

Student Senator's letter

Students:

My name is Lyle Skinner and I am a student representative on the UNBF Senate. I encourage you to email me at Lyle.Skinner@unb.ca with your views on a November study day. I serve on the Academic Policy and Procedures Senate Committee (APPC). This committee is responsible for the scheduling of academic regulations, which include the academic calendar. At issue is the idea of having a study day during the Remembrance Day academic week in fall 2007. As you are aware, in fall 2006, an academic study day did not occur during the Remembrance Day week due to the November 11 statutory holiday falling on a Saturday. This same situation will occur next year, as November 11 falls on a Sunday. Traditionally, students have an additional day off during the term due to the statutory holiday falling on a weekday; however, since the holiday occurs on a Sunday, the university has no legal obligation to provide a day off for students and faculty.

Some students wrote to The Brunswickan requesting a November study day. I heard many students comment on their disappointment in the lack of a study day this year. This makes it evident to me that students do care about this issue. Going forward, this is your chance to affect positive change in the university community and establish a 2007 study day during the Remembrance Day week.

On January 23, the Fredericton Senate will debate and decide the merits of a study day during the November 11th week. The decision to have a study day rests with this body alone, and I stress that a study break is not guaranteed. However, I promise

that your Student Senators will effectively represent you on this issue.

I want you to be aware that there are certain consequences to this decision. The number of teaching days in the fall term is roughly 63. It is important to understand that simply removing a teaching day will have a negative impact on the ability of your professors to teach course material due to the shortened term. This, by extension, will detrimentally affect your academic study. Therefore, it is likely that to implement a November study day the removal of a reading day before the examination period or starting the term a day earlier must occur. Accordingly, we as students must make a choice.

I believe that the benefits of a November study day outweigh the drawbacks: this break occurs during a period of the semester where the second round of midterm examinations arise. Having this day off will give students more time to prepare for their tests, thereby allowing greater chance for academic success. This is solely my opinion; what I want is your opinion on this matter. I require your input so that your Student Senate Caucus can make an informed decision in the upcoming Senate meeting. Often students wonder if they can make a significant difference at this university. Students, this occasion is such an opportunity. If you are one of the many students who I have heard wish they had a day off in November, I encourage you to write your comments and concerns to my email address below. Together we can make a difference.

Sincerely,
Senator Lyle M. Skinner

Please leave an iMessage at the iBeep

by Josh O'Kane

Just when you thought you had it all with your Razr and your iPod Video, Apple yet again manages to trump you: last Tuesday, the new iPhone was unveiled - to spectacular reviews.

The iPhone takes everything you wanted or even needed in a phone and puts the old Apple twist on it. Not only is it - you guessed it - a phone, but nearly one whole face of the iPhone is a touch-sensitive video screen. This enables easy menu browsing, of course, but you can also turn it sideways, and then you have a widescreen iPod video.

Apple's new wonder has a variety of other new features as well, with over 200 patents filed alongside the device. Integrated with Mac OS X, it's ready for just about everything. And with a built-in browser, email, and camera, you can check out, receive and send just about anything you'd ever need. The cameraphone ability even allows you to crop photos you take with only two fingers. All this while you're using the iPhone as a phone.

The touchscreen allows you to browse through anything with ease and the gadget has all the functionality you'd ever need. When browsing photos or watching video right side up, all you have to do to make it widescreen is turn the iPhone aside and you're in business.

The touch/tilt feature works perfect with another feature. With WiFi and Bluetooth access, the device has access to the Internet, and all you have to do is tilt and zoom when you are, perhaps, perusing the new Brunswickan website, www.thebrunswick.ca, and you can read with ease.

Another innovative feature is that the iPhone is multitasking - you can download email, send a photo, and talk on the phone all at once. This is probably a good thing if you're calling someone for directions and want to follow up on a map. All you have to do is put it on speakerphone and drag around until you find what you're looking for.

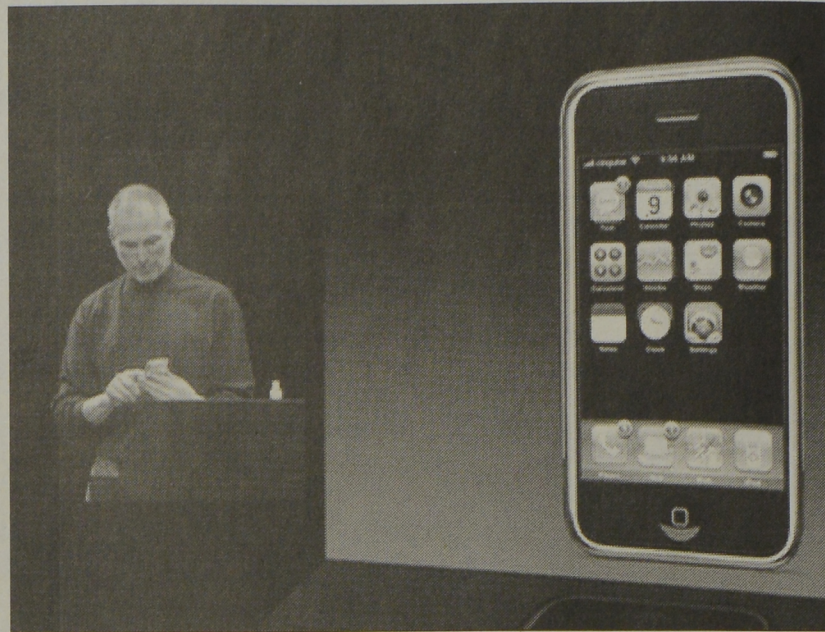
The maps feature doesn't just end there. Because you're searching on a phone, all you have to do is click a business when it pops up and you can dial it. It's that easy.

Despite the multitude of features available on the iPhone, it's only 115 mm x 11.6 mm x 61 mm (or half an inch by 2.5 by 4.5 inches), and weighs in at 4.8 ounces, or 13.5 grams. Given the fact that the screen takes up most of one side, that's a lot for

one phone.

The one downside is the available storage capacity - either four or eight gigabytes. This means it's not yet out there to completely replace the iPod for music and video - but it's surely getting there.

With this venture, Apple hopes to garner one per cent of the world's mobile phone market - not too bad considering its 70 per cent hold on the U.S. mp3 player market already. Plans are set for the phone to ship to the U.S. in June and Europe and Asia in the months to follow. The four gigabyte model will initially be set for \$499 U.S., and the eight gigabyte at \$599 U.S., based on a two-year contract with Cingular, who will be the only marketer of the iPhone during its initial run. No announcements have yet been made about a Canadian release date.



Internet

Universities work to address retention issues

Transition programs, counseling help students succeed

by Josh Wingrove
The Eycopener (Ryerson)

TORONTO (CUP) - Dave Hartog came to Ryerson University two years ago with the zeal and trepidation of any other first-year student. Raised in Whitby, Ontario, the 18 year-old moved into residence and began his degree in computer science.

The first weeks went well. Classes were challenging, residence was fun, and the life of a first-year was refreshingly liberating.

Then Hartog's typical university experience started to fall apart. Coursework piled up. He had trouble making friends with his classmates, who he says were "too nerdy." Hartog fell behind in class and by the end of the year, he'd failed three courses.

A sit-down meeting with program

advisers proved fruitless, and Hartog, who maintained an honours average in high school, was placed on suspension and faded from the minds of professors, classmates and the registrar.

The help sessions failed in keeping him at Ryerson. "They made me recognize the problem I already had - I didn't care - but didn't help me fix it," he said.

"I never studied for a test. In high school, I could come to class, listen to a teacher, and bullshit a test; I could figure it out. In university, I really couldn't do that," he added.

Retention is an issue that Ryerson is working to solve. About 400 students withdraw or drop out from full-time programs each year at the school. Two months into the semester, 244 had already thrown in the towel.

Data released by Ontario's Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities shows computer science to have a graduation rate of just 60 per cent. Engineering, biology and

chemistry students also drop like flies - less than two-thirds of every first-year class will earn a degree.

Zouheir Fawaz, associate dean of engineering, said the school has taken steps to solve its retention issues.

The engineering program has raised retention rates to the 80 per cent range, losing only those for whom engineering is a poor fit, he said.

"We accept students who are predisposed to do well in that program. If we don't do that job properly, yes, things get ugly," he said.

"Anybody who is salvageable, if you will, I think we have in place the programs to help them."

The key, he said, is getting everyone on the same page early. Engineering students receive a "one-stop-shop" handbook on success and take standard math and English examinations in their first month as part of the faculty's transition program.

Similar programs are offered by other

Ontario universities, such as the University of Waterloo, in an effort to standardize the foundation of knowledge for new students.

Those who perform poorly on the exam are offered remedial courses to catch up, Fawaz said.

"As much as we cannot provide the same sort of hand-holding your high school could, we'll try our best. And it is literally that: hand-holding and guiding."

One of the initiatives was the establishment of a First-Year and Common Engineering Office, which Fawaz called a "great success." The centre offers support and coordinates tutoring for those students who struggle with the six-course schedule in engineering students' first semester.

Ryerson students in any program can access similar services at the Ryerson Student Success Centre.

Dawn Lovas, a learning strategist with the centre, said situations such as Hartog's aren't uncommon, but services are available

to prevent a similar outcome.

"Many students find that it takes them a while to adapt to university learning," he said. Fourteen faculty-specific academic links have been hired to hold drop-in hours in residence. Weekly learning groups have been established in different levels of study.

The centre offers tutoring sessions for first-year students and free learning groups for any of "the high risk" science, engineering and business students. While some students on probation - those carrying a grade point average less than 2.0 on a 4.33-point scale - are required to take the classes, more and more students have been voluntarily enrolling themselves, Lovas said.

"Our service has shifted from being reactive to a more proactive model."

Graduation rates are higher in some programs, with nursing and radio and television arts leading the way at about 90

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The Brunswickan

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We publish weekly during the academic year with a circulation of 10,000.

Letters

Must be submitted by e-mail including your name, letters with pseudonyms will not be printed. Letters must be 200 words maximum. Deadline for letters is Friday at noon.

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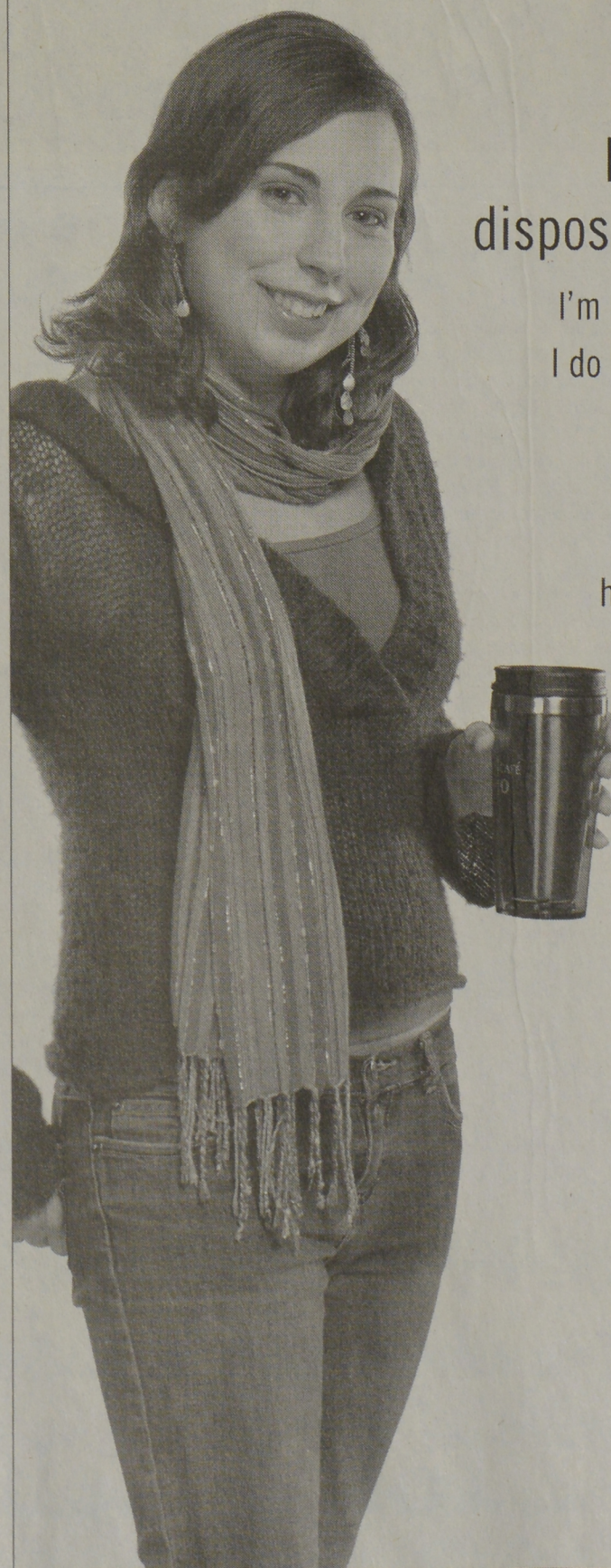
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Winnie Bower, Student



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