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Bi-weekly pay for Grad Students comes at a price to teaching assistantships

Gordon Loane

The Brunswickan

Graduate students at UNB who receive funding through graduate teaching assistantships, graduate research assistantships, or other research assistantships, will begin to receive pay cheques every two weeks, effective October 13th.

The university is moving from a monthly payroll system to a bi-weekly payroll system, following requests from graduate students in recent years.

UNB's Acting Comptroller and Director of Financial Services, Larry Guitard, said because of the cut-off dates for payroll processing and the registration dates for graduate students, it is not possible to have the new bi-weekly system in place during the month of September.

As a result, graduate students will receive a full month's pay on Friday, September 29th, and will then receive pay cheques every two weeks after that, beginning on Friday, October 13th.

The move to a bi-weekly pay cheque for the graduate teaching assistantship component of a graduate student's total funding will, however, result in an approximate

five percent reduction in take-home pay because of deductions for employment insurance and Canada Pension Plan contributions, Guitard explained.

"After reviewing Revenue Canada rules and what other universities are doing, we've determined that the Graduate teaching assistantship component is really employment income and should be paid as such with EI and CPP deductions," he said.

The decision will also have an impact on the university of an estimated \$10,000 to \$15,000 annually,

because contributions to EI and CPP must also be paid by the employer.

Guitard stressed that the EI and CPP deductions apply only to the graduate teaching assistantship component of a graduate student's pay and do not apply to either

graduate research assistantships or other research assistantships, which are considered scholarship income.

While the situation varies from graduate student to graduate student, Guitard said the graduate teaching assistantship component of a graduate student's total funding in general, tends to be the smallest piece of a graduate student's overall pay and it is only that smallest piece that will be affected.

The move will result in an approximate five percent reduction in take-home pay

F'ton youths protest white supremacist at his PEI trial

K Brookland

The Brunswickan

Some UNB students travelled to P.E.I. over the holiday weekend but vacationing was definitely not what they had in mind.

They went to Charlottetown to protest the actions of Dwayne Finlayson, an Island white supremacist. Finlayson was in court September 1st, on two charges of assault and one charge of causing a disturbance.

The charges stemmed from an April 28th racially-motivated attack on three Japanese women which involved Finlayson pushing a slice of pizza into the face of one young woman, yelling racist remarks and obscenities, and beating a man who came to the aid of the Asian women.

Finlayson pleaded guilty to the charges before Provincial Court Judge, John Douglas. Douglas then ordered the 29 year old Finlayson to serve three sentences of four months for each charge, to be served concurrently. He will also be on probation for 24 months after his sentence has been served.

The judge said he was not ordering the sentences to run consecutively in the hope the move would help the Charlottetown man change his violent pattern of behaviour.

Crown Attorney, John MacMillan, however, is skeptical Finlayson has any remorse for his racially-charged crimes and believes he is an unlikely candidate to change his troubled ways.

MacMillan told the court Finlayson, who has a long criminal record, has not once made the slightest effort during any of his numerous probationary periods in the past to clean up his act.

The Crown Attorney described the April 28th attacks as "despicable, cowardly, unprovoked acts."

The judge appeared to be acknowledging the presence of the large crowd of anti-racist protesters who poured into the courtroom when he told Finlayson the public would "like to have me tar and feather you."

Protest organizer, Shane Martinez, 19, of Fredericton, felt the sentence didn't match the crime. "I

think it's outrageous there's somebody like this in the Maritimes who's getting four months of concurrent sentences when it [the sentence] can be three times as long," he said. "The hatred he promotes in our communities is completely unacceptable."

Martinez is convinced Finlayson will be quick to rekindle his white-power campaign once he is released. "He's going to wear this [sentence]... as a badge of honour... I have no doubt the Heritage Front (the white supremacist group Finlayson has tried to woo high school students to join) membership cards are going to keep popping up around Charlottetown," said Martinez.

Jonathan Petrie, of Nova Scotia, and a member of the East Coast Bootboys, a white-power 'gang,' has pleaded guilty to assault and disturbance charges for the same incident.

Petrie, however, failed to appear in court for sentencing. The judge set an October 4th date for Petrie's sentencing. "The reason he didn't show up today will be dealt with at that time," said Douglas.



Kevin Molyneux Photo / The Brunswickan

Jubilant UNB Frosh performed a variety of athletic feats including organized crowd surfing at the Aitken University Centre Blast-Off Monday.

Blast-Off full of excitement

Todd Anderson

The Brunswickan

Monday night's spirited Blast-Off at the Aitken Centre was the starting point of Frosh Week for hundreds of first year students.

The Blast-Off was the first time all new UNB students were brought together. The night was full of games which got Frosh up close and personal with their new fellow students. Games included an obstacle course including piggy-backing, a peanut push, and leap-frogging, among other things.

Master of Ceremonies, Jeff "Flappy" Flanagan, warmed up the crowd with UNB cheers, and later choreographed a "UNB 2004" group photo.

The Orientation 2000 Committee presented the students with a host of speakers who passed on UNB 'Survivor tips,' and familiarized them with student services. Among the speakers was Julie Parent from SMART-PACC, (Student Managed Alcohol Response Team Promoting Alcohol Consciousness on Campus) who led a demonstration on alcohol pass-out recovery.

The highlight of the night came when a Bridge's frosh dirty danced with a chair to a

Brittney Spears song in the Strange Talents Competition. The night ended with the Red Shirts dousing unsuspecting Frosh with a water cannon as they left the Aitken Centre.

Other Frosh Week events included Movie Nights, Adventure Day, the Comedy Show, Let's Make a Deal, Disco Fever, Shinerama Day, and Orientation Underground.

With this pin, I thee invest... Pomp and circumstance at UNB Commencement

Gordon Loane

The Brunswickan

Pomp and circumstance mixed with solid partisan cheers were in full evidence Tuesday as well over 1,000 first year students were officially welcomed to the UNB Fredericton campus in a half hour Commencement Ceremony held at the Lady Beaverbrook Gymnasium.

Complete with an academic procession, a pinning ceremony, various welcoming speeches, and a few student-led cheers, Commencement is a ceremony now in its sixth year at a university that first opened its doors 215 years ago.

"This is an important day for you in a new, exciting environment," said UNB President, Elizabeth Parr-Johnston.

Citing UNB's long tradition and a "cutting edge learning" environment, Parr-Johnston said students should begin looking forward to the time when they will participate in a similar academic procession to the one at Commencement. "Your goal is to graduate and we want that to happen," said Parr-Johnston, who became UNB's first female President in 1996.

Despite a shortage of pins, she then invited first year students who did receive a 2000 UNB Fredericton pin at the door of the event, to choose a partner next to them and participate in the traditional "pinning ceremony."

"With this pin you are now invested as a member of the University of New Brunswick community."

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Kevin Molyneux / The Brunswickan

More than she bargained for - UNB Frosh were apparently required to do warm-up exercises including push-ups in preparation for the Blast-Off events.

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