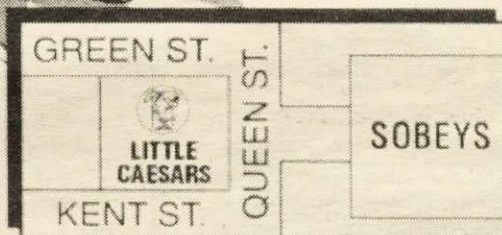
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