

cross-canada briefs

Students exaggerate condom-carrying

BY KAREN FARYNA

VANCOUVER (CUP) — Students don't tell the truth about condoms. That is the conclusion two University of British Columbia marketing professors have come to after conducting two separate surveys over the last year.

A self-report survey conducted in March found that approximately one-third of the 376 UBC students who participated said they would be "very" or "somewhat likely" to take a condom with them if they went to a bar.

But a follow-up survey on students' actual condom-carrying behaviour outside a campus pub had very different results.

"We were surprised at how low the carrying rate was," Weinberg said. "Not everyone goes to the [pub] to have sex, obviously, but some people do, and so you'd think that more people would be carrying condoms than they actually are."

Out of 346 students going into the pub, only 16 men and no women were carrying condoms. The discrepancy between the self-report survey and the spot check was probably because "it is a socially good answer [to say] 'I'm going to carry a condom'," Weinberg said.

Student unions should pucker-up says leaked document.

BY SAMER MUSCATI

OTTAWA (CUP) — Kissing butt is the best way to protect post-secondary education in Canada, says a document leaked from a national student organization.

Student unions should "shmooze" media, government, and students as part of the lobbying strategy of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA), which represent over 100,000 post-secondary students, including Dalhousie.

CASA recommends that its members "bump" into politicians by hanging out in government buildings, establish good relationships with newspaper editors and invite university administrators out for dessert and coffee in order to become an "effective lobby organization."

Student groups are also encouraged to send university administrators flowers "at appropriate times" such as during a death in the family.

"[Sending flowers] may sound morbid," said Matthew Hough, executive director of CASA, "but it's not a bad suggestion."

Hough, who compiled the report, says that the document is the basis of how he approaches the lobby scene. He says that the strategies have been sent to CASA's 11 member schools.

Nicolas Bruneau, an executive member at the University of Ottawa's student union, says he never would have thought of inviting a city councillor to his house for some wine and cheese, had he not read the document.

Other recommendations for lobbying include utilizing cafeterias when addressing students since they are "a captive audience," and holding press conferences and media events in classrooms.

Maclean's ignored by campus journalists

BY MEG MURPHY

TORONTO (CUP) — Maclean's magazine is gearing up for its annual survey of Canadian universities and this year many campus papers do not plan to respond to their request for help.

Three years ago the magazine started a "What's hot, what's not" section which appeared along with a ranking of Canadian universities. Campus journalists were asked to help Maclean's prepare the section by letting them in on what was groovy on campus and many responded.

This year Maclean's is once again asking campus papers, clubs, and organizations to provide them with another run down of what is hip and what isn't on campus, and their request is being met with disdain by campus journalists.

Scott Hayward, editor of the Ubyyssey at the University of British Columbia, says that last year Maclean's phoned the paper and the staff just yelled out answers to their questions.

"One of the question was 'What it hot on campus?' and we yelled, 'the Ubyyssey!' Well, what do you know, the Ubyyssey was listed as one of the hot things on campus."

Laurel Fortin, editor of the Fulcrum at the University of Ottawa, says the questions were too trivial to bother answering.

"Students are looking at keeping bread on the table. Whether the campus bar is cool or not has become irrelevant."

Tim Covert, copy editor of the Dalhousie Gazette, says he has not yet received the survey, but plans to answer it if it arrives.

Oops! The campus cards don't work

BY TAMARA BOND

The new campus cards are crap according to students who have invested in the plastic.

Cara Foods introduced a new campus card to residence students this fall as a change in the operation of the 1996 meal plan. Students arrived at residence this year to long line ups made longer by the hustle to receive the new ID cards. Cara Foods said that the new card would not only handle the students' campus needs provided by the old ID card, but would also include a meal plan and food spending account. Students were told the cards would be electronically swiped at meals and also would contain credit for food at any food vending outlet on campus.

Due to a bug in the computer chip, campus card vending machines have been shut-off indefinitely. Even when they are turned back on, students will be unable to check the cash balance on their card before making a purchase. Due to insufficient technology, the only way to check a card's balance before a purchase is to find a pop machine that isn't glitching.

The cards first showed their flaws within the first week of school when the residence meal hall electronic swipers went down. As a result, a hand record of each student who ate at each meal had to be kept. The faster technological method was all of a sudden taking more time to deal with than the old paper pass method.

As well, the list of improvements the card was supposed to provide that was given to students at registration was inaccurate. It left out important changes such as the fact that you can't leave and then return to the meal hall once your card has been swiped, and that twenty-four hour notice must be given to receive bagged lunches or late dinners. It also grossly over-estimated the abilities of the cards in a rather ambiguous fashion.

Information given to card holders said students would be credited four dollars for a missed cafeteria meal during each week. Many students did not comprehend that this was a four dollar total, whether they missed one meal or every meal. This is better than getting nothing back for missed meals, but at approximately nine dollars a day it definitely does not make the meal plan valuable for students who do not eat at the cafeteria on a regular basis.

Cara also spoke of what could be done with the potential four dollar refund. The money could not be refunded, but could be spent at any vending machine or

retail food service outlet on campus. Money could also be added to cards at the Robin's Donuts, Tim Horton's and Tiger Trap food outlets on campus or at the Dalhousie Food Services office in the Library.

Students receive a ten percent bonus on their first deposit, but if a student deposited money on their card with the intention of spending it where CARA suggested they would be very disappointed. The Howe Hall canteen doesn't accept the campus card because they are not part of Dalhousie

Food Services. To buy pop in a vending machine costs a \$1.25 with the card (more than students would pay off campus even with the ten percent bonus), and buying anything in an automatic vendor capable of containing multi-priced products is virtually impossible.

This card is not the card that can be used anywhere and swiped anywhere on campus. It is not as good as having money in your wallet because the technology is insufficient. The card does not even offer protection against theft of the money on it, as no pin number is required to use it.

Cara Foods is not happy with the complications either because each day machines are down and students are not using their cards. Cara loses potential profit. Legal actions for the losses are now being considered by Cara.

The card was supposed to give better value to the students for their money, but so far the cards have been nothing but trouble.

Dal helps metro residents choose new careers

BY MONICA GILLIS

Facing a career change just got easier for people in the supercity.

The Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Centre, a provincial government pilot project, opened last month in the Halifax Shopping Centre. The centre is run with the help of six metro universities, including Dalhousie.

The goal of the PLA Centre is to ease the transition of people facing a career change, or help people choose a career path according to their skills.

The centre assesses clients' past and present knowledge and helps them recognize the skills they have, or may need for a new career.

Part of the assessment includes university education. With the help of universities like Dalhousie, the centre tells clients what course they may need to take at university for their chosen career. As part of the universities' assessment, clients may be told that

based on their knowledge and work experience, they can take more advanced courses at university, even if they have never attended university in the past.

"A person who may be well read but hasn't taken any courses in literature can obtain a credit in say, first year english if they can demonstrate an understanding of the text," Douglas Myers, executive director of the P.L.A. Centre said.

After one month in operation, Myers said that the centre is getting a lot of people who are facing downsizing or lay-offs, and need to find a new job. He said that these people are lacking skills or training in the proper areas for available jobs, and aren't sure of what they can do.

Myers said the centre is not a job placement program. The PLA Centre helps people choose a career, and then sets them on the right path (in terms of university courses and training) towards obtaining their goal.

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