

Unemployed take refuge in universities

by Warren Opheim and CUP News Services

More students than ever are crowding into Canada's post-secondary institutions as they flee a student unemployment rate of nearly 15 per cent.

Early estimates indicate full-time university enrolment will reach 465,000 this year, an increase of about 2.4 per cent over last year. Researchers say another 300,000 full-time students will attend community colleges and 300,000 will study at universities part-time.

A preliminary phone survey of university enrolment conducted by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) has revealed that greater numbers of students who already have some post-secondary education are returning to school.

The numbers of first year university students, mostly responsible for the dramatic enrolment increases noted in the past two years, have dropped substantially in every province except Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island.

Both Canadian Federation of Students and Statistics Canada researchers say the upsurge in returning student enrolment is likely due to the impact of a long, drawn-out recession and this summer's especially bleak job market for young people.

Wright says educated people in today's economic climate are more likely to find work. According to Statistics Canada, the September unemployment rate for those between the ages of 20 and 24 with a university degree was 12.6 per cent,

compared with 13.8 per cent for those with only some post secondary education.

Returning students weathered an average summer unemployment rate of about 15 per cent. The numbers of unemployed returning students peaked in July, with 180,000 without a job.

Wright says she is surprised so many managed to scrape up enough money to go to school, at a time when they also face spiralling tuition fees, rising textbook costs and increasing rents.

Doug Lynd, chief of Statistics Canada's post-secondary education section, says many educational institutions in the early 70s expected enrolment to decline in this decade.

Failing to foresee the high unemployment rate among young people, they did accurately predict a drop in first year enrolment, he says.

Both Lynd and Wright say the tail-end of the baby boom is passing through the university system and there is now a smaller pool of people likely to attend post-secondary institutions. About 86 per cent

of all undergraduate students are between the ages of 18 and 24.

According to Max von Zur-Muehlen, president of the Canadian Society for the Study of Higher Education, the number of people in the 18 to 24 age group is expected to decrease from 3.3 million in the early 80s to 2.6 million in the mid-90s.

The AUCC survey says the most startling decrease in first year university enrolment appeared in B.C., where all three universities increased tuition fees substantially and the bursary portion of student loans has been eliminated.

The University of B.C. noted an 18 per cent drop in first year, the University of Victoria recorded a 19 per cent decrease and Simon Fraser University about six per cent. All three universities are conducting a survey to determine why so many students failed to show up.

First year enrolment also tumbled by 7.5 per cent in Manitoba, by 7 per cent in Saskatchewan, nearly four per cent in Alberta, by 3 per cent in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and by 2.4 per cent in Ontario.

Overall full-time undergraduate enrolment, however, increased the most dramatically at Quebec universities, which have the lowest tuition fees in the country. They recorded a four per cent increase.

Full-time enrolment increased by one per cent in Saskatchewan and half a per cent in Manitoba. Ontario only noted a 1.6 per cent increase and the Maritimes an average of a little more than two per cent.

Last year, 23,319 full-time and 4,187 part-time students enrolled at the U of A.

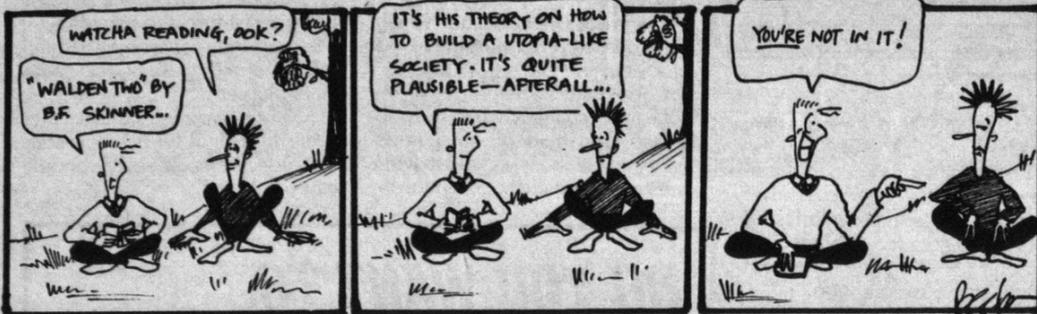
As of Oct. 25, 24,049 full-time and 4,160 part-time students enrolled for the 1984-85 term. Despite the slight decrease in the part-time population, total enrolment is up over last year by three per cent.

At Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland, however, full-time enrolment rose by nearly 16 per cent. A record increase in first-year students, about 135 per cent, has flooded the university because they are now only entering the system after grade 12 was instituted last year.

B.C. universities also noted a four per cent drop in overall undergraduate enrolment.

Yard Apes

by Hans Beckers



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GSA donates

by Kent Cochrane

The U of A Graduate Students' Association (GSA) donated \$1915 Monday to the university library system.

Bob Tinkess, the VP external of the GSA, said the library could use the money in any way they saw fit.

He added the GSA hoped the money would be used for the purchase of books and journals, since then it would be matched by an equal donation from the provincial government.

Peter Freeman, the Chief Librarian, said the library was "very pleased to receive the money."

He also said the library would be happy to follow the wishes of the GSA regarding the use of the money.

Tinkess said the GSA decided to donate part of their surplus funds to the library to help the library's lack of funding problem.

"We hope that other groups will see what we've done and will try to match it," he said.

He also noted that this was the first occasion of which he was aware that a student group had made such a substantial donation to the library.