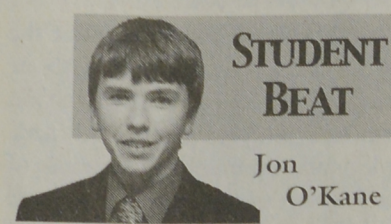


Taking advantage of the brilliance of society



STUDENT BEAT

Jon O'Kane

In 1968, the USS Scorpion lost communication with naval bases and was missing somewhere at sea. No information was known regarding its speed, trajectory, or how much time had elapsed between engine failure and communication loss. The search to find the lost vessel seemed impossible, given so little circumstantial information was available.

A navy officer and mathematician, Dr. John Craven, assembled a group of Navy officials, current specialists, mathematicians, and other relevant experts to determine the resting place of the vanished submarine. Intriguingly, these experts were encouraged to work independently and provide

individual answers of the location of Scorpion using the skill set and background they were strongest in.

No expert was able to locate the ship on their own.

However, Dr. Craven aggregated the knowledge of the experts, compiling the data and producing a weighted mean of their calculations.

The group's mean location was only off by a few hundred yards and the Scorpion was salvaged.

This is just one remarkable example of how, provided the opportunity for people to produce solutions, independently collected, humans are astonishingly smart.

We can learn much from the amazing case of Dr. Craven and the Scorpion. If we, as a society, can collectively produce near ideal responses to intrinsically complicated problems, we should exercise this ability more often.

As our province continues to grow, we must bolster our post-secondary education programs. Universities and colleges in New

Brunswick have a long history of being critically underfunded. We must, and our government has committed to, transform the way we approach education to ensure that every qualified, capable New Brunswick student has access to an affordable education.

Back room decisions and the politics of personalities have shaped financial aid structures into the product of a few legislators with personal agendas. To truly transform our education in the best interests of our students and provincial community, we must consult the masses.

Just as Dr. Craven was able to find the Scorpion, taking advantage of the brilliance of our society can lead us ever closer to the ideal policies of structuring financial aid and funding out universities.

The government has spoken and, especially after students and community members rallied to save UNBSJ, the premier and his cabinet promised to listen to the province's concerns and value the opinion of all relevant

stakeholders.

These stakeholders, including the UNB Student Union, have agreed that current funding mechanisms such as the \$2,000 First Year Student Bursary are ill methods of addressing the affordability of education. How can we restructure financial aid to ensure that no student is left behind?

Implement an annual student loan debt cap of \$6,000, for example. When the government assesses need through student loan applications, allow for any required funds over a fixed amount such as \$6,000 to be distributed in the form of a non-repayable grant. This would in turn, cap an average New Brunswick four year undergraduate degree at less than \$24,000, ahead of the national average. This provincial mechanism would complement federal programs which target funding at low and middle income students.

Put in place a repayment assistance program that provides for no student to pay more than their ability to pay. An income contingent loan repayment

program could cap payments at 20 per cent of a student income such that they are not constantly burdened and unable to provide for themselves once leaving school. We must apply a sunset clause to this policy, though, to ensure that no student making smaller payments is accumulating interest as time elapses and they pay off their loan more slowly. In Nova Scotia, a new program absolves provincial student loans after 15 years.

Provide access grants to underrepresented groups and, most importantly, enhance early outreach programs to convey to young students the value of an education. No cultural, social, or financial barrier should stand in the way of a student and their potential.

These policies are the pragmatic solution to financial aid mismanagement that our provincial government is searching for. Ask the crowd, the experts, and the specialists and the collective answer of these policies addresses the high need high debt crisis that New Brunswick is facing.

We have only a short time to see these policies addressed in the provincial budget. Premier Shawn Graham stated in June 2006 that the direction of financial aid will be decided in the next year. The Spring budget is being developed as every day passes. The government knows the position that the crowd has offered, but will they respond and address the changes that need to happen?

Do what you can to shape the direction New Brunswick approaches education and join the cause for an affordable, accessible education for all.

New Brunswick is searching frantically for our Scorpion of education. Will politicians invest our money in an endeavour that will be miles off? Or will they adhere to wisdom of the masses, and take progressive steps towards the best solution? There has never been a better time to listen.

Jon O'Kane is VP External of the UNB Student Union. Student Beat is a weekly column by UNB student leaders examining issues that are pertinent to students.

The ugly head of pointless bureaucracy



MUGWUMP

Tony von Richter

Ridiculous IOC regulations could mean an unfamiliar looking Team Canada in 2010

The event that I'm looking forward to the most at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver is easily the men's hockey tournament.

It will undoubtedly be one of the highlights of the year when a team of all-stars takes the ice wearing the familiar red and white uniforms of Hockey Canada. Except things won't look so familiar if a long-ignored International Olympic Committee ruling is enforced.

Starting with a few teams in the Beijing Olympics (notably the Brazilian and Argentinean soccer teams), the IOC refused to allow individual sport federations to display a logo on their jerseys.

According to the IOC's website the organization acts as a catalyst to the Olympic Movement, the goal of which is: "to contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport practised without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play."

It's been a few days since

this story broke and I'm still wondering what part of "friendship, solidarity and fair play" that ridiculous jersey regulations fall under. In fact, the IOC is actually hurting the goal of the Olympic movement to "educate youth through sport" as this decision may make hockey less accessible to Canadians.

Hockey Canada President Bob Nicholson told the Canadian Press that Hockey Canada may have to raise their registration fees for the first time in a few years due to lost revenue from jersey sales and other revenue related to the Hockey Canada logo.

Now I'm sure there was some type of important principle for the IOC to create this rule in the first place, but enforcing it after years of ignoring it doesn't make a whole lot of sense, especially when it could hurt the development of sport in countries around the world.

To me this is pointless bureaucracy, and the IOC is enforcing rules just because they are there, not because

they actually provide a positive benefit.

There are very few things in this world that make me angry, but pointless bureaucracy is right at the top of the list.

The IOC isn't alone in this pointlessness however as the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) has refused to sign a form requesting that Hockey Canada be exempt from the jersey policy, something they have done many times in the past. The COC hasn't provided a valid explanation for not signing off on Hockey Canada's request, other than to say that the rule is now being enforced unlike previous Olympics.

It's often been said that when you play for Team Canada, you play for the logo on the front not for the name on the back. Unfortunately, because of some pointless regulations, there may not be a logo to play for anymore.

Tony von Richter is the Managing Editor of the Brunswickan. Feel free to contact him at managing@thebruns.ca.

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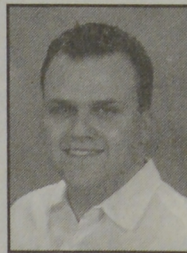
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Jackie Dableh

A graduate from UNB, Jackie chose the CGA program because she knows that the CGA designation will give her that competitive edge in today's marketplace. As a staff accountant at EPR Daye Kelly & Associates, a CGA public practice accounting firm in Fredericton, Jackie is gaining valuable experience in accounting, tax and auditing while studying towards her CGA designation. Enrolling in the CGA Program of Professional Studies was an important part of Jackie's plan to reach her career goals.

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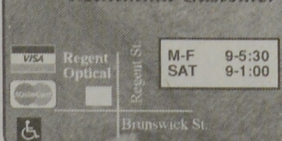


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