

## African studies program underfunded

by Robin Perelle, The McGill Daily  
MONTREAL (CUP)—While other area-study programs at McGill University wallow in million-dollar endowments, the African studies program must struggle just to stay afloat.

Last spring, the African studies steering committee sparked student outrage when it tried to replace the major degree with a minor, saying a lack of resources left it little choice.

Only weeks later, representatives from the faculty of arts concluded a \$10-million deal with Canadian billionaire Charles Bronfman to create the new Institute for Canadian Studies.

In the last few years, the African Studies program has fought dwindling resources and numerous attempts by McGill professors to pull the plug.

A comparison between African studies and McGill's preferred areas of study, such as Europe and North America, also shows that the study of Africa is not a high priority at the university.

A glaring example of the inadequacies of the program is the fact that the history of the entire African continent was condensed into a single course by the history department. In contrast, many countries in Europe are allocated entire semesters to deal with specific periods of their development.

Students are finding McGill's reluctance to move on the African studies issue increasingly frustrating. Some have expressed concern that the university's behaviour is deliberate, as it appears to be progressively eliminating the study of Africa from the curriculum.

## U of T wants new freedom of info policy

by Bruce Rolston, The Varsity  
TORONTO (CUP)—A proposed freedom-of-information policy for the University of Toronto is stricter than provincial legislation on the same subject, its drafter concedes.

But Governing Council secretary Jack Dimond, who has written the new policy, says having a strict policy is better than the current situation of having none at all. The Governing Council is the highest decision making body on campus.

Currently, decisions at U of T as to whether the public can see a document are largely made by the drafter or holder of that document.

Such a decision would be subject to appeal under Dimond's proposal, by one of a new set of university-appointed freedom-of-information officers.

The officer can overrule the decision to keep a document or other piece of information private if there is no good reason why that information should be confidential, Dimond said.

The proposal outlines the reasons officers could advise keeping information private. Personal privacy, the interests of the university, and undermining university decision-making are among the exemptions.

The university needs to draft a policy now, or face pressure from the provincial government. In the late 1980s, universities were exempted from Ontario's freedom-of-information legislation, with the understanding they would draft their own policies, Dimond said.

The proposal also provides for a freedom-of-information commissioner, who would be responsible for providing a universitywide annual report on appeals.

To be passed, Dimond's proposal must be adopted by Governing Council, perhaps as early as March. It would go into effect next September.

## Alberta's dentistry school dodges bullet

by Lynn Lau, The Charlatan  
OTTAWA (CUP)—It's a return from the brink of death. The faculty of dentistry will dodge the chopping block by merging with the faculty of medicine at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, probably by April 1996.

Last February, then-president Paul Davenport announced the university was planning to dissolve the dentistry school in an attempt to deal with provincial funding cuts. Then, in June, the proposal was quashed by the university's board of governors because it would have meant cutting the province's only dentistry school.

The dissolution would have saved the university between \$3 million and \$4 million, says acting dean of dentistry Henry Dick. The merger, approved in principle by the board of governors Jan. 13, may save about \$2.5 million.

But to cover the cost of keeping dentistry, students may be charged up to \$5,000 extra in their last two years of the four-year program to pay for the university's clinical facilities. This would come on top of dentistry students' tuition, about \$3,500 per year.

The merger is still in proposal form, being passed through various committees and councils for approval and "fleshing out." A formal proposal is expected to go to the university's board of governors this June.

U of A student union president Suzanne Scott says the merger has been "fairly well received as an alternative to cutting."

Canadian University Press (CUP) is a national organization made up of over 40 student papers from St. John's to Victoria. CUP enables student papers to exchange stories and ideas through the wire service, regional and national conferences. As a founding member of CUP, the Dalhousie Gazette makes sure that our university news becomes national news.

## Student union fees changing

by Milton Howe

With all the talk of rising tuition costs, it may come as a bit of a surprise that in at least one area next year students will be getting a break. Student Union fees will be dropping from the current level of 144 dollars per full time student to perhaps as low as 124 dollars for the 1995-96 academic year.

Bret Leech, Treasurer of the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) outlined the changes in an exclusive interview with the Gazette.

Topping the list of cuts is the \$15 per student capital campaign contribution, slated for removal next year. Leech noted that the fee, originally intended to repay the costs for the construction of the Student Union Building (SUB), has more recently gone toward various SUB renovation projects and covering shortfalls in other areas such as the yearbook.

In order to continue to be able to conduct some much-needed renovations to the SUB, some members of the executive are proposing that a new SUB improvement levy be instituted.

Beth Owen, VP Academic of the DSU, said that among the renovations suggested are improvements to some of the meeting rooms on the third floor to facilitate their permanent occupancy, as well as an expansion of the Grawood, including relocation and redesign of the bar and stage.

The exact nature of this levy proposal, and the amount (suggested at \$7 per full-time student) will be ratified by council at the meeting this Sunday.

In addition, the four dollars currently collected for membership dues in the Canadian Federation of Students is being eliminated following the student referendum which saw the DSU withdraw from the CFS last term.

Although students will be voting in a referendum later this month on whether to join the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) later this month, it will not involve a direct levy to the students.

Rod MacLeod, President of the DSU, estimated the annual dues to CASA to be \$13,500, which will come out of the operating budget of the DSU.

The last dollar to be cut will be the dollar per student which goes toward the course evaluation booklets produced by the DSU. Leech conducted an in-depth audit of the course evaluation system and decided that having accumulated a surplus, the union could afford to not collect the fee for a one year "hiatus."

He stressed, however, that this does not mean the DSU is abandoning the course evaluations. Leech admitted that the process has been poorly managed in previous years, but that the DSU plans to revamp it for next year.

By turning over the responsibility for the evaluations to one of the full-time staff members of the DSU, he hopes to see some improvement in the product by virtue of the added continuity. "We're changing the format and making it more of a professional thing," he said.

But depending on the outcome of the student referenda later this month, we could see almost all of the fee cuts be replaced by new levies.

Among the questions to be presented on this year's ballot is one asking that the Dalhousie yearbook, *Pharos*, levy be increased from five dollars to ten. Leech explained that this will eliminate the need for the yearbook production to be subsidised by additional funds from the DSU operations budget.

"We've run a deficit in the yearbook for the past ten years," Leech said.

Also, the students will be asked to approve a \$4 levy to go to the *Gazette*. This represents the final step in a long process which has seen the *Gazette* become incorporated as a society independent of the DSU. Currently, the *Gazette* is funded by a grant of \$40,000 from the DSU. With a levy of \$4 (calculated by dividing \$40,000 by approximately 10,000 students) students will be paying directly into the *Gazette* rather than through the DSU.

## Students to vote on CASA

by Rod MacLeod, Dalhousie Student Union President

During the upcoming Dalhousie Student Union elections and referenda (March 13, 14 and 15) Dal students will be voting on whether or not Dalhousie should become a member of Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA).

CASA is a new national student lobby organization which is in its final stages of incorporation. CASA is the outgrowth of many students' feelings that there must be policy alternatives at the federal level. The purpose of CASA is to work towards the highest levels of quality and accessibility in the post-secondary education system in Canada.

CASA was started by two groups of student representatives. First, students who were not being represented by any organization, such as students at Western and the University of British Columbia, who recognized the need for national representation.

The second group was convinced that their current level of representation was ineffective. This group included student representatives from schools such as Dalhousie, University of New Brunswick, and the University of Ottawa.

These students were driven to start a new student lobby organization because this year has been one of the most critical for post-secondary education. The federal government has proposed changes that would more than double tuition at Dalhousie. Additionally they have proposed a new loan system called Income Contingent Loan Repayment (ICLR), and have made changes to the existing student loan system, the Canada Student Loan Program (CSLP).

Dalhousie has played a leading role in the creation of CASA. This year there were conferences in Ottawa, Edmonton, and Fredericton and Dalhousie was at every one. The result has been a constitution devel-

oped by over 20 schools with consensus and representation from every province. CASA was created by students from Acadia, Brock, Carleton, Dalhousie, McGill, Memorial University in Newfoundland, Mount Allison, Queen's, Saint Thomas, University of Alberta, University of British Columbia, University of Calgary, University of Manitoba, University of New Brunswick, University of Ottawa, University of Prince Edward Island, University of Saskatchewan, Waterloo, Western, and Wilfrid Laurier. Together these schools represent over 300,000 students.

To belong to CASA it would cost the Dalhousie Student Union \$13,500 with no increase in student union fees.

If you would like more information about CASA or a copy of the constitution, please drop by the DSU Council offices (Room 222, SUB) or phone the offices at 494 1106 or e-mail DSUVPC@dal.ca

## Banning 'bad' blood

by Laura Peterson, The Martlet

VICTORIA (CUP)—The spring and winter Red Cross blood donor clinics have been banned from the University of Victoria campus and they probably won't be coming back.

Last year UVic student Robb Stewarts filed a formal human rights case against the Red Cross, saying the blood donor questionnaire was discriminatory against gay men.

The complaint was taken on by the UVic anti-harassment office, which ruled in Stewarts' favour and removed the clinics from campus until the British Columbia Human Rights Council determines if there's enough evidence for a hearing on the matter.

"The case has been forwarded to the B.C. Human Rights Council and it is up to them to determine whether the questionnaire is discriminatory," said Susan Shaw, the UVic anti-harassment officer.

"At this time we are waiting to see how things will unfold. It's out of our hands."

Stewarts said he was offended by the "outdated information" on the questionnaire. He said question 12A implied having sex with another male even once would put one at a high risk for AIDS.

Conversely, no such question was asked of heterosexual people, who are equally at risk of contracting the deadly disease through unprotected sex, he said.

In targeting the gay community, Stewarts said outdated information such as that on Red Cross blood donor questionnaires will further reinforce the stereotype that it is only gay men who have a high risk of contracting the HIV virus.

Suzanne Germaine, a spokesperson for the Red Cross, said the questionnaire has been updated as "it no longer asks if you are from a country which has a high AIDS infected population."

On this new, apparently less offensive, questionnaire, an additional question to heterosexual women asks, "If you are a female have you ever slept with a man who has slept with another male?"