

THE BRUNSWICKAN NATIONAL NEWS

FROM UNIVERSITY NEWSROOMS ACROSS CANADA

MP calls for tax changes to benefit students

by Mark Greenan
Ottawa Bureau Chief,
Canadian University Press

A Progressive Conservative MP recently presented two motions in the House of Commons that would reduce the tax burden on students.

The two motions, presented by New Brunswick MP John Herron, call on the federal government to make scholarships tax exempt and to introduce a tax credit on student loan repayment. Currently, only the first \$3,500 in scholarships are not subject to tax.

Herron said the motions, culled directly from the PC Party's 2000 election platform, were important in mitigating the effect of high student debt, which he cited as "the largest deterrent" to participation in post-secondary education.

"Too many of our best and brightest are choosing not to seek higher learning," he said.

"We've indentured an entire generation, where those individuals

upon graduation, because they owe over \$20,000, will not have the capacity to contribute to the economy."

However, Herron noted that his proposal for tax credits on student loan repayment would only apply to people living in Canada, which could help stem the "brain drain".

Noting that several public opinion polls have shown that Canadians consider post-secondary education to be important, Herron said that the federal government has to come up with a new strategy to support students.

"The federal government really has to step up to the plate and ensure that we develop a toll kit so that students can pursue a higher education and we can maintain a competitive economy," he said, adding that Ottawa should also increase transfer payments to the provinces.

As yet, it has not been determined if Herron's motion will be debated in the House. A House committee will meet in the coming weeks to determine if the motion will be deemed worthy of a vote.

Liberal MP Reg Alcock, a member of the government caucus on post-secondary education, said that he

supports the principle of both motions but would need to understand the costs involved before endorsing them.

"We [the government PSE caucus] continue to look for creative ways to promote accessibility ... these things are consistent with that," said the Winnipeg MP, adding that he prefers direct funding to universities to keep the costs of tuition down.

Alcock noted that the proposal would see student loans treated in the same way as business investments, which are often tax-deductible.

Student groups applauded Herron's motions, but said that other measures are needed to improve student loan programs.

"We feel this is tackling a lot of student issues," said Liam Arbuckle, national director of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA), adding that any reforms must be made within the context of the current system.

"They're not going to scrap the system, that's a reality."

Arbuckle said that CASA has endorsed Herron's proposal, but added that his organization is promoting several other

changes the Canada Student Loans program.

CASA is calling on the federal government to increase the amount that loan recipients can earn before having their loan amounts clawed back, increase the amount allocated for living expenses, reconsider the expected amount of parental contributions and improve the debt remission program.

The Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) said that students would be better served by policies that did not take

advantage of the tax system.

"If the money's going to be spent it's much better spent on front-end measures like grants," said CFS national chair Ian Boyko. "Back-end measures have absolutely nothing to do with front-end accessibility."

Boyko added that the CFS is calling for a relaxation of the requirements for the federal debt-remission program and for the government to pay the interest on part-time student's loans, as they currently do for full-time students.

Rewarding night for Rehorick

by Jen Barth, The Brunswickan

Last Wednesday, Sally Rehorick was presented with several gifts and awards in recognition of her standing as the Chef de Mission of Canada's Olympic Team at the 2001 Salt Lake City Olympic Winter Games.

"I was quite honoured," commented Rehorick, "I'm glad that I can share so much of the experience."

Following an introduction by Fredericton MP Andy Scott, mayor Les Hull and Secretary of State for Amateur Sport Paul DeVilliers made presentations.

DeVilliers talked about the "admirable poise of the Canadian athletes," and congratulated Rehorick on her strength and support.

On behalf of the University of New Brunswick, Elizabeth Parr-Johnston presented Rehorick with a gift.

Rehorick, the Director of the Second Language Education Centre in the Faculty of Education at UNB, was

appointed to the position of Chef de Mission for the 2002 Winter Games in November 1999. Since then, she has worked with Canadian athletes, volunteers, and representatives of other countries.

At the presentation, Rehorick described her experiences as Chef de Mission, her stay at the Olympic Village in Salt Lake City, and the duties of her position. She praised the attitude and the behavior of the Canadian athletes, both during the regular games and throughout several controversial affairs.

"Our Canadian athletes have done more for north-south relations than any free-trade agreement," said Rehorick. She went on to praise the coverage of the Games by the CBC and other members of Canada's media.

Andy Scott closed the presentation with thanks to Rehorick, and also presented her with a letter of appreciation from Prime Minister Jean Chretien and the Government of Canada.



Jen Barth/The Brunswickan

UNB's Sally Rehorick was presented with several gifts last Wednesday in recognition for her work as the Chef de Mission for Canada's Olympic team. The presenters included, from left, Fredericton MP Andy Scott, UNB president Elizabeth Parr-Johnston, Mayor Les Hull, Rehorick, and Secretary of State for Amateur Sport Paul DeVilliers.

Sex Ed. needs improvement: report

by Mathieu Gobeil, The Brunswickan

A recent survey conducted by a team of researchers in the psychology department at UNB reveals interesting facts about middle school and high school students' opinion concerning their sexual education.

While 70 per cent of New Brunswick middle school students gave a favourable rating to the quality of sexual health education they received in school, only 45 per cent of high school students were satisfied with the education they have received. Some students also report that information provided at school about specific aspects of sexual health lags behind their sexual experiences.

Even though a considerable number of students are unsatisfied with their sex education, "students in anglophone high schools and middle schools overwhelmingly supported having sexual health education in school," said Dr. Sandra Byers, one of the principal

researchers. "They also indicated that the program should cover a wide range of topics with some of them introduced in the elementary school grades."

This report also reveals about one third of students think their parents or guardians did a poor job providing them with sexual health education.

"These findings are troublesome given that young people are faced with situations that have implications for their sexual health before topics like birth control, sexually transmitted diseases and abstinence are covered in school," remarked Dr. Heather Sears, a researcher who worked on the project. "They may make choices that compromise their physical health or emotional well-being simply because they are lacking information and skills."

Dr. Byers hopes the Department of Education will consider revisions to the timing of sexual health curriculum topics as well as content.

"Sexual health education, as with most school subjects, needs to be an ongoing

topic that spans students' public school career," she said.

According to the report, other key ingredients to achieving a positive outcome in schools are regular teacher training, encouraging teachers to use teaching strategies that provide for discussion and responsible decision-making, and fully implementing the curriculum.

"It is also important to support parents within a community setting so that they can provide sexual health education at home," Dr. Byers added.

Education Minister Dennis Furlong thanked UNB for the survey and responded to Dr. Byers' inquiries, saying the sexual health curriculum for middle school students is currently being revised and the findings from all groups surveyed will assist members of the Health Curriculum Development Advisory Committee in their work.

Surveys were completed by 745 middle school students and 1,663 high school students across New Brunswick.

Students clear shelves, tackle hunger

by Bruns Staff

When exams end later this month, some students at UNB will be clearing their shelves to address hunger in Fredericton.

Working with Meal Exchange, a student-run charity, students will have the opportunity to empty their cupboards from April 13th-27th and make donations to local social organizations.

Clear the Shelves! is Meal Exchange's newest student solution to hunger. Rather than dragging all of those leftover boxes of macaroni and cheese, cans of spaghetti sauce, and other packaged goods home for the summer,

Clear the Shelves! allows students to donate them to community members in need. All donations collected at UNB will be distributed to the Fredericton Food Bank at the end of the collection period. Prior to the donation drives, students are made aware of the hunger that exists in Fredericton, and empowered to solve the problem. Student volunteers will deliver this latest round of donations on April 29th.

Students at UNB have also participated in *Skip a Meal* - a programme that enables students to directly assist social service agencies by donating one meal per semester from their meal plans.

Last semester, students at UNB

donated 2,848 lbs. of food to the Fredericton Community Kitchen. Meal Exchange has chapters on 22 campuses across Canada. For more information visit www.mealexchange.com or contact Mark MacRae.



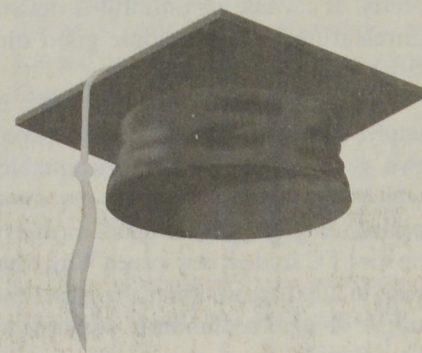
Emma Hutchman/The Brunswickan

As the NRC building nears completion, most students are wondering: How do I write for The Bruns?

The 2002 Graduating Class Entrance Scholarship

Graduating in 2002?

Do you remember your first year?
Do you wish that you had received financial assistance?



Leave a Legacy by Supporting the Class of 2002 Project!

The class of 2002 are establishing the 2002 Graduating Class Entrance Scholarship which will be awarded to student(s) entering UNB based on financial need and involvement in extracurricular activities. Students, Faculty and Staff are invited to participate and/or honor a friend or colleague by contributing \$20.02 towards this important initiative.

The 2002 Graduating Class Entrance Scholarship - what a great legacy for us, what a great legacy for UNB!

For more information, e-mail UNB Grad Class 2002 President at v175p@unb.ca

Contributions can be dropped off or sent (before April 26, 2002) to: Grad Class 2002 Project, Student Union, Room 126, Student Union Building, University of New Brunswick, P.O. Box 4400, Fredericton, NB E3B 5A3 or call 454-6789.