

NEWS

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MPHEC: Universities must trim operating costs

by Gordon Loane

Student leaders at UNB are concerned about the future quality of education following the release of the Maritime Provinces' Higher Education Commission's 1994-95 financial plan.

Universities will have to trim operating costs to balance the books next year. Cutting staff and academic programs are some of the options universities will have to consider, the MPHEC report said.

"The Commission has pointed out the terrible bind government underfunding has put universities in," said Hugh Macneil, VP External of the UNB Student Union. "When the New Brunswick government freezes funding, as they said they would do this year, it means overcrowded classrooms, deteriorating facilities and a host of other problems for students," he said. "In addition, it's clear students cannot afford to shoulder any more of the burden of funding post-secondary education."

In 1981-82, students' fees covered 13.6% of UNB's operating expenses while today the total has risen to 23.8%, the MPHEC points

out. The total is expected to stay near this level for next year despite a tuition fee freeze at UNB.

Macneil is also concerned about the high level of student unemployment and thinks the McKenna government should do more to address the problem this summer. Student unemployment topped 20% last summer up from 15.5% just three years ago.

"One of the most disturbing findings of the MPHEC report was the apparent decrease in university participation by members of families in the lowest income bracket," Macneil said. "This flies in the face of government efforts to get people off social assistance."

The MPHEC report says the number of students obtaining student aid who are from families with incomes of less than \$10,000 per year has been steadily declining since 1989, going down from 579 in 1989 to 332 in 1994.

The report says during the same period the number of students from families with incomes between \$40,000 to \$50,000 have increased from 516 to 884.

In the meantime, the Association of Atlantic Universities, made up of

all university presidents in the Maritimes, says funding is not meeting the costs of increased enrollment and inflation. The result, the Association told the MPHEC, is increased student/faculty ratios and a lack of funding for libraries and building maintenance.

Data supplied to the Commission from the Federation of New Brunswick Faculty Associations, a group representing professors in the province, showed the rapid rate of increasing cost of library acquisitions compared to the general increase in the Consumer Price Index in recent years. The cost of serial publications and academic books far exceeds the CPI, the data indicated.

Faculty salaries at Maritime universities continue to lag behind the rest of Canada the MPHEC report concludes.

Median salaries for faculty at all ranks hit a Maritime average of just over \$58,000 in 1992-93. In the rest of Canada the median salary for all ranks stood at just over \$72,000 in 1992-93.

"Maritime universities have to compete for faculty in a national and international market," the Commission report concludes.

In recent years, government grants and tuition fee increases each year helped somewhat to offset operating cost increases. Universities got an extra bonus as enrollments jumped each year.

While enrollments continue to rise at most universities in the Maritimes, that trend is not universal in 1993-94.

While Mount Allison in Sackville experienced a 6.1% increase in enrollment, Saint Thomas an 8.5% increase and Université de Moncton an 1.1% increase, UNB enrollment was off 0.7%, according to figures supplied to the MPHEC.

The most significant drop in enrollment occurred in first-year on the Fredericton campus. Preliminary estimates put the drop at 15.8% in 1993-94, according to a recent report released by the Registrar's office.

Provincial governments are in a bind when it comes to funding for post secondary education.

Up until five years ago, transfers from the government of Canada under "Established Programs Funding" provided around 80% of provincial funding for post secondary education. The federal government

now provides less than 70% of provincial funding, the MPHEC report points out.

"In addition," the impact of the recession on the Ontario economy has also resulted in a substantial cut in equalization revenues to the Maritime Provinces, by an amount of the same order as the contribution by the provincial governments to universities," the MPHEC report continued. "The recession has also severely limited growth in the provinces own source revenues."

In general, the MPHEC concludes that the prospects for increased funding to universities from government "does not look very positive." The report concludes that there is little waste or inefficiency in the system giving universities little leeway in trimming costs.

The MPHEC says universities cannot hope to make up for the loss of government funding through student fee increases either.

"The level of general fee increase that would be required would be too great for the student population to absorb," the Commission said. "Universities will therefore be faced with the prospect of reducing their actual costs of operation."

Eating disorders explained

by Cheryl McLean

Ten per-cent of men and 25% of women have some type of eating disorder.

Last Monday, student nurses at UNB set up information booths during the dinner hours throughout the UNB and STU campuses to highlight Eating Disorders Week, which ran from February 1 through the 7th.

Heather Neustaedter, a first-year nursing student said that the purpose of the information booths is to promote awareness.

Neustaedter went on to say that if a person has had an eating disorder throughout high school, they could now be at the end of their rope.

With this information provided by the nurses, a person with this problem will realize they are not alone.

This program has been going for at least four years at UNB, but the campaign runs across Canada. The theme this year is "Breaking Free: Celebrating Our Natural Sizes."

"We want to help students break free of the belief that thinness means success, happiness and beauty," said UNB nursing instructor Kathy Weaver.

"At the booths, students can learn about healthy eating-rather than dieting-and finding a balance between exercise, diet and the stresses of university life."

The two main eating disorders are Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia Nervosa. Both these disorders are associated with the fear of gaining

weight and low self-esteem.

Anorexia is visible through drastic weight loss, because the individual sees themselves as fat no matter how tiny they might be. These individuals eat very little and exercise obsessively.

Bulimia, on the other hand, is characterized by fluctuation in weight, caused by binge eating. This is followed by some form of purging to try to get rid of the unwanted calories.

One should be aware of the warning signs of anorexia and bulimia which include: excessive concern about weight; unusual eating habits; depression, guilt or shame about eating; and feeling fat when not overweight.

If any of these signs are evident, counselling is often helpful when overcoming an eating disorder.

But the problem is getting worse due to stress, peer pressure and society's notion that staying thin is best. Neustaedter said that we are taught this from the beginning of elementary school.

The problem is increasing but doctors are diagnosing more cases and people are becoming more aware.

However, many people show symptoms of one of the two disorders, but do not fall directly into the category and go unnoticed.

Many times an eating disorder stems from the lack of control in other areas of an individual's life. There is always reassurance in controlling their life, and some show this with their body, through their exercise and eating patterns.

UNB student studying in Ukraine

by Jeffrey Melanson

Ever consider studying in the Ukraine? Somehow though, the thought of the 'evil Commies' whisking you off to a Siberian work camp has managed to hold you back?

Relax, the Cold War is over and the opportunity is now available through a new exchange program between UNB and the Donetsk Polytechnical University.

The new program will allow the two universities to exchange students and/or faculty members to participate in joint research projects.

The first participant in this new international program is 22-year old Greg Chernoff. The Fredericton native is a senior economics student at UNB. He signed up for the four-

month exchange knowing that the Ukraine's political and economic climate is less than stable right now.

Chernoff, who departed after Christmas, said that possibly one of his biggest challenges would be communicating.

"I've spent the past four years studying Russian so I have a basic understanding of the language, but it'll take me some time to adjust to speaking it everyday."

Chernoff has been preparing himself mentally for the trip, studying the culture, and most importantly, vowing to keep an open mind.

Chernoff will also have the opportunity to trace his roots while in Eastern Europe.

His ancestors, the Russian Doukhobors, come from a region known as Trans-Caucasia which is about three hours from where he is

studying.

After almost a century of communist rule, Chernoff cites one major challenge is to motivate the Ukraine people to become more productive.

He will encounter this challenge head on while there, because in addition to his regular course load, he will be teaching an economics course in English.

Although Chernoff is not rushing to make any long-term career decisions, he is planning to return in June to complete his arts degree and then maybe on to law school.

"I like to take things as they come. That's the attitude I have about this trip. I want to do my best learn the language and the culture and come back older and wiser."

With an opportunity such as this, there is no doubt he will.

Donahue,

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in letters to the Student Union stating why they thought they should be one of the representatives from UNB.

FitzPatrick said that Council would debate on who would go. He said that probably a couple of people from the Student Union, and two or three other people would be chosen if the show still plans to air.

"At this point in time I would be just as happy not to have students go to Donahue. It's time for the students on campus to deal with the issues that Yaqzan highlighted,

namely the lack of a comprehensive discrimination policy, and really severe flaws in the complaint procedure," he said.

FitzPatrick went on to say, "It is more important to address the issues raised, than go gallivanting off to New York for this."

Stein said that the producers first heard of the issue when a story about the campus controversy reached *The New York Times*.

The show then made the decision to investigate the story, wanting both sides of the issue. A couple of days later, a producer contacted Yaqzan hoping to get an interview, but was turned down.

Stein stated that they wanted to

know about students reaction to the statements made by Yaqzan, what action was taken against him, and the general feeling around campus about the whole issue.

Stein explained that show ideas come from stories in newspapers from all over the country, news wire services, and viewer mail.

The team of seven producers, and four associate producers work together to come up with ideas and bring a show together.

"It can take anywhere from one day to one month to organize a show. If something happens (a news story) in a day, they can have a show on it within a day or two," Stein said.