

Students say Differential Fees blot on Alberta

EDMONTON (CUP)—The Federation of Alberta Students (FAS) will take the Advanced Education Minister the University of Alberta board of governors to court on October 26 to protest differential fees for visa students.

"We're trying to test whether the board has a right to charge people based on where they come from," said FAS president Blair Redlin.

"We have exhausted every legal and political channel, so we are now trying the legal route," added executive secretary Brian Mason.

According to Redlin, there is a precedent in municipal law equivalent to the board. "They're not supposed to be able to tax because of the type of person they are".

According to FAS lawyer Gordon Wright, the U of A derives their power to make changes in fees from the Universities Act. The case presented by FAS is based on an alleged illegal delineation of fees, according to Redlin.

At question is last year's increase in fees for Alberta visa students of \$300 at universities and \$150 at colleges. This year, with the ten per

cent increase, fees are \$330 and \$165 respectively higher.

The U of A board was most vehement in its opposition last year but bowing to provincial pressure ultimately did an about-face, and approved the differential fee.

The secretary to the U of A board said, "the Board (of Education)'s position did not change. We were opposed to a differential fee for foreign students but the minister has power under the Act to approve tuition fees. He decided they would be different. Our board had no choice but to agree."

Redlin said that for now only the U of A board has been named in the suit because to name all other boards would be too complicated. As well, he said, there was a "possibility of coercion" in their case.

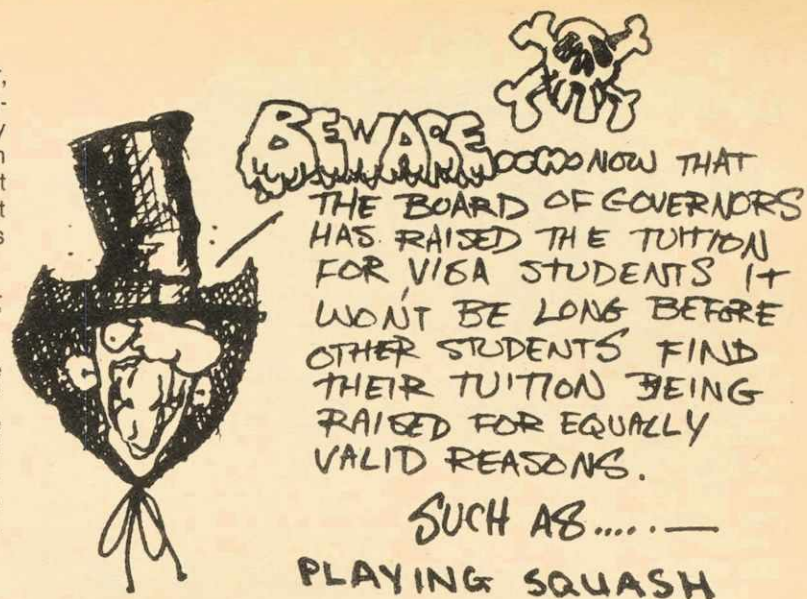
FAS tried for over a year to take the government to court, but had difficulty in the past because it was not officially recognized under the Alberta Societies Act. However, the Federation has obtained such recognition, and with its new legal status was able to take its protest to court.

According to Alberta Ad-

vanced Education Minister, Bert Hohol, "It is a very fundamental motion of equity that we welcome foreign students, we need them—but this is not at issue. What is at issue is that our universities are supported by taxpayers".

"All students that come ... must pay some increment," he said.

"Differential fees hurt those who need an education most," said Mason. "They reduce the opportunity for a broadened experience for our own students and they are a blot on Alberta's international reputation."



Squash the courts

OTTAWA (CUP)—The students' council at Carleton University is demanding the administration halt planning on eight new squash courts and transfer the \$272,000 earmarked for the courts to library expansion.

Carleton student association president Dan Hara said the library is more important than building squash facilities. "Are we an academic institution or not?" said Hara. "Our chief academic need is the library."

Even though the library needs the money more, said Hara, the administration decided to build the courts for financial reasons, as the courts would be open to the

public for a fee.

"They can make money on squash courts and not from libraries," he said.

Carleton president Michael Oliver admitted the new squash courts would make money for the university.

Ronnie Lebi, a member of last year's student executive said the board's decision indicated "in this instance... the priorities of this university are muddled."

"The university is pursuing a course of action detrimental to students," he said.

However, while opposing the university's decision several councilors criticised the usefulness of a referendum.

Arts representative Fayne

Thompson accused the council of "playing petty student politics," and called for "real action" instead of "holding a useless referendum".

"The real problem is that we have a bunch of gutless, conservative people on council. It's (the referend) just another cheap trick to say we've not neglected the library issue," said Thompson.

Councilor Dan Westell said a referendum does not carry any weight, and said a petition would be more effective in polling students.

The squash courts were first proposed last June when the athletics department took \$136,000 surplus from its budget, and convinced the administration to put up a \$136,000 loan. The Wintario board, if it approves, will provide a matching \$272,000 grant.

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