

cross-canada briefs

McGill finally gets its Women's Studies Major

BY SONIA VERMA

MONTREAL (CUP) — After five years of bureaucratic hassle students at McGill University can finally major in women's studies.

The university received the go-ahead from Quebec's Ministry of Education to implement the program over the summer. Before the proposal even made it to the provincial level, it underwent five stages of scrutiny at the university level. The last leg of the delay has been blamed on tough provincial criteria which are unique to Quebec.

Maureen Baker, who runs McGill's Centre for Research and Teaching on Women, said the university was very supportive throughout a process that involved an "astounding amount of bureaucracy."

As it stands, the new major is interdisciplinary, involving a greater number of compulsory credits than its popular minor counterpart. Students can choose from a variety of different departments to fulfill their degree requirements, skirting the usual confines of most departmental programs.

Women's Studies will, however, be relegated to non-departmental status. The means that control over resources, curriculum decisions and the program's overall success, will ultimately be determined by other departments. If other department decide not to offer women's studies courses, Baker will have to lobby the university.

Though women's studies programs have since 1970 gained recognition as an essential curriculum option at other Canadian institutions, it has remained, until now, conspicuously absent from McGill's offerings. Dalhousie has offered degree programs in women's studies since the early 1980s. A combined honours degree was added last year, bringing the total to four.

Students hit hardest by GST harmonization

BY DAVID COCHRANE

ST. JOHN'S, Nfld. (CUP) — Students could be hit the hardest by a deal between the Atlantic provinces and Ottawa to create a new region-wide 15 per cent sales tax. The new tax will replace the GST and the provincial retail sales taxes.

When it comes into effect next April, the tax will apply to all goods and services currently subject to the seven per cent GST.

For students that means paying more for text books as well as electricity and gas. For student parents it also means paying more for children's clothing.

"That will be a large chunk out of the student parent's income that they could put towards other things like rent or groceries," said Janet O'Connell, president of Memorial University's student parents group.

Also, because some student parents get social assistance, they are only eligible for a partial student loan. O'Connell said this leaves the average parent in Newfoundland with about \$6,000 a semester to pay for all university and living expenses, plus raise a small child.

Sales tax levels in Atlantic Canada currently average 18 per cent, so the new 15 per cent rate means there will be some tax relief on things like adult clothing, telephone bills and junk food.

But students relying on loans will be hit hard when they go to buy text books said Jennifer Smiley, president of the Students' Union of Nova Scotia.

"In Nova Scotia the maximum allowed amount under student aid for books and materials is \$700 a year," she said. "A 15 per cent tax will reduce the spending power of students on aid."

CASA interim director may be cleared of alleged embezzlement

BY RACHEL FUREY

OTTAWA (CUP) — Pat FitzPatrick still hasn't been charged with any crimes eight months after a national student organization alleged he embezzled almost one third of its budget.

Last January members of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) told the Canadian University Press they were planning to lay charges against FitzPatrick in Ottawa and New Brunswick. They alleged he misappropriated close to \$40,000 in student funds.

The association's national director said Ottawa police agreed to investigate two charges — writing a fraudulent cheque and theft of \$2,225. But Staff Sgt. Tom MacKay says the Ottawa police never received any complaint.

Alex Usher, then CASA's national director, said recently that no charges were laid in Ottawa because "it would have cost more to pursue them than we'd have gotten [from winning the case]."

But MacKay said it would not cost CASA anything to file a claim. He added CASA had the option of taking the case to small claims court

where no lawyer is needed and there is only a \$45 fee.

The new national director of CASA, Matthew Hough, said he wants to drop the issue.

"We've done what we could [and] I'm not going to lose any sleep over it," he said.

Most of the \$40,000 is alleged to have been misappropriated in Fredericton, where FitzPatrick served as vice-president of the University of New Brunswick student council.

Although Hough said he is now working on other issues that are more pertinent to students, some member schools don't want to see this issue die.

Originally, CASA alleged that FitzPatrick, who directed the organization in the fall of 1995, used his position as coordinator of a conference on higher education to gain access to and misuse the funds. The money in question was collected by CASA from individual student unions at its 10 member universities, including Dalhousie.

FitzPatrick, who is now working at a student paper at the University of New Brunswick, refused to comment on the situation.

Getting into the Groove

BY JEANNE H.-J. JU

For most Dal students, it's back to the books and into the familiar routines that help you deal with the stresses of university life. Yet for first year students — adjusting to the scene of crowded lecture halls and making the transition from summer agendas to ones with an academic crunch — it's much more difficult.

"At this time of year many first year students are concerned with meeting people and getting involved, but the greater workload and being left more on your own makes organization much more important," says Victor Day, a counsellor and psychologist on staff at Dalhousie Counselling and Psychological Services.

"Residence students may need to figure out ways of dealing with distractions and finding time and places to study, and to get their work done," he said. "Off-campus students

don't necessarily have the same distractions," noted Day, although he added that they may feel more of a need to get involved in social activities.

Simply attending classes and not getting behind in academic work is a suggested rule of

and time management to preparing for and writing exams.

Other workshops and programs offered focus on personal and academic development. Students can also discuss their career options at the Career Information Centre,

a resource mainly staffed by student volunteers.

The Dalhousie Counselling and Psychological Services offers free confidential counselling to about 10 to 15 % of students at Dalhousie University every year. Appointments can be made by dropping in to the Centre, located on the 4th floor of the Student Union Building, or by phoning 494-2081.

Study Skills registration will be held this Thursday and Friday Sept. 5th and

6th. Program and workshop schedules are posted around campus.



thumb. Among the workshops and programs offered by the Centre there is the Study Skills program. Offered early each term, the program helps students develop skills and strategies in areas ranging from motivation

Writing for the Gazette makes me very happy.