

Editorial
Mary Rogal-Black

Editorial (adj.) 1. An article in a newspaper, magazine, or the like, published as the principal or official expression of opinion on some issue. — adv. 1. Of or pertaining to an editor or editing; editorial policy. 2. Written.

Time for protection from endless increases in cost of tuition

This isn't just another incremental increase in tuition. Last September, full-time students were billed \$2840 for tuition; next September, it could be \$100 more. If you're an Arts student, that is. Students in most other faculties could pay up to \$1000 more.

A report released last week by The President's Task Force on Future Tuition and Other Student Fee Policies suggests that instead of a flat rate for full-time tuition at UNB, students pay a per-course rate. The proposed system, which could be accompanied by a rate increase of \$10 per half-term course, would mean that Science students taking 44 credit hours in a year would have a bill of \$3822 for tuition. Unlike the yearly incremental tuition increases we've become accustomed to (on this point, students have seemed sadly like unconcerned frogs in a pot of water approaching the boiling point), the plan under consideration this year offers students a double whammy: not only will tuition be raised as usual, students taking more than five courses will also be charged for their additional courses. Science, Business, Computer Science, Engineering, Forestry, Forest Engineering, Nursing and Kinesiology students, who often do more than thirty credit hours per year, could be facing major increases.

It's not difficult to understand that the University needs to get money from somewhere. Funding to UNB from the provincial government dropped by over two million dollars this year. The problem is that no one seems to know when to put the brakes on. Bit by bit, the government's cost-cutting measures have been getting passed directly on to students through decreases in financial aid and increases in tuition. In the deficit-cutting craze of the nineties, support for post-secondary education is on the chopping block along with everything else. Single-minded belt-tightening is leaving little room for considering what will become of the economy when a generation of university graduates, with job prospects as insecure as ever, enter the workforce with debt loads in the tens of thousands. The economy relies on 20-30 year olds with disposable incomes, but apparently that's somebody else's problem. Few of today's administrators or politicians will be seeking office when, years from now, we begin see the consequences of restructuring the debt right onto the shoulders of individuals.

In the past decade, tuition at UNB has gone from \$1,575 to \$2,840. In the same period, student aid bursaries have disappeared. The Task Force report notes that the rising cost of tuition hasn't affected enrolment, but realistically, it's too soon to fully understand the long-term consequences of developing a debt-ridden population on a large scale, let alone to expect individuals to fully understand what they're committing to when take out the huge loans required to finance even a basic undergraduate degree.

Administrators on that Task Force, politicians and fourth-year students facing monthly student loan payments equal to the cost of rent must realize that eighteen-year-old high school grads entering university sign their student loan papers with little or no concept of what it means to be six-thousand dollars in debt. Four years later, the bill is up to twenty thousand dollars. It's too much like lambs to the slaughter. Budgeting for textbooks, rent and groceries represents a new challenge for many students; will they really understand what it means to owe thousands of dollars? I hope that educators and politicians are ready to adjust to the implications. Many students spend their first year or two in university simply trying to find a career path that is right for them, but now more than ever, the cost of simply choosing the wrong major in your first year can be critical. Who will fulfil the need for better career counselling in high school (perhaps investing in some crystal balls, for example)?

More importantly, how will the increasing cost of education affect accessibility? The steadily increasing financial burden of a university education is reaching backbreaking proportions for people without savings, good summer jobs or support from families. As the Task Force report reflected, the development of programs that subsidize 'needy' students are not keeping pace with increasing costs. In the face of governments' increasingly apparent prioritization of savings over social responsibility and the University's scramble for cash, how can we be sure that anyone is watching out for those people who can't afford to weather the cost-cutting storm? Whether young people simply decide they can't afford to go to university or do so and emerge at the other end with a debt of \$25,000, the future is so uncertain that it can be difficult to know whether we should go to university at all. At the very least, I wouldn't blame some UNB students if they began seriously shopping around for a university committed to helping them protect their financial futures as well as their intellectual ones— if such a place still exists in Canada.

Call for submissions: what will tuition increases mean to you?

If tuition goes up, how will you be affected? Will you switch faculties to something more affordable, take fewer courses, transfer to a university with lower tuition, borrow more money or just drop out? Will you fight the proposed increases? What should students, politicians and administrators do about the challenges of funding post-secondary education? Write about your experiences and let loose with your opinions. Submit letters to Blood 'n Thunder by dropping them off at The Brunswickan or e-mailing bruns@unb.ca.

Mudwump

Joseph W.J. FitzPatrick₃

Do you see the difference? No, I don't see the difference. This is the response most likely to be enacted by a university official if you ask them if there is a difference in the quality of teaching a student receives from a tenured faculty member versus a part-time untenured faculty member. Funny thing is, with the way things are at UNB, you have no indication that your professor is a near-retirement professor or a just-retired professor back to teach part-time.

There's a big difference on the balance sheet, though. Why a retired faculty member is worth so much less than a tenured faculty member is explained away by the theory of "administrative duties." You see, tenured faculty at UNB have the onerous job of teaching three courses per term, plus "administrative duties." These may include sitting on committees or serving as Chair or Dean of the department or faculty.

In addition, a tenured faculty member at UNB gets a 70% pension after age plus years of experience is 85 (a 55 year old prof with 30 years of teaching for example), a good health plan, a dental plan, life insurance, an office, and job security. Starting salary, today, is around \$40,000.

It certainly doesn't sound like a lot, when you stop and think about it. But let's look at the other end of the scale. The top paid faculty member at UNB can head in more than \$70,000 with administrative stipends. Now it sounds like a lot of quid, eh? There's more. Because the University has so many high-paid faculty members, it can't afford to hire junior faculty at \$40,000. So, it hires part-time faculty at even

To the Editor:

As an Asian student, I find it very inconvenient not to have access to information in my native language at the UNB library. I find there is a limited source of material in Chinese. This includes two newspapers, the back issues of which the library does not keep, and several kinds of magazines that do not arrive on a regular basis and are not kept by the library. The library mainly collects publications in English and a limited number of publications in other European languages. Publications in Oriental languages, such as Chinese, Japanese, and Korean are not included in the library collection.

Given the fact that there are so many international students at UNB, the library should have a means to quench their thirst for reading publications in their own languages. Sometimes, such reading is for research purposes.

While it is expensive to equip the library with collections for just a small number of readers, Internet provides a good substitute for acquiring much valuable information. The pity is that in

the library, there is only read languages in the Latin alphabet. Much useful information, such as the information provided by the homepages of embassies, cannot be read. Take Chinese for example: the Chinese Embassy in Ottawa has a homepage in Chinese about passport and visa applications. Because there is no Chinese software installed in the computers in the library that provide Internet access, such information cannot be read. The same case applied to some electronic newspapers and magazines in Chinese.

Each student in this university is allotted a limited disc space for individual use. Such a space is far from enough for installing software for Chinese, Japanese or Korean fonts. It will be too demanding if each student asks for an expanded disc space, but it will not be a difficult thing for the library to do so on the three Mac computers (there is also a fourth one in the library of the Faculty of Education) that provides Internet access. I do not know about Japanese or Korean students, but I do know that some Chinese students know how to install Chinese fonts in computers. All that is needed is an expanded disc space. Maybe the

disc space of the library computers is already big enough.

I also suggest that the library keep the back issues of the Chinese newspapers. In this university, there are both Chinese students and faculty members. Not all of them subscribe to the Chinese newspapers. These newspapers contain useful information for the study of contemporary China and Taiwan. They are good for researchers in social, economic and political studies. Since there are only two such newspapers, the processing of them should not cost much to the library. Nor do they take much storage space.

The UNB student radio station has a Chinese program on Sunday mornings. It is mainly entertainment. I hear that this program was added to the radio station at the request of Chinese-speaking students. If entertainment is considered important for the Chinese-speaking students at UNB, newspapers and Internet documents in Chinese should be considered even more important.

Alan Yu

BLOOD & THUNDER
Letters to the Editor

UNB Internet should be multilingual

Forestry and the adoption of the Precautionary Principle

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to an article in Forest Breeze, January 17, entitled "There's nothing clear about clear cutting." My interpretation of the main arguments of this thoughtful article [written by Brad Case] is as follows. Despite the raging debate that has occurred about clear cutting for many years, very little has been "gained" aside from the occasional protected area. (In New Brunswick even this exception appears not to hold true as only 1.2% of our forested land base is protected from timber exploitation.) However, Case argued, the entire debate about clear cutting is misplaced. Clear cutting is simply the most "expedient method for removing large volumes of wood." As society requires wood in massive quantities and "the forestry industry is caught in the destructive cycle of more is better," foresters have little choice but to utilize this particular management technique.

While I agree with the premises of this author's argument—that clear cutting has not decreased despite many years of debate, that clear cutting is a symptom of a more serious problem, and that the relentless cutting of forests is partially the result of societal demand—I do not agree with Case's deterministic and rather cynical conclusion: that clear cutting and perhaps more importantly, the increasing rate of forest exploitation, are inevitable.

One major difficulty with this conclusion is that it seems to reiterate the frequently held view in the discipline of forestry that the role of the Forester is simply to use her/his knowledge of forest ecosystems to carry out the demands of human society. The Forester is a value-free "managing machine" designed to find the most efficient way of using forests for societal values. The problem with this notion is that the most predominant of these societal values is usually economic. It then becomes the role of the Forester to manage forests so that they yield the greatest profit. Forestry's present preoccupation with objectivity may be misplaced. To paraphrase Jonathan Livingston, a much-respected Canadian naturalist, immersing oneself in nature is a much

more effective way of learning how it works than standing objectively "above" it. Objectivity is indeed dangerous in the context of forest management since it implies that components of nature are simply "resources" to be used by human beings, and to be "managed" for maximum output. It is crucial to realize that nature has intrinsic value that is completely unrelated to the demands of human society.

The implications of this belief in objectively implementing economically-based societal values are widespread. Clear cutting is only one of the many potentially ecologically destructive practices that may be the result of forest management based on economic demands. (Use the word "potentially" here since, in many cases, the long term ecological impacts of many forest practices are simply not known. However, in the current political context which requires continual economic growth, this uncertainty is often used as justification for the perpetuation of these practices.)

What are the alternatives? Foresters have a responsibility to act less as managing machines and more as stewards or ethical representatives of forested ecosystems. It is simply not justifiable to deterministically accept that society's escalating wood consumption will inevitably result in destructive forest practices. Rather than allowing

economic values to impact the ecology of the forest, should we not constrain our societal demand to fit with the needs of ecosystems? Mitch Lansky, a forest activist from Maine stated, "If it becomes impractical to have healthy forests and stable communities, if it becomes impractical to ensure the passing of biological wealth to future generations, then there is something wrong with these systems. Rather than degrade forests...we should adjust the systems to the needs of the forests and the communities." My question is: If Foresters and ecologists do not suggest where the ecological constraints exist, who will?

This shift in thought means accepting what has been termed "the precautionary principle." That is, in the face of scientific uncertainty, a cautious approach to "management" should be adopted. Uncertainty, rather than being used as an excuse for continued exploitation, would be used as a justification for utilizing conservative harvesting systems and increasing our knowledge of forest ecosystems through intensive research. It is only through this paradigm shift that we can hope to begin to ameliorate the often horrific record our species has had as stewards of the earth.

Matthew Bets
Faculty of Forestry and Environmental Science

Tibbits thanks food drive supporters

To the Editor:

Our first annual Tibbits Hall Food Drive for the Frederickton Community Kitchen and the Frederickton Emergency Shelter was a tremendous success. Both organizations were impressed with all the donations they received and assured us they would not go to waste.

On January 11th, the residents of Tibbits Hall went door-to-door with shopping carts, asking for these items. As coordinators of our first annual fundraiser, it thrilled us to see the generous donations from the community, and to know that the residents of Tibbits had a great time collecting for these causes.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank

the generous and kind-hearted residents that live in the area bounded by Smythe, Regent, Priestman and King's College Streets, who gave donations when we came to their doors. We would also like to thank anyone who dropped off items in our boxes throughout the UNB campus.

Your generosity has not gone unnoticed by the residents of Tibbits Hall, and especially not by those who use or work at the Community Kitchen and Emergency Shelter. We look forward to seeing you next year.

Stephanie Timpa
Mireille Ozon,
Coordinators
First Annual Tibbits Hall Food Drive

Professors: why pay more?

less. \$3,249 per term per course to be exact, before taxes. If a part-timer was allowed to take a full load (three courses per term) they would earn less than \$20,000.

The irony is that a good number of these part-timers are retired faculty members on 70% pensions. Maybe double dipping a trickle down effect? Are your lights on, Mr. Wilson?

It does seem odd, doesn't it, that for the privilege of receiving an extra \$20,000, a professor gets tenure, an office, a health plan, and a nice pension plan. Doesn't it follow that fewer benefits would mean a higher salary? Not for professors.

The cost of post-secondary education is spiralling out of control according to some people. With tuition increases exceeding inflation, where does this leave faculty salaries?

If you can "progress" from \$40,000 to \$100,000 in 30 years as a faculty member, why did tuition increase by a factor of 5 during the same period? UNB has taken an odd stance. While it maintains its faculty wages, it has allowed attrition to cull the ranks of senior faculty. In addition, it has squeezed those who don't have a lot to give the cleaning staff. Saved a whopping \$100,000 over three years.

Maybe faculty wages are designed to maintain a certain aloofness in our academics. Maybe these salaries are designed to elevate their position in society so that they are respected because of their knowledge and the wisdom they convey. They are, after all, the academic elite. We must attract them away from other jobs, like the private sector, or other universities. I'm sure somebody will come to UNB to

teach because another university offered \$1,000 less per year. And then, there are the many professors who are really professors in name only because they do research and consulting, and in exchange for attaching UNB's name to it, our university is happy to pay them to continue.

To be fair, it's easy to say this because I wasn't here when the faculty boom of the 70s hit. A few administrators of UNB were, notably the VP Finance, Jim O'Sullivan. I can appreciate that, at that time, there were so few people in university that few people had degree sufficient to teach. As a consequence, several faculty members have retired without ever receiving a doctorate, though now it is required.

And, I'm not simply griping that if only my father's generation would retire, I would be able to work. I'm saying that maybe universities have to look long and hard at what they get from those \$150,000 unutilised faculty member before they get and hire any more of them.

And is it not highly ironic that the highest paid educators are those who are teaching University, when nearly everything points to the greater importance of primary education? Just because you need a higher degree to teach post-secondary education, does that mean that you are worth more than the teachers of primary school?

I'm also asking that before politicians and lobbyists fly off the handle proclaiming that students are the primary beneficiaries of post-secondary education and should therefore pay more for it, remember that life has been pretty good to those tenured faculty over the past 30 years and university would be a lot cheaper if they got paid a bit less.

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*This issue is dedicated to:
A sense of justice - I mean, what's up with this world????*

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