

No Chuck-fuckin' or playin' with yer royal jewels

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Macleans survey called inaccurate

by Roxane Brown and John Montesano

Macleans is more interested in selling magazines than informing students when it uses a rating system to grade universities, say critics of its most recent survey.

The magazine ranked each Canadian university this month in one of three separate categories: medical/doctoral, comprehensive, or primarily undergraduate.

York was ranked fifth in the comprehensive category.

The medical/doctoral category included large universities with major doctoral programs and medical schools. The comprehensive category included medium-sized universities offering a broad program at the undergraduate and graduate level. The primarily undergraduate level included smaller universities.

"I don't think it is a very sensible way to rate universities," said York Dean of Arts Michael Stevenson.

The criteria considered were the quality of library material, money available to the university, reputation, class sizes, the marks of students admitted and the caliber of the faculty.

Stevenson said universities are forced to comply with an inadequate grading process, fearing a lack of cooperation might jeopardize

Waiting for the deadline

Refugee students never know what future holds

by Christina Varga

H. is an undergraduate political science major at York and, along with many of us, is looking a little tired these days, as the essay crunch hits. But H. is also facing another kind of deadline — one whose consequences are much more serious than a 'D' on a final paper.

H. came to Canada as a refugee and may be facing deportation. If he was returned to his native Iran he fears that he would face imprisonment and possibly torture for his political views.

This week he faces a tribunal which will accept or reject his claim for refugee status on humanitarian and compassionate grounds. If he is rejected, H. will have to face a tribunal to establish the credibility of his refugee claim. If he is rejected again, then he will be deported. When I am surprised at how calmly he has tells me this, he says this is nothing new. As we sip our coffees in a quiet office in the Student Centre, H. tells

of his six-year struggle.

H. came to Canada from Iran in 1986 under a program that recognized the need to grant speedy asylum to people from countries with well-documented histories of human rights abuses. But, 6 months after he arrived, the legislation was changed and he was relegated to a backlog. Time and time again he was told to come back in 1 year, in another year, in 6 months. As mail was being sent to wrong addresses and H. was being given the runaround, a supervisor finally admitted to having lost his file.

"It's hard enough for refugees to go through leaving your homeland, friends and family. Some people even experience torture and imprisonment. Then, to come to a place where you are not welcome, and experience delays on top of that, it's harmful to people — there are some people who actually commit suicide."

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their standing in the popular survey.

"Universities will find they have to play along or run into public relations difficulties," said Stevenson, who would like to see more focus placed on really substantive problems at universities.

Last year, Carleton president Robin Farquhar considered resigning after administrators gave

the magazine incorrect information that led to the Ottawa school's 44th out of 46th rank among universities.

This year, Carleton ranked sixth in the comprehensive group.

"The tragedy is it sells a hell of a lot of issues," said Stevenson.

"Ranking is important, there are some le-

gitimate points to be made," said Ann Dowsett Johnston, who edited Maclean's Nov. 9 special report.

"If you invest four years and money into a university, you demand a certain education quality," Johnston said.

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Residents may get credit card for meals soon, says Crandles

by Jenni Buckland

Residents could get smaller cafeterias, debit cards instead of scrip, and the right to spend a small amount of meal plan money in the Underground pub next year.

Marriot, the largest catering service on campus, has its contract renewal in April. An examination of the changes that students want has just begun.

"We're not contemplating any tenders at this stage. If Marriot can accommodate us and we can accommodate them there's no reason

to change caterers," said Norman Crandles, executive director of Housing and Food Services.

Crandles said the cafeterias have to be updated to meet the needs of students. Some factors that are being looked at are menus, better service and hours of operations.

Gary McNealy, chair of the student centre's board of directors, doesn't want to see Marriot back. "The university is not dealing fairly with student-run operations."

Instead of the money going to Marriot, it should go to student-run college pubs so that they can up-

grade, said McNealy.

This is not likely to happen, but McNealy would like to see resident students be allowed to use scrip at the centre's Underground pub because of the better quality food and services available.

Crandles said this is a possibility but that only a specified amount of scrip can be spent at the Underground. The reason is because Marriot needs a guarantee that a profitable amount will go to them and make its business here feasible, he added.

This will be possible because of the replacement of scrip for a debit card, a credit card with an electronic strip which automatically reduces meal plan accounts. Crandles feels this will be more effective.

According to Crandles, the debit card will most likely be in place next year.

If scrip is stolen or lost it cannot be replaced. Being just like money, other people can spend it.

If the debit card is stolen or lost, the student can report it and the number on the card, so it cannot be used.

McNealy said he is indifferent to the debit card as long as it can be used without restrictions on campus.

Crandles said changes

will have to be made in Complex 1 cafeterias which serve Founders, Vanier, Winters and McLaughlin College students, including smaller service areas and new equipment.

If the cafeterias continue to operate as they do now, they will lose

money, he said.

"We're living in a changed environment, especially for food. Students have changing expectations. The services now are outmoded. We have to change direction and the timing is perfect," said Crandles.

Health plan cost could rise

by Matthew Bray

Can students expect another increase in next year's health plan cost?

It's a strong possibility, according to Dave Taylor, health plan administrator for York Federation of Students.

"Based on last year's claims experience (50 per cent of registered students made claims)," said Taylor, "the cost of \$132 may still not quite cover the Blue Cross expenses."

If the current \$132 does not cover expenses, students can expect an increase in next year's premium. Since it is too late to hold a referendum for next year, the most the premium can rise is by 15 per cent.

This would raise the cost to \$152 for each undergraduate.

Only 18 per cent of York's undergraduate body took part in last year's referendum, which raised the health plan's cost from \$60 in the previous year.

This year, some 5,000 undergraduate students withdrew from the Blue Cross health plan included in their tuition, 2,000 more than last year, Taylor said.

"5,000 students opting out will not affect next year's health plan," said Taylor.

Health care premiums rise when the expenses from student claims are greater than the money brought in from premiums.

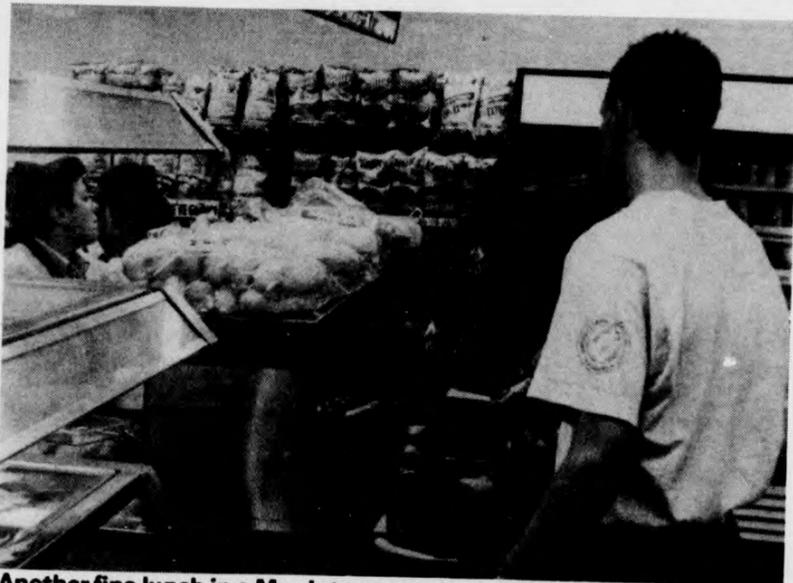
Jeff Zoeller, the federation's internal vice-president, said the large number of students opting out of the plan only reflects an increased awareness of the plan.

This year, more people realized they had the choice to withdraw, he said.

In an effort to reduce next year's health care premiums, the federation has set up a deal with Vanguard Pharmacy, York Lane's drugstore.

Ken Labovitz, Vanguard's pharmacist, said the Pharmacy has lowered its dispensing fees from \$10.50 to \$9.

"Blue Cross will save more on student claims," said Labovitz, "and this will result in charging students less for next year's premiums."



Another fine lunch in a Marriot servery. York residents could be seeing smaller eating places and meal cards soon • photo by Wayne Todd