

Gee, university life at its most serene. Just think - only seven more days of classes.

Student demand should decide what courses are offered

Vocation over academics?

by Mark McCarvill

OTTAWA (CUP) — Canada's post-secondary education system would better prepare the country to meet the challenges of the future if market forces determined the make-up of university and college programs, the Senate National Finance Committee was told this week.

Michael Walker, director of the Vancouver-based Fraser Institute, a privately funded think tank on national issues, told the senators that student demand, not the university bureaucracy, should decide which courses are offered and which are eliminated. "Under normal circumstances, and in the case of most products and services, we rely on the demand side to discipline the production process," Walker said.

According to his proposal, students would be administered a family income test. If their family income is less than a set limit, — he suggested \$40,000 — they would be given the money the federal and provincial governments presently spend per student on PSE. This system of "vouchers" was recom-

mended last year by the Macdonald Royal Commission on the economy.

Walker said universities would have to "cancel courses and eliminate departments in response to changes in society." He mentioned the recent closing of the school of architecture at the University of Toronto as a good example of 'market forces' at work.

"To see the central issue here, one need only contemplate what would be the variety and distribution of post-secondary institutions in Canada if, for the past ten years, the budgets for all of our national education institutions had been distributed first to the students, who would have had freedom to dispense this to institutions as they saw fit," Walker said. He said there would be many universities of varying standards, all offering degrees.

In addition to "distorting the market", Walker told the Senators that the present funding arrangement contributes to the economic stratification of society, not to equal access to education. "About seventy per cent of all (government) spending on post-secondary insti-

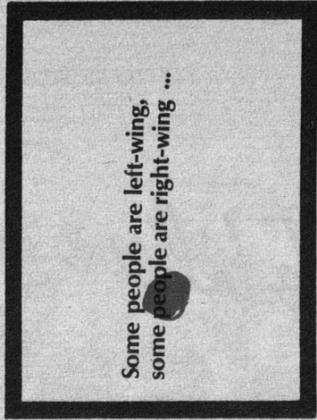
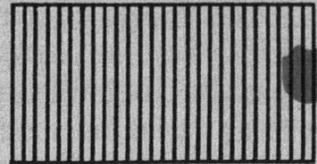
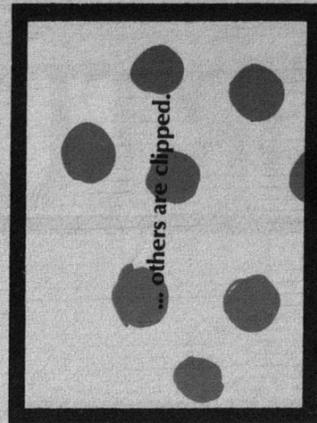
tutions is done on behalf of individuals whose family income is above the national average," he said. Since persons with university degrees tend to have higher incomes, Walker argued, "it appears that, to a considerable extent, (government PSE spending) involves transferring money from those whose incomes are average or below average to those who are now or will be wealthy."

Senator Henry Hicks, former President of Dalhousie University, said he was "appalled that Walker had put the whole thing, as we might have expected from an economist, on a dollar and cents basis." He said society has an obligation to provide its young with a liberal education, not to simply "train them for a job."

Senator John Stewart, also from Nova Scotia, summed up the presentation, saying "Mr. Walker is giving us virtually the same analysis in 1986 that Adam Smith gave us in 1776."

The Senate Committee plans to write its report on post-secondary financing in the summer for release in the fall.

Photo: Rob Schmidt



The Gateway

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A new Arts?

by Audrey Djuwita

Restoration of the 71-year-old Arts building will start this mid-July and take about 18 months to complete, assuming that everything goes according to plan, said Brian McQuitty, Associate VP (Academic).

"Obviously, time had taken its toll and the purpose of the reconstruction is to restore the building to its former glory.

"We are going to modernize the mechanical and electrical systems in the building to meet the present fire and safety code. The roof is in poor shape, although structurally the building is in good shape," said McQuitty.

McQuitty said that the outward appearance of the building will be retained and the interior will remain about the same. There is going to be a certain amount of movement of partition walls to improve the space efficiency in the building.

After the restoration, the Arts building will bring under one roof the departments of Romance languages, Germanic languages, Slavic and East European Studies, Comparative Literature, and East Asian languages and literatures.

"Given reasonable maintenance, the building needs a major renovation every 50 years," said McQuitty. The budget for the restoration is \$9.7 million.

"We'll have to get everybody out of the building during the renovation. Consequently trailers will be used as classrooms," McQuitty said. "We have two sites for the trailers, one is the Algonquin Apartment area and the other is the greenhouse area by the Earth Sciences Building."

The Algonquin site will accommodate 22 trailers while the greenhouse area accommodates 17.

Two of the greenhouses will be partially retained while the rest will be demolished.

"It's getting hard to maintain these greenhouses and the surrounding buildings block the sun.

"We chose the Algonquin site because there was no alternatives. We did consider other possibilities. If we use several rooms in Kelsey Hall, there will be problems for the Housing and Foods and inconvenience for the students. If we use the parking lot of HUB, it will interfere with parking on campus, and there's no sense in putting the trailers in the H.T. Coutts park because we just spent some money to landscape it," McQuitty explained.

"And we can't put all the trailers in one area (the greenhouse area) because there are problems with the fire codes. The cost factor to have two-storey trailers is just too expensive."

At one point, a pedway connecting the Arts and Business buildings was considered as part of the renovation project; however, the idea did not materialize.

"We are currently discussing the possibility of expanding Rutherford westward, but no decision has been made. Personally, I wonder what the impact will be on the Arts building. Will it detract the aesthetic aspect of the building? I would like to have some types of drawings to allow me to get a feel for the situation," said McQuitty.

"Aesthetically, I think the Arts building is one of the most pleasant buildings on campus. I hope they'd be able to restore it to its former grandeur. The building has historical significance, particularly for the university. I am excited about the project," said McQuitty.

