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Economy drives youth to universities

by Lois Corbett
of Canadian University Press

HALIFAX (CUP) — When the children of the baby boom graduated, enrolment would drop off at Atlantic universities, the analysts said.

Well, the children of the late fifties are through school now, but attendance at post-secondary institutions in the economically-depressed east coast is up 33 per cent in the last six years.

John Keston, executive director of the Association of Atlantic Universities, says the increase, which excludes Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland, is dramatic. (Memorial is excluded because the decision to add Grade 12 to high school threw off university enrolment figures).

"When the increase is in the 25 per cent range, then it's like adding one University of New Brunswick to the pot. When it's 33 per cent, it's like adding a Dalhousie," says Keston.

While Keston won't say where the enrolment increases hurt the most, small universities have seen their institutions expand rapidly and programmes altered radically to meet the needs of all the students who want a degree tagged after their name.

At the university College of Cape Breton (UCCB) in Sydney, N.S., more than 615 students enrolled in 1980 to pursue a degree in arts or science full time. This fall, that number is up to 117.3 per cent, to 1337.

Deanne Dennison, UCCB registrar, says the university becomes more and more crowded every year.

"Last year enrolment was up 20 per cent, this year it's up about six per cent. The study areas have to accommodate more people than ever before, and it's the same thing with the cafeteria.

"Our cafeteria just won't accommodate the students, even over a staggered lunch break — it was only meant to hold 500," she says.

Dennison says UCCB requested funding from the N.S. government to enlarge its facilities. The registrar would like to see it expand enough to allow the students some space for socializing.

"They need some room just so they can sit down and have a coffee. And if you have to have an emergency meeting right now, you wouldn't be able to find a room, every one is taken up with a class," says Dennison.

The small university bursting at its seams in an area with the highest unemployment level in

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A total of 64 participants got off on the right foot at the start of the Amnesty International Run for Freedom on Oct. 20. Todd Miller, Dal Photo.

AI Week off to running start

By VALERIE MATHESON

LAST WEEK AMNESTY International (AI) launched their annual public awareness campaign (PR week) with a "Run for Freedom."

PR Week is intended to bring public attention to international human rights abuses. In 1984, the organization focussed on women who have been jailed for their views. This year, in recognition of the International Year of Youth, AI is concentrating on young people in prison.

Sixty-four people assembled in front of the Student Union Building to run the five kilometre race. Bill Owen, a member of AI, gave an opening speech before the run. "We are having this run basically to get publicity for our two adopted prisoners," said Owen.

"We want to encourage the public to write letters to the governments in the countries on behalf of the prisoners", says Audrey Samson, a member of the local AI group.

The Halifax chapter of AI has adopted a Russian electrical engineer Mark Netomnyashchi, who was imprisoned for anti-soviet slander, and a South Korean, Kae Johg-Ran, a medical student, imprisoned for alleged espionage for North Korea.

One of the runners, Michele Case, raised eighteen dollars for AI on her own.

Case was told that she did not

have to get sponsors for the run. "I went into work on pay-day, however, and told my peers about the run—and they decided to sponsor me," says Case.

Case, an AI activist, will appear in the play "Anywhere But Here" on Oct. 27. The play is also part of PR Week activities.

The run started and ended in front of the SUB. The runners ran the loop from Robie to

LeMarchant on University Avenue a total of five time.

Patrick Evans, an eleven-year-old elementary school student, was the youngest runner, and Andrew O'Rourke, a Dalhousie student, was the fastest. O'Rourke ran the race in twelve minutes and four seconds. "I'm running for the cause," he says.

The total amount raised for the run was \$743.00.

Proceeds from the run are to go towards the network to keep information flowing to the public. Alex Neve, treasurer of AI says, "Some groups hope to send some of the money to the families of our two adopted prisoners."

"This, however, will have to be done on the sly so that the officials in the respective countries will not find out," says Neve.

UNB cuts students' marks

FREDERICTON (CUP)— The University of New Brunswick's faculty of law will slash half a point off the cumulative grade point average of any St. Thomas University student who wants to enter first year law.

In a statement, the admissions and scholarships committee of the law faculty says that first year law students from STU, which shares the Fredericton campus with UNB, have trouble "attaining passing status."

The committee attributes the problem to the "different grading approaches taken by the two institutions."

Bill Spray, vice president of STU, says his administration is not convinced the law faculty's conclusions about STU graduates are valid.

Spray says UNB is being unfair to STU students, since it does not have enough information about the types of students who pass or fail.

"There could be all kinds of reasons for students to be

flunking in any faculty," he says.

Spray says the UNB decision is not "very good for the reputation of the university".

Beverly Smith, the chair of the law committee that wants STU applicants penalized, says that while all STU graduates are not flunking out of the program, the study his committee conducted over the summer has produced results that are "statistically significant."

The study's results won't be released, says Smith, but he did show them to Spray.

Smith says the penalty to applicants from STU is in the best interest of all applicants. He wouldn't say whether applicants from other universities will suffer similar penalties.

"Whatever we do with other universities is our business," he says.

He says it's too early to tell if the steps taken by the committee are solving the problem.

"We just won't know until the

end of the academic year," he says.

Smith says the committee still welcomes "qualified applicants" from STU.

"We have no axe to grind at all. We don't care, really, where our people come from," he says.

Professor Bruce Wildsmith, of the law admissions committee at Dalhousie, says Dalhousie does not quantitatively judge students' applications on the basis of the university they are applying from but does consider these factors in a "qualitative manner."

Indications are that the trend is towards more quantitative judgements in the future. "We have been working towards developing a data base which might assist us in the future in evaluating the academic standards applied at other universities," which will be ready in six to nine years, says Wildsmith.