

THE BRUNSWICKAN



NATIONAL NEWS

FROM UNIVERSITY NEWSROOMS ACROSS CANADA

Queen's students take over president's office

by David Leibl, National Bureau Chief
National CUP Bureau

Five Queen's University students are occupying the office of the university president in protest of a Queen's proposal to have undergraduate tuition fees deregulated.

The students locked themselves inside an administrative area outside the office of principal William Leggett Monday morning and were still inside as of press time late Tuesday afternoon.

The students say they are upset over an application Queen's has made to the Ontario government to be a test case for the deregulation of arts and science tuition fees.

Deregulation would give the university freedom to raise tuition fees far above limits set by the government, a move Queen's says is necessary to remain a top-calibre institution. The university has proposed raising tuition fees by 10 per cent each year over the next four years to approximately \$5,900.

The students who have locked themselves in Leggett's office say the cost of a university education is already too expensive and fear deregulation would mean lofty tuition fee increases that would put Queen's out of reach for all but the wealthiest students.

Robin Hartley, a political science

student taking part in the occupation, says students at Queen's have repeatedly told university administrators that they're opposed to deregulation but have received little response. Ninety-two per cent of undergraduate students who voted in a referendum last year, she said, voted to oppose tuition fee deregulation.

"We've done the referendum and petitions but nothing has worked so far," she told Canadian University Press from a cell phone she brought inside Leggett's office.

"We're still waiting for a response."

Hartley said the protesters will continue to occupy the office until the university meets a list of demands that includes a tuition freeze in all programs and the withdrawal of the university's request to the government that tuition fees be deregulated.

The students may be in the office for some time.

Leggett said he's not about to concede to any demands but added he has no plans to ask the students to leave. Although power to the office has been cut, Leggett said the students have a right to express their beliefs, even if that means locking themselves inside his office.

"This is a place of open debate. We're going to do nothing to hinder this. We understand from time to time that they need a pulpit to do this from."

Leggett dismissed allegations that

the university has refused to discuss the issue of deregulation with students. He said the faculty of arts and sciences has been discussing deregulation for over a year and has actively sought student input.

He also said concerns that deregulation would make education at Queen's too expensive for some students have been met.

In its proposal to the province, Queen's said it would commit to dedicating 30 per cent of any additional tuition from currently regulated programs to financial assistance for students. The university has pledged that under deregulation it would match those funds with an equivalent amount of money received from private donations.

Joel Duff, the Ontario chair of the Canadian Federation of Students, said that even with plans to provide financial support to some students, deregulated tuition could quickly become too costly even for students from middle-income families.

Tuition fees in already deregulated programs like medicine, commerce and dental hygiene are soaring, he said, sometimes by thousands of dollars over a span of just two or three years.

Duff said his organization is supporting the protesting students. About 100 Queen's students rallied outside Leggett's office on Monday to show support for the five students inside.



Joy Cummings Photo

Students on the Fredericton Campus of the University of New Brunswick celebrated the spirit of Christmas with a contribution of 2,848 pounds of food for the Fredericton Community Kitchen through the Meal Exchange program. The food came via donations of "Charwell's Change," which are the meal chips students receive when they miss a residence dining hall meal they have already paid for. Getting ready to take the stacks of frozen foods, condiments and canned goods to the kitchen are, left to right, Amaya Arcelus; Misty Wade, UNB Meal Exchange co-ordinator; Tim Vail; Rahul Raj, founder of the Meal Exchange program holding Charwell's change; and Mark MacRae.

TASC works to find missing Canadians

by Ben Conoley and Pierre Loiselle

With Martin Luther King Jr. Day fast approaching, on the 21st of January, much work is being put into the fight against racism.

One organization in particular, Toronto Action for Social Change (TASC), is rallying for what they feel is a less general, and very important cause: those Canadians who have disappeared since the Sept 11th attacks.

Matthew Barrens from TASC is in charge of organizing walks for those Canadians who have disappeared and took place this past January 13th-15th. In addition to the walks, TASC also encourages solidarity rallies in communities all across Canada.

TASC is a non-violent direct-action social group who has been operating for the past seven years. They focus of protesting poverty, welfare discrimination, sexism, militarism, and corporate greed.

Usually TASC organizes walks around military institutions and parliament buildings on Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, but decided to incorporate a modern issue with King's visions. "Martin Luther King JR had serious questions about the world in which we live. They weren't just questions about

how we get along, but they were questions about the way we treat one another in terms of the economy, in terms of racism, in terms of war. This year we felt it was especially appropriate to focus on what we are terming "the disappeared of Canada."

"The walk itself is to highlight the fact that hundreds and hundreds of people, and we still don't know how many have literally disappeared after Sept 11th. And there were others who had disappeared before them who were thrown into prison and not charged but kept there for vague notions and reasons of national security and we want to know who they are, how many were taken in, why they were taken in, and why the government has not released this information," Barrens said regarding why TASC feels this cause is of such importance.

"We usually associate that term (disappeared) with Central American torture states where one day you're on the street as a labour organizer or as a student activist and the next you find yourself in prison. I did a lot of work in Central America and South Africa doing solidarity work in the 80s and it's quite frightening to see how similar we are beginning to see the behavior that we supported as a Canadian Government overseas in the 70s and 80s starting to show up increasingly here at home.

Especially in light of Sept. 11th," says Barrens commenting on the seemingly increasing restriction of civil freedoms by governments in the Western Hemisphere.

When asked how he and his colleagues were able to retrieve information on people who have been taken without any notice, Barrens replied, "We've been in touch with lawyers such as Rocco Golotti who is one of the leading lawyers in terms of handling what's known as security cases and security certificate cases. He and other refugee lawyers, when they have gone out to places like the Metro West Detention Center in Toronto have spoke with refugee and immigration case individuals and as well as other organizations. For example, the Arab, Middle Eastern, or Muslim communities and they have reported that people have been arrested and thrown behind bars for no particular reason other than who they are. We saw especially after Sept 11th, there was an incredible rise in the blatant racism that exists in Canada, and especially against specific targeted groups."

The number of individuals who have gone missing since Sept 11th have been estimated from four dozen by the Toronto Star, to more than 700 by Golotti.

Barrens says Bill C-36, which was recently passed by parliament, has made

it easier, and legal for the government to take such action.

"Bill C-36, or what we're calling the Suspension of Canadian Liberties act, is written very specifically about activists and people who threaten what is known as economic security of Canada."

"One of the things that disturbs Jean Chretien is domestic dissent. You can see that going back through decades and decades of his work with the Trudeau government, when he was justice minister during the declaration of marshal law in 1970, and also through things such as APEC and demonstrations which took place against the OAS in Windsor and in Quebec City, that Chretien has never had a problem suspending civil liberties, but he doesn't like it if it's technically illegal. This bill makes it legal.

"What we have been seeing for years and years is that members of specific targeted communities, the Black community, the Native community, the Hispanic community, the Middle Eastern community have been on-going targets of racist police and RCMP harassment. What this law does is it allows the police far-ranging powers in terms of their ability to, if they feel like it, just pull people in off the street, hold them for 72 hours, not charge them and release them with very

severe restrictions on their civil rights. For example, you would have to report into the police station once a week, you would not be allowed to attend demonstrations, you're not allowed to associate with certain individuals."

"It's a very calculated and well-planned assault on people's civil rights, which has nothing to do with terrorism; it's about control. The more we see the gap between the rich and the poor widen in Canada and around the world, the more we're seeing increased police powers to control the anger and rage which is going to erupt and continues to erupt in response to that."

"We have seen these kinds of actions in the past any time Canada has been involved in a war, or some kind of imperialist act. Weather that's taking over Native lands in Western Canada, or participation in the Boar War, WWI, II, and Korea, we have suspended civil rights for specific communities."

Some of the instances Barrens makes reference to include retaliation against the labour movement after WWI, and the treatment of Japanese, Italian, and German—Canadians during WWII.

People who wish to spread awareness of such issues are encouraged to hold solidarity protests in their towns on and around Martin Luther King Jr. day.

Get your passport to a safe and healthy career with the SAFETY START PROGRAM



New Brunswickers aged 15 to 29 are now eligible for a **FREE two-day course** in emergency first aid and occupational health and safety. The provincial government and a team of partners are offering the 14-hour course to decrease the number of injuries sustained by young people in the workplace.

Once you complete the course, you'll receive a Health and Safety Passport which you can add to your resume of skills when looking for a job. The Province of New Brunswick will give hiring preferences to those who complete the training. The Department of Training and Employment Development will organize the course when and where numbers warrant.

Find out more about the
Safety Start Program
or register for training by calling
1-888-298-1599 or find us
on the Internet at
www.safetystart.gnb.ca

New Brunswick
Nouveau Brunswick

Training & Employment Development
Formation et Développement de l'emploi

Club

624

\$1.50 Beer Thursdays
\$2.00 Beer Fridays

*Win a Party For Your House
*Win a weekend getaway to Halifax

Beat The Clock

Fredericton's Newest Alternative Dance Bar
624 Queen St.

*See Bartender for details