

National Campus News

From University Newsrooms Across Canada

The Picaro getting no help from Student Union

Halifax student newspaper may have to close

Andrew Gillis

The Gazette

HALIFAX (CUP) – The Picaro, Mount Saint Vincent University's student newspaper, may fold because it hasn't seen any funding from the student union.

The union hasn't given the newspaper the student money that makes up 40 to 60 per cent of its budget.

The loss of funding leaves Melissa Melanson, editor-in-chief of the Picaro, in the awkward position of trying to find \$15,000. She said the future doesn't look good for the paper.

"From their position they are not funding us because they don't have the money," Melanson said. "It really isn't feasible for a school our size to have a paper without funding. We print 3,000 issues every two weeks. In order for us to have money on top to cover more than just our printing

costs, we'd have to run a paper that is extremely small and almost entirely advertising. That isn't a quality product for our students."

Melanson says the union money covers only the printing costs, and does not cover staff honouraria and other bills. Melanson, like the rest of her staff, hasn't been paid yet this year.

"We are the only form of student media on campus. So as far as voicing student concerns, we are it. There is nothing else. And really, why shouldn't Mount Saint Vincent have a newspaper?"

Throughout the summer and school year, the Picaro staff say they were assured by student union that they would be receiving money. But during a union meeting in December, a budget was passed with no money in it for the Picaro.

Colette Nickerson, president of the university's student union, says expenses occurred by past union executives is just one of the reasons why the Picaro didn't receive

funding this year.

"I don't think that we should say the Picaro is the only place that we cut the funds," Nickerson says. "Funds were cut in every single line item in our budget."

Nickerson said the situation is incorrectly being made to look like a student union vendetta against the Picaro.

Nickerson said the existing contract between the student union and the Picaro was only agreed to in principle. Part of that contract states the newspaper would pay for 40 to 60 per cent of its operating budget. That contract was breached last year, Nickerson says, in several different ways. The main breach being the Picaro's failure to raise the 40 per cent of their budget not covered by the student union.

"We ended up giving them over \$25,000," Nickerson said. "Meanwhile they only raised \$1,800 by themselves. So, I think a lot of the blame

and responsibility has to lie with the paper right now ... Not only that, but our student newspaper has not been run in a fashion that you would expect. They haven't been accountable to us."

Melanson says those accusations are ridiculous.

"It was the responsibility of that year's student union to keep watch of their funds," she said. "Now we are being punished for it."

Nickerson thinks that it is very important for the university to have a student newspaper, but she says it cannot continue to be run as it has in the past.

"I want the budget broken down on a piece of paper showing where the money is spent," Nickerson said.

"If we thought we would get the funds if we showed the student union our budget, we would do it," Melanson argued. "But we know that they are not going to change their mind on this one."

Two arrested protesting weapons manufacturing

Melinda Gibson

The Ontario

GUELPH, ON. (CUP) – Two people were arrested at a protest last week against Kitchener's small arms manufacture Diemaco.

Over 120 people gathered January 15th at a non-violent demonstration organized by Homes Not Bombs, a pacifist and anti-poverty activist group that believes federal monies should not be spent on arms, but on housing and other social needs.

The decision to hold the demonstration was made after Diemaco rejected the group's request to allow two dozen

members to inspect its premises for violations of international law.

"We came to Diemaco to voice our outrage that this government-funded corporation creates instruments of death in our community while thousands of people go hungry and without shelter in our neighbourhoods," said protestor Josh Shook.

Diemaco is a sector of the Devtek Corporation, a Canadian public company that can only sell arms through the federal government.

In previous years, Homes Not Bombs has taken part in large-scale demonstrations. An attempt was made last year to mockingly

turn the Department of National Defence into the Housing Department. That protest resulted in 54 arrests.

Anne Healey a representative from the Canadian Defence Industry Association has stated that Diemaco's foreign clients are limited to Canada's NATO allies. Diemaco has confirmed this.

Self-proclaimed as "Canada's leading small arms manufacturer" Diemaco designs and produces small arms such as the C7 Assault Rifle, the M203A1 Grenade Launcher, and CG762 Chain Gun.

• with files from Josh Shook and David Sone

Universities eye Thompson deal

Jaime Kirzner-Roberts

The McGill Daily

MONTREAL (CUP) – Multi-media giant Thomson Corporation could soon market courses online bearing the names of 18 universities worldwide.

The list of 18 includes McGill University, the University of Toronto and the University of British Columbia.

Thomson is close to signing a deal with Universitas 21 – a consortium of universities that has banded together to forge private-sector links and market their prestigious names.

If the deal is accepted, Thomson will market a new line of web-based university courses bearing the names of participating universities. In return for the use of their names, universities will receive royalties on all profits made by Thomson from the initiative.

One university considering signing on to the deal with Thomson is McGill. "We are in the midst of looking at the material and trying to make a decision," said principal Bernard Shapiro last week. He expects a decision to be made in the coming weeks.

Jim Turk, Executive Director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, points out his organization is worried a deal with Thomson paves the way for an increasingly corporate and low-quality education system.

"Universities like McGill are moving towards a corporate model, where education becomes a commodity which can be sold," he said. "You can also see that jurisdiction is being given to private corporations that don't really have any stake or experience in undertaking the vital role of providing public education."

According to University of Melbourne professor and Universitas 21 chair Chris Robinson, however, the consortium has seized on a major marketing opportunity. "Universities are getting less and less from the public purse and need more revenue to keep up the quality of what they do," he said.

Robinson believes that demand for on-line education will quadruple worldwide over the next

10 years due to globalization and the new "knowledge-based economy." If existing educational institutions want to maintain their quality in the face of cutbacks, he says, they must strive to meet the rising demand by signing on to initiatives like the one proposed with Thomson.

"[Universitas 21] has set out to establish a major global e-education business, and I believe that the Thomson deal could bring us a substantial share of the global market," he said.

While Robinson would not comment on the exact amount universities like McGill could receive if they sign on to the deal, he did say the deal "has the potential to be a significant source of revenue."

Turk, however, thinks this sort of attitude is a dangerous one. "When Universitas 21 courses go on line, what assurances are there for quality?" he asked. "What assurances are there that universities will actually be writing the course material, rather than just lending their names? What happens when curriculum doesn't fit into the vision of Thomson Corp.?"

Recently the University of Toronto announced it would not be signing on to the Thomson deal.

Sheldon Levy, U of T's vice-president of government and institutional relations, said the university was not ready to become part of any global e-learning initiatives for the time being, but would not elaborate further.

"We have not come to the conclusion that a partnership with Thomson Corp. is in the best interests of our university. We did not want to bind ourselves in a formal contractual way," said Levy.

Universitas 21 pulled out of similar negotiations initiated last spring with Newscorp, owner of the Fox Network and major newspapers across the globe.

The consortium was formed in 1998 with the aim to "leverage the reputation, resources and experience of its members on behalf of corporate partners." The consortium includes the University of British Columbia, University of Toronto, McGill University, the University of Glasgow, and Peking University.

UNB Residence Community

HALL PROCTOR & EDUCATIONAL PROCTOR POSITIONS FOR 2001/02

Residential Life & Conference Services currently is advertising for the positions of Hall Proctor and Educational Proctor for the 2001/02 academic year. Applications will be available at the Information Session (see below) and also through the Residential Life & Conference Services office beginning January 30/01.

Information Session*

All applicants are required to attend the information session on Monday, Jan. 29/01 at 7:00 pm in McLaggan 105 (auditorium in Nursing Building).

*If you are unable to attend due to a class or other major conflict, please advise your Community Coordinator for your Cluster or contact Cristine Medford at 453-4800 so that arrangements can be made to brief you and to give you your application package.

Application Deadline

Completed applications to be submitted by Feb. 9/01.

Other Important Dates to Remember

Interviews for short listed candidates to take place Feb. 24 - 27. All successful candidates will be involved in job shadowing with current Proctors, and will be required to attend Bridging Day, a House Team leadership training session, on Mar. 24/01.

Elections for the positions of Editor-in-Chief, News Editor and Sports Editor* will take place this Friday at 12:30pm in Room 35 of the SUB. Come on out and show your support or just come and watch us duke



The Brunswickan

* If any of the current section editors run and win, there will be elections for those positions as

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