

Universities increasingly relying on corporate money

BY SIMON GLEZOS AND MIKE COX

VICTORIA (CUP) — A recently released Statistics Canada report says Canadian universities are increasingly reliant on student and corporate money.

The report, which compares university revenue between 1994-

98, shows government grants and contracts have decreased by 13.3 percent, while revenue from student fees is up 29.6 percent.

Non-governmental grants and contracts have also risen by 20 percent.

Overall, university revenue across Canada was up 4.5 percent. In British Columbia, where

the provincial government has frozen tuition since 1995, government grants and contracts still provide more than half of university revenue.

But there is still an increased reliance on students and corporate fees.

In B.C., tuition and other student fees account for 16.3 percent of revenue, while non-governmental contracts, donations and sales provide a combined 27.5 percent of university revenue.

The statistics anger student leaders who say the federal government should be paying for post-secondary education, not students or corporations.

"Now it's a case of who's the richest and whose pockets are the deepest," said Summer McFadyen, University of Victoria

Student Society (UVSS) director of finance.

McFadyen says tuition fees should only be a minor part of university revenue, and that government education cuts leave universities open to corporate sponsorship.

"Corporations want to influence the research at universities," said Summer, pointing to McGill University where Sony has a representative on the curriculum committee because of the donations made to the music department. "It's all about the control of knowledge, research and learning."

Rob Fleming, the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) national executive in B.C., said corporations place limits on a university's freedom.

"The danger with corporate sponsorship is that eventually the strings attached get stronger and stronger," he said.

Fleming also stressed the importance of increased federal government funding so universities aren't reliant on tuition as a major part of its revenue.

The StatsCan report also provided a breakdown of university spending.

Salaries and benefits constituted the majority of university spending, though they have dropped from five years earlier.

Canadian universities also showed an increased allotment of funds to scholarships and bursaries, which accounted for \$314.2 million, up 43.1 percent from 5 years earlier.

CASA tells Ottawa to restore provincial transfer payments

BY LEIF LITTLE

WINNIPEG (CUP) — Preparing for the launch of their national education campaign later this month, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations is asking

students to help them in their lobby efforts.

At all of CASA's 17 member campuses, which Dal is a part of, students are being asked to sign posters with a brick wall motif, symbolizing a strong and

balanced foundation for future of post-secondary education.

CASA will present the signed posters to federal Members of Parliament on October 20. The organization will also officially launch its Education Builds a Nation campaign on that day as part of its national conference, being held October 18-22 in Ottawa.

University of Manitoba Students' Union President Steven Fletcher is a national CASA board member.

He says the new campaign will pressure Ottawa to boost transfer payments to the provinces.

"The U of M is a member of CASA, so the goal would be to lobby for increased transfer payments [to] the provinces so the provinces can spend more on university education," he said.

CASA is a coalition of 17 student unions and associations, representing 280,000 Canadian post-secondary students.

John Duford, CASA's government-relations coordinator, believes the federal government should increase transfer payments to the level they were a decade ago.

"We'd like to have the Canadian Health and Social Transfers restored to the early '90s level," said Duford. "We [CASA] call for \$4 billion over the next two years. We feel that \$4 billion is a satisfactory number to get things back on track."

Duford says CASA's October national conference will give student leaders an opportunity to address federal politicians.

Federal Minister of Finance Paul Martin will be attending, along with finance critics from other parties.

Representatives from the millennium scholarship fund will also be speaking at the conference, as well as representatives from Canada's major banks.

Student leaders will be paired up with individual MPs to discuss post-secondary issues.

In addition to the restoration of transfer payments, the Education Builds a Nation campaign calls for interest relief on student loans, the removal of GST on textbooks, and the elimination of discriminatory inter-provincial tuition fees.

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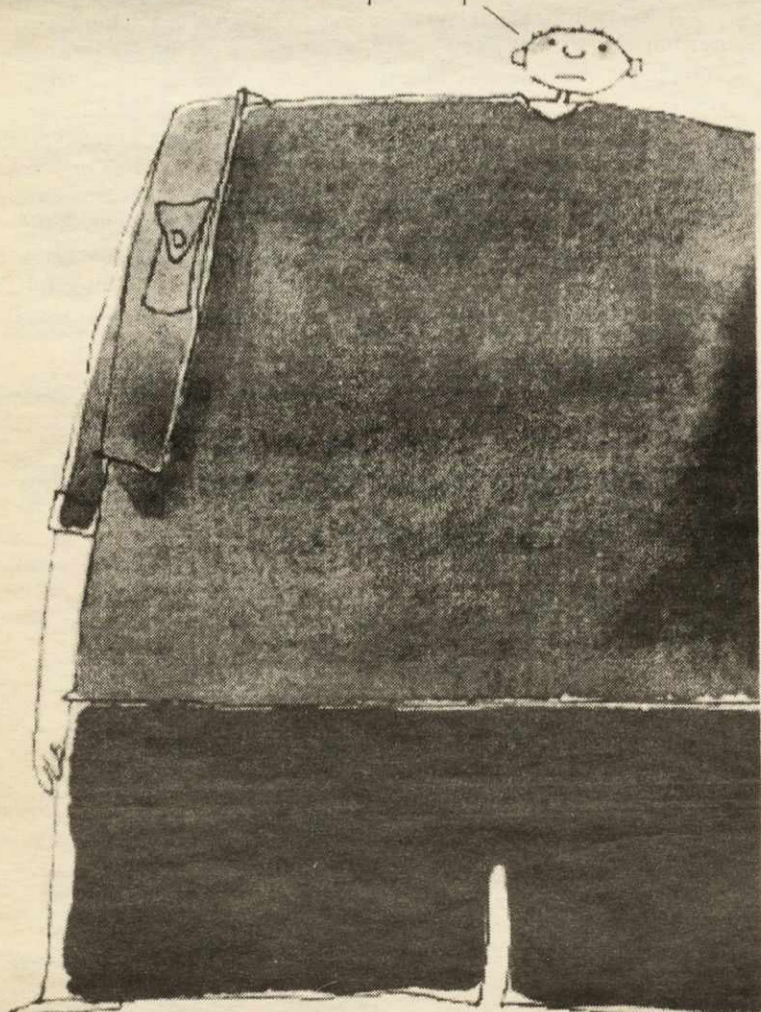
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