

cross-canada briefs

Premiers to lobby Ottawa for more student aid

ST. JOHN'S, Nfld (CUP) — Nine of Canada's premiers are joining forces to demand that the federal government increase funding to the Canada Student Loans Program.

In a letter sent to student leaders in his own province, Newfoundland Premier Brian Tobin says the decision to lobby for more money came out of a recent Premier's Conference held in Alberta. Attached was a memo acknowledging student aid funding levels have not increased to meet the rising costs of post-secondary education.

Due to the way student loans are funded, an increased commitment at the federal level will also enlarge provincial funding. Right now, Ottawa and the provincial governments share the cost of loans, with the federal government footing 60 per cent of the bill. Quebec alone is absent from the premiers' plan. It runs its own student loans program without federal involvement.

Newfoundland is already moving ahead to increase aid for some students.

Unmarried students receiving the maximum allowable student loan will have their weekly living allowance increased by \$16. This will put an extra \$512 in these students' pockets over the course of a 32-week academic year.

CFS plans day of action in late October

MONTREAL (CUP) — Canada's largest student organization is planning a national day of action in late October as part of their campaign against government cutbacks to post-secondary education.

"We need to send a strong message to the government that students across Canada are taking the fight against the cuts one step further, and that we will not be divided," said Brad Lavigne, national chair of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS).

Lavigne says another protest like last February's day of action, which involved close to 40,000 students across the country, is a crucial instrument for change.

The CFS is proposing that Ottawa pass a Post-Secondary Education Act modelled on the Canada Health Act, which guarantees comparable health care service across the country, even though health is under provincial control. The CFS' proposal includes measures to ensure the portability of credits between institutions, guarantee adequate student aid, and freeze tuition rates.

Sole support parents get little support from Ontario government

OTTAWA (CUP) — Last April, the Ontario government began to phase out child care bursaries and eliminate welfare payments to students with children.

"It's an easy way for the government to get 17,000 people off their welfare roles," said Vicky Smallman, chairperson for the Canadian Federation of Students. "(But) it makes people have to compromise their families (at the expense of) going to school."

According to CFS statistics, the new plan would see single parents with two children entitled to \$13,000 in loans over a school year. Before the changes, the same student received \$19,000.

While sole support parents are now eligible to receive more student loans, they lose access to all other benefits such as welfare. Students with children have lost access to drug, dental, eye care and snowsuit plans.

Richard Jackson, manager of policy and communications for the Ministry of Education and Training, said that the government's intention was to make social assistance "a last resort".

Deborah Hughes, co-coordinator of the University of Ottawa's Mature and Part-time Students centre, said that the only option for many students is to quit. With only a year left in her sociology degree, that's the option Hughes was forced to take.

Med School Struggles to Maintain Quality

BY GINA STACK

Dalhousie University's Medical Department is keeping afloat despite a \$2 million budget shortfall for the 1996-97 fiscal year.

"There has been no impact on delivery of academic programs," said Brian MacDougall, associate dean of finance and planning for the Faculty of Medicine.

"According to outside observation, all our education programs have full accreditation from the accrediting bodies, no course schedules have changed and we continue to deliver high quality programs."

Budget cuts, announced in July, were the result of reduced funding from the university and financial commitments made by the medical department.

At that time, specialized courses like tertiary pediatrics and neurosurgery were in jeopardy. The future of the department-run Cowie Family Medical Centre was also uncertain.

To date, cuts have not reduced any courses offered to medical students.

Last week, the medical department announced that it would provide the funding needed to keep Cowie open until March 31, 1997.

MacDougall said the department could not allow Cowie to close.

"It is a vital part in the education of family physicians. Cowie stands out as a model both aca-

demically and clinically; from an educational point of view, we need it. We have 18 years invested into Cowie Hill in the Spryfield area and we wouldn't want to close the book."

To keep Cowie open, the medical school has had to leave 15 staff positions unfilled. It has also been forced to slow down private sector initiatives that have the potential to make money for the department.



MacDougall said the medical department is currently negotiating a cost-sharing agreement for Cowie with the Nova Scotia Department of Health. This agreement must be in place before current funding ends on March 31, 1997.

"Once we have a long term funding solution (for Cowie) in place we can fill the vacant teaching positions and move more quickly into new initiatives with the private sector."

MacDougall said that the school will begin recruiting for the vacant positions in the next 12-18 months.

In the meantime, MacDougall said professors have lost about half a day weekly to increased

teaching hours.

"We are all working harder," MacDougall said.

Although Dalhousie medical students' courses have not been affected by budget cuts, the president of the Dalhousie Medical Students' Society said less professors will have an adverse affect on students.

"Clinical faculty (who are the educators of medical students, particularly 3rd and 4th years)

will be stretched for time and resources and hence students, future physicians, will have a substandard education experience," Beth Taylor said.

Taylor said students are also worried about tuition increases for the 1997-98 year.

"With tuition set at its current level, and with the certainty that it will increase in the future, our medical school, and Dalhousie as a whole, is becoming an institution for the rich."

MacDougall said the department is not looking to raise tuition as a solution to its budgetary problems. However, he said that medical students are rightly concerned about increased tuition fees.

"Tuition fees are anyone's guess. The Nova Scotia government is working on a new funding formula for the 97-98 year. Because of this, there is a very high degree of uncertainty in the department. We are working as strongly and positively as we can to develop a solid program."

New Building

...cont'd from page 1: "\$12 million"

However he did suggest the possibility of a parking garage in the new building, and perhaps more parking spaces on campus.

Dostal also showed concern that the possibility of larger lecture halls would result in larger class sizes. Traves suggested that by making "the first and second [year classes] bigger, then [there will be] more resources available for the third and fourth year classes."

He believed that this could free some faculty from teaching the lower level classes and allow departments to offer a greater number of courses. Any increase

in class sizes would be compensated for by having small discussion groups and up-to-date teaching facilities.

Senate Rep Clark commented, "This university is a complete mishmash of various styles of architecture, some of which look like bad Salvador Dali paintings and others which are classical beauties...how are we going to fit [the new building] in this complete mishmash?"

"That will be the challenge of the architect," replied Traves. The three to four story building will be styled to aid the aesthetic transition between the older style

buildings in the Quad and the 1960s style buildings like the SUB and the Weldon Law building.

Traves also assured the DSU council that there would be no substantial food service in the new building that could offer competition to the facilities in the SUB.

The DSU is considering Dr. Traves' proposal for a \$1 million donation and will make a decision at their next meeting. That meeting will be at 6 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the SUB on Sunday, September 29. All students are welcome to attend and voice their concerns.

Editors

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