

Conservatives outline plan for post-secondary education funding

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in the economy," said MacKay. "So this isn't something that is going to be drawn out of new revenue, this is a cut to over taxation right now, and surpluses that are burgeoning because people are being asked to pay too much into the pool right now."

MacKay said that the plan for a GST cut would materialize by slicing off one per cent completely in the first Conservative federal budget, with the second per cent being phased out over five years.

Though over the last ten years federal funding to post secondary education (PSE) has dwindled, MacKay promises a brighter future for students if the Conservatives are elected.

"There is nobody in the country more to blame for the current debt load of students, and the state of health care than Paul Martin," said MacKay. "I'm not here to talk about how bad [The Liberals] are, I'm here to talk about what we're going to do differently."

The Conservatives also promise a dedicated transfer of federal funds to support PSE costs which would be implemented upon them taking power, though they have not announced its dollar value.

A Tory government may also change the way the student loan system works all together. "We're going to work on increasing the threshold so more people have access to student loans," said Pat Lynch, explaining that if you raise the minimum annual income required to qualify for a student loan, then you open up that ser-

vice to more Canadians who need it. "We will also not tax bursaries and scholarships."

Lynch talks about returning accountability to the federal government.

"You've read and heard about all the mismanagement, and all the waste, and all the money being thrown away, money that's even been stolen," he said. "You go in there, you adopt best practices, you bring accountability back to government, you bring fairness back to government, and all that money can be put to proper use."

A \$500 tax deduction for books that would be transferable to parents is also in the conservative plan for PSE, though this may not have the impact with students that The Conservatives hoped for. "[Tax credits] are completely and utterly ineffective as a form of

student aid," said Creighton. "Students don't pay taxes."

Creighton would like to see a wholesale review of financial aid in Canada, forcing the government to look at all the different student aid programs, how well they work, and where they can be changed.

"The way it is now it's like a quilt; there's all these patches, and different sort of band aid solutions to student financial aid issues," she said. "It doesn't work effectively and a lot of the money is wasted."

Though Creighton was unwilling to endorse any political party, she does support some of The Conservative Party's platform.

"The idea of a[n education] transfer, and it becoming immediate would be very good for students."



Fresh out of a media scrum, Deputy leader of the Conservative party Peter MacKay (left) huddles with staff writer Mark Timms (centre) and local Tory candidate Pat Lynch (right).

Pay equity bill rejected by Committee

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women in New Brunswick lose out on more than one month's wages every year because of the gap.

Citing a 2004 study by St. Mary's University professor Ather Akbari, the press release stated that discrimination could contribute to 80 per cent of the difference in men's and women's wages. Anne-Marie Gammon, Chair of the Coalition for Pay Equity, wonders, "will the government be brave enough to take tough measures to eliminate discrimination?"

A possible solution is referred to as pay equity. This means that if two jobs are of equal value, they will be paid the same amount. According to a report submitted by the Coalition to Minister Blaney in February 2004, value is "calculated according to the criteria of responsibility, skills, working conditions and effort deployed."

This same report stated that, "the principle of 'equal pay for work of equal value' is unquestionably ranked among basic human rights and it is incumbent on Canadian provincial and territo-

rial governments to ensure that all its citizens are able to exercise that right."

But there is another side to the wage gap story.

American Enterprise Institute fellow Diana Furchtgott-Roth writes that, "feminists have invented the wage gap, just as they have invented the myth of the glass ceiling, in an attempt to give less-qualified women undeserved promotions and raises."

Judy Cresanta, president of the Nevada Policy Research Institute, thinks that, "the wage gap is just another tool for those who wish to micromanage America's workplaces."

Opponents to pay equity point out that women make different choices than men do when it comes to employment. While they admit that a wage gap does exist, many scholars argue that choices dictate the breadth of the gap, not a patriarchal conspiracy or discrimination.

Some influencing and often-cited factors that can limit a woman's income include: lifestyle choices, entering and exiting the workforce, and choice of occupa-

tion.

Many studies show that women are more likely than men to stay home to care for children, parents or spouses. To do this, they must often leave the workforce. Even a few years out of the workforce means that some women will be competing for jobs against men who have more experience.

Career choice is another big factor. Studies have shown that when compared to men, women tend to choose more personally rewarding, flexible, and safe jobs.

Arrah Neilsen, junior fellow at the Independent Women's Forum, a Washington D.C. lobby group, writes that, "it is wrong to assume that maximizing earnings is the primary goal of every worker. The important thing is that everyone is free to make their own decision and is constrained only by the talent and ambition they possess. If women earn less than men as a result of their own choices and preferences, then that is an outcome we should be willing to accept."

But is it a choice that women make willingly? Dr. Akbari's 2004 study, commissioned by the Genuine Progress Index for Atlantic

Canada, suggests otherwise.

Akbari's study showed that even when critical factors such as education, work experience, age, marital status, industry of employment, and occupation were controlled for, "the wage rate paid to a female worker in New Brunswick continues to be about 17 per cent lower than that paid to a man."

Despite the fact that the Standing Committee on Law Amendments will continue to review the possibility of pay equity legislation, Coalition for Pay Equity Chair Anne-Marie Gammon would like to know if the Lord government is, "ashamed to announce that they have no intention of passing [Bill 77], despite popular support."

And though both camps may lapse into bouts of rhetoric, there are good arguments to be made on both sides.



An ALPS Christmas



UNB President John McLaughlin gets into the spirit of Christmas at the ALPS Christmas party.

December 11, 2005 marked the Adult Learners, Part-Time Students (ALPS) Annual Christmas Party. Adults and children alike were delighted by Perley the Magician, cookie decoration and a visit from the jolly man himself, Santa.

Kudos for such a positive event in keeping with the true spirit of the season go to ALPS President Emma Cunningham (4th year BA), ALPS Social Promotions Coordinator Tracie Ouellette (4th

year BN) and ALPS Office Manager Lori Redmond (3rd year BA).

My children always look forward to this event each year; ALPS volunteers certainly know how to remember children and over-worked parents/students at this time of year. For more information on ALPS and the services they provide, please contact 453-3596 or ALPS@unb.ca.

Shelley Clayton
Director, Financial Aid

Kevin Newman talks voter apathy

by Amy Chung
CUP Ontario Bureau Chief

TORONTO (CUP) -- Youth make up a third of the voting population in Canada, but young voters continue to avoid the ballot box, said Global news anchor Kevin Newman, who was at York University this week to discuss voter apathy.

"In 1960, voter turnout amongst youth was 65 per cent. In 2000, it was 25 per cent," said Newman, who was hosting his show The National from York's Glendon campus.

The youth population in Canada is anyone between the age of 18 to 34.

Newman proposes the decline in youth voters may be due to our dependency on convenience, suggesting the voting system may be "behind the times."

Newman notes that e-voting may be a better solution, citing the four per cent increase in voter turnout during the municipal elections in the town of Markham, a suburb north of Toronto.

However, some warn there are hazards to Internet voting.

"We do have electronic voting but there are dangers," said Patrick Monahan, Dean of Osgoode Law School.

"There may be difficulty with verifying someone's identity [by

e-voting] and there is always the case of family members pressuring or influencing the vote," he adds.

Newman also questioned if Canada should look at other voting models like Australia where there is a 95 per cent voter turnout because it is illegal not to vote.

However, students believe there is a low turnout because they do not feel empowered.

"People feel like their vote is not making a difference because it's only one person's vote," says Hodan Ahmed, a first-year English student.

Others suggest this is correlated with the myriad of failed promises political parties campaign.

"The [political] parties aren't really keeping their promises. They promise too many things and nothing comes out of it. The youth are fed up," says Muna Yufus, a first-year Psychology student.

However, student leaders believe it is not only based on trust, but relevance, suggesting a more student focused campaign will encourage youth engagement.

"The platform should focus on what university students are concerned with... tuition and wages as opposed to taxes and the military," says Liz Saati, a first-year Osgoode Law student, adding that all issues are interesting but may not be relevant to young people.

The federal election is slated for January 23.

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