

cross-canada briefs

Amalgamation, Everybody's Doin' it

REGINA (CUP) -- Students and administrators at Saskatchewan's two universities are anxiously awaiting the release of a report that could change the face of post-secondary education in the province. Minister of Education Bob Mitchell is expected to release the document publicly on Sept. 26. Rumors persist that the Mitchell-McKay Report on Saskatchewan Universities will recommend some form of rationalization between the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan.

It is expected the report will suggest the University of Regina close its engineering department since one already exists at the University of Saskatchewan. In return, the U of S will be asked to close its education department. The university might also lose its college of medicine -- the only med school in the province.

Mitchell commissioned the report in response to concerns about how the two universities will deal with \$10 million in funding cuts by the year 2000.

The Mitchell-McKay Report is not the first of its kind. The Johnson Report of 1992 addressed the issue of amalgamation of the universities by saying there were "no compelling economic reasons for a single university."

Students cause chaos at McGill ceremony

BY M-J MILLOY

MONTREAL (CUP) -- At a ceremony to commemorate McGill's 175 year history, Quebec education minister Pauline Marois refused to rule out hikes to tuition fees for McGill students in the future.

Her comments came after a student demonstration disrupted her speech at an open air ceremony. Over two-hundred students, non-academic staff and teaching assistants drowned out the emcee with chants demanding a continuation of the twenty-five year freeze on tuition levels.

The event looked as if it would dissolve into utter anarchy. Agitated members of the Board of Governors on stage looked uncomfortable as the professor in charge of the ceremony tried to defuse the growing chaos.

At first, he called student volunteers running the event onto the stage to drown out the demonstration. When that failed he marshalled a nervous looking high-school band between the stage and the protestors.

When they could not drown out the demonstrators, the administration finally allowed Erin Runions, an organizer of the demonstration, to address the crowd.

Part of the motivation for the protest was to denounce McGill Principal Bernard Shapiro's repeated and public attempts to convince Marois to allow McGill to raise tuition levels, according to Runions.

Shapiro has put in place his plans to radically alter the university's administration and goals. He released a controversial report last fall which advocates privatization of profitable degree programs, a doubling of tuition levels, and the closure of faculties and programs which do not break even.

Federal Conference On Youth Snubs Students

BY SAMER MUSCATI

OTTAWA (CUP) -- Student groups are outraged they weren't invited to a federal conference on youth while corporations were welcomed with open arms.

The federal government conference brought together over 100 hand-picked participants from corporations, governments and youth to develop action plans on youth issues. But no national student groups and only one provincial group was invited to the three day conference held in Ottawa on Sept. 17-19.

Canadian Federation of Students Chairperson Brad Lavigne says that there is such a strong business lobby presence at the conference. He is alarmed that groups such as the Canadian Youth Business Foundation, which is funded by the Royal Bank and other corporations, were representing youth at the conference.

Lavigne doesn't understand why more than 25 business lobby groups such as Shell Canada Limited and Air Canada were embraced while student voices were ignored.

CFS researcher Denise Doherty managed to attend after the Canadian Auto Workers donated their seat to the student group at the last minute.

She says that post-secondary education issues such as student debt, student aid, skyrocketing tuition fees, quality of and accessibility to education, and government cut-backs were not addressed. She says that the main focus of the conference was entrepreneurship.

The second national conference on youth will be hosted by the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Canada's second largest bank. The CIBC will organize the entire conference, and determine who is eligible to attend.

CASA director tours Maritimes

BY GINA STACK

The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations is rebuilding after suffering growing pains under its former administration.

Matt Hough is the new national director of CASA. He visited Dalhousie on Tuesday as part of his Atlantic tour.

Hough says that he has his work cut out for him this year.

"I want to make sure that the association gets through the year in tact, and is better than I found it."

Hough is referring to last year's controversy surrounding former Atlantic regional director Pat Fitzpatrick's alleged embezzlement of \$10,000 from CASA, and as much as \$30,000 from the University of New Brunswick.

Hough says that CASA's position on the issue has been misconstrued by a recent article written by CUP reporter Rachel Furey (Gazette, Sept. 19).

"I have no intention of dropping this issue, we need to have closure," Hough says.

Last fall, Fitzpatrick was appointed coordinator of a national conference on higher education set for March 1996. At the same time, national director Alex Usher fell sick with chronic fatigue syndrome. This left Fitzpatrick in control of CASA for a six week period.

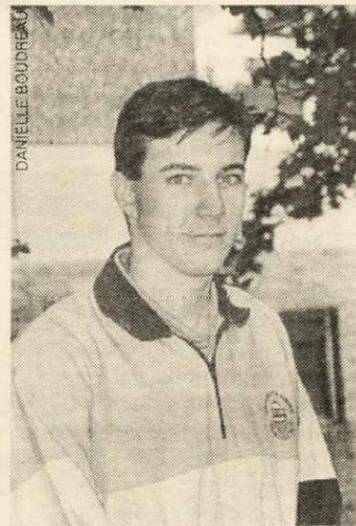
Hough says that Fitzpatrick was supposed to wait for the national conference board's guidance on how to organize the conference, but he went ahead without consulting anyone.

"He took out a lease on an office, and he took out accounts with a number of companies under his name. One direction we gave to him was that he was to

incorporate a cash CASA national conference, so if anything happened, the conference was a separate company and the main organization would not be hurt. He didn't do that."

Hough says Usher returned to work on Jan. 6 to discover a lot of problems.

"He (Fitzpatrick) had hired a group of people to work on planning the conference who he



hadn't paid a cent. While in Ottawa, he withdrew \$8,000 from the CASA account, wrote a fraudulent check for \$225 and took an additional \$2225 from the CASA account.

"We were in trouble and we instantly sent Pat away and he is no longer associated with CASA."

Hough says police in Ottawa and Fredericton were then contacted, and CASA sent detailed packages outlining Fitzpatrick's actions to both departments.

The case is now in the hands of a crown prosecutor in Fredericton, New Brunswick.

Hough says he will meet with

the crown prosecutor next week when he visits New Brunswick, to discuss the \$10,000 still owed to CASA. Because Fitzpatrick took out accounts in his own name, he alone will have to deal with the creditors and unpaid people.

"It is a shame and we have suffered a lot...[Public Relations]-wise due to the actions of Pat Fitzpatrick."

The University of British Columbia pulled out of CASA shortly after Fitzpatrick was fired citing ideological differences with CASA. The University of Calgary also left CASA, but has since returned. The University of Manitoba has joined the ranks of CASA, and next Sunday, Acadia University's student council will vote to enter CASA. This will bring the total membership to 11 universities. Dalhousie has been an official member of CASA since 1995.

Hough sites a breakdown in communication as the reason why the Fitzpatrick was unaccountable to the members of CASA. He says CASA has already implemented changes to prevent such a problem from reoccurring in the future.

"I am in communication with universities every week. I send out weekly reports and monthly financial statements to all members schools. A double signature is also needed before any money can be taken from a CASA account."

Hough is at the University of Prince Edward Island today, and will continue his Atlantic tour with stops at the University of New Brunswick (Saint John), Acadia and Saint Thomas University. He will end his tour at the CASA conference next weekend at UNB (Fredericton).

Charest dines at Grawood

BY DANIEL CLARK

For the second time in six months, federal Progressive Conservative (PC) Party leader Jean Charest dined in a Dalhousie establishment. This time it was the Grawood on Monday afternoon.

Charest is on a cross country odyssey. He is visiting universities across the country in an attempt to get students active in the party. The subject of this trip was Acadia, and a formal trip to Dal is being scheduled for November.

"Being the youngest [party] leader he has a message for young Canadians. He has a very significant youth initiative that he wants to get across," national secretary of the PC Party Kellie Leitch says.

"He feels that every young Canadian should either be working, going to school, or training in some capacity. These opportunities must be there for them. That is his message."

Charest, who was crowned most effective federalist during the Quebec referendum of October

1995, visited Dal last March.

On behalf of the Party, Charest has been advocating a tax cut in the order of \$5 billion. This plan



would be funded by a withdrawal from what Conservatives claim is an overfunded unemployment program which has a surplus of \$10 billion. The other \$5 billion would be left as a cushion for the program.

Charest's cross-country university tour is being organized and coordinated by former Dalhousie student Chris Whynacht. Whynacht left his studies at Dal to pursue this opportunity.

While he enjoyed a Tiger Burger at the Grawood, Charest spoke with students, local PC Party youths, and local PC Party candidates and organizers.

Mr. Charest was also approached by the Dalhousie Stu-

dent Union (DSU) executive and spoke with them for several minutes. The executive presented him with a DSU t-shirt in celebration of the 130th anniversary of the DSU.

When he learned that the DSU budget was in excess of \$2 million, Charest remarked, "My God, that's bigger than our party budget!"

Charest's brief visit to Dal was not political this time. The discussion focused mainly on sports, his love of theatre, Dalhousie's student body, his extensive collection of ties and t-shirts, and the fact Dal does not have a football team.

"I know how expensive it is," said Charest.

"When I was Sports Minister I recommended to the party that intercollegiate sports be sponsored by the government. They did not agree with me."

Charest's biggest surprise of the afternoon came when DSU VP Academic/External Chris Lydon said, "Mr. Charest, this is a pleasure. Let me just say, 'Lunch is on me'."

Actually it was the DSU that picked up the tab for lunch.