

Broadening the horizons of CS

HILARY PAIGE SMITH
THE BRUNSWICKAN

Ali Ghorbani, a professor at the University of New Brunswick since 1998, has been named the Dean of Computer Science.

Ghorbani has been associated with UNB since his days as a PhD student in 1991. A year after his days as a student ended, his years as a professor began. He worked part time with the university until 1996 and became a full time professor in 1998.

At the close of last semester a call was issued for a new dean. Ghorbani applied, was short listed and eventually received the position.

"I did not anticipate that I would be running for the deanship that quick. Normally it happens after 15 to 20 years. When the job was open for the new dean, I felt that I could use my experience that I have from the past for this position here at UNB and I felt that my service might be useful for the university."

Ghorbani began his five year term on July 1 and arrived with intention to improve the faculty of computer science. "We have a number of

different goals for improvements in the faculty. One is to improve the dynamics and make the faculty a positive environment. We have a positive environment, but we would like to improve it more by providing more social interactions between the students, the students and professors and staff and alumni. So that community building is one of the major initiatives I've started."

Ghorbani has not only been striving to provide a positive learning environment for his faculty, he also began a newsletter that is sent to all alumni and current students of the faculty that showcases the successes of students, former students and professors in the field of Computer Science.

Aware that his faculty is an ever changing field, Ghorbani has been keeping up with the latest technology and trends to improve the future of Computer Science at UNB. "We're looking at our programs to basically change it so it will go with the trends now in the area of computer science and also meet the demands of the industry, government and in general to society."

The new dean's goals are not

only for his faculty at the University of New Brunswick, but for other universities around the world. "The other goal I have is to establish offsite programs outside Canada. That is something other faculties do. They call it internationalization. We bring the students in here from other places, but we would also like to see if we can have our program in other places. We started with a program in Singapore...We are also currently looking at programs in Egypt and possibly China."

While sharing the knowledge of UNB's faculty across continents, one must always stay current with the latest technology buzz. "The other aspect of our work is of course looking into our organization in the next year or so and fine tune the organization of the faculty in terms of the programs we are offering. We also would like to constantly look for new programs that we'd be able to offer, so another initiative is to look at the current trends and programs in North America and what it is that we would like to offer here at UNB."

The Faculty of Computer Science has experienced an increase in students in recent years as the

information highway is expanding and technology presents itself more often in our day to day lives. There are so many opportunities for technological hopefuls in today's world that UNB has more co-op jobs in the field of Computer Science than they do students to fill them.

Ghorbani wants to ensure that all students in his faculty are experiencing all that technology has to offer, however he has noticed one thing the faculty is lacking. "I would also want very much that society and everyone who is involved to be mindful that our intake of female students is small and we want to basically erase that perception that Computer Science and IT sector is only for male students. This is an area that is very much suited for female students and I'd like to see that we go to a level where we can pride ourselves that we have 50/50 gender distributions or even more females in our program."

With his finger on the pulse of the technology beat, Ghorbani will be a link to change in the future of the faculty of computer science.

This is the last in a series examining new faces and positions at UNB.

CAUT director speaks to UNBSJ

SIMON JACK
SPECIAL TO THE BRUNS

SAINT JOHN — Jim Turk, the Executive Director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, may be best remembered at the university for his willingness to wear a university T-shirt over his dress shirt as much for his stirring defense of the University of New Brunswick at Saint John. But when he returned to Saint John to give the Association of UNB Teachers' Fall Lecture it was for more than the opportunity to add to his short-sleeved wardrobe. He spoke before UNBSJ faculty and students about the new dangers facing the university from the provincial government on Sept. 12.

The provincial government received another post-secondary report on education over the summer, which they almost immediately turned into an action plan. Turk has seen this action plan, and he is not impressed.

After congratulating the faculty and students on their success in saving UNB Saint John from closure, Turk launched into the true substance of his speech — an exhortation to those same faculty and students not to think that the battle was over. "Like [the last report]," said Turk, "the Action Plan gets it wrong."

This is not to say that it's an unmitigated disaster. There are several proposed changes to student financial assistance, and plans to make the community college system into a public college system, as well as committing to the continuing existence of UNBSJ and other campuses, which meet with Turk's approval.

But then there's the bad news. Firstly, he said, the plan "...fails to understand that the most serious problem facing colleges and universities in New Brunswick is under-funding." According to Turk, New Brunswick's post-secondary education system has the second-lowest funding in the country. And although the Action Plan promises \$90,000,000 over five years, those funds are supposed to cover community colleges offering first and second year university courses, a 40% increase in graduate students, 11,000 new community college spaces, and a 70% increase in apprenticeship spaces. This in addition to meeting the growing needs of the academic community.

The plan expects community colleges to quickly gear up to offer

university courses, but without making provision for the time that would be needed, the need for trained faculty and appropriate academic resources, or providing the money to do so. The Action Plan, said Turk, "fails to provide any reasonable indication of adequate resources."

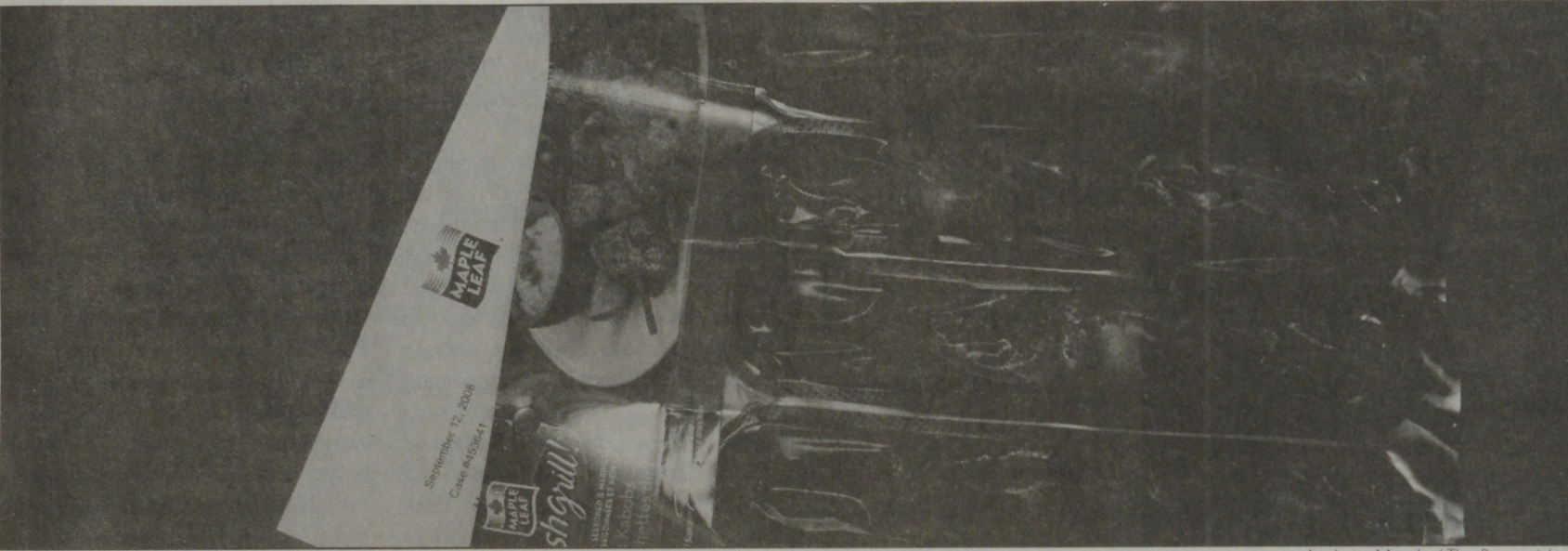
Turk also cited the Plan's proposed creation of new institutions which, as the report says, will "complement and compete with existing programs." How, Turk asked, do we solve the problem of underfunding by creating new competing institutions? He also notes a similarity between polytechnics and Institutes of Applied Learning and Training, and feels they may well be "the same beast with a slightly different name."

Most important to Turk seemed to be the apparent "assault on institutional autonomy" the Plan proposes. The plan proposes the replacement of college and university funding schemes, the requirement that institutional plans be submitted to the government which are tied to "performance-based contracts," and the requirement that the university appear before the government annually to justify its use of funds. Turk points out that universities are "already accountable" with community meetings and laws on their conduct.

Proper running of universities "requires a balance" between control and independence. This subordination risks the destruction of university's age old role as "places where any idea, theory or product can be taken apart and examined from all angles." Without this independence, he argued, the university will be open to influence from pressure groups and their valuable roles will be abrogated. He cites a decision by the Canadian Supreme Court, which said that "universities are legally autonomous, and not organs of government...the government has no legal power to control them."

"In the name of accountability, [the Action Plan], it is fundamentally threatening the autonomy that is vital to our work and to our institutions. If the plan is introduced successfully by the government, every university in this province is at risk." The challenge to the staff and students of the University of New Brunswick, says Turk, is to "rally the people of New Brunswick a second time." Although UNBSJ itself is no longer at stake, Turk exhorts us not to underestimate this new threat, which he says will remove what makes UNBSJ "a real university."

N.B. listeriosis death linked to recall



Andrew Meade / The Brunswickan

UNB students needn't worry about Maple Leaf products served on campus; Sodexo manager Martin Bayliss assures there aren't any served on campus.

COLIN HODD
THE BRUNSWICKAN

The death of a New Brunswick woman due to listeriosis was caused by meat included in the Maple Leaf recall. The woman, in her early 80s, whose name has not been released, died last week after being admitted to hospital. She is the 17th victim of contaminated meat which originated in a single plant in Toronto, and the first confirmed case in New Brunswick.

It is unknown at this point whether the woman came in contact with the bacteria at her nursing home or if the infection came from some other source. The nursing home, whose name and location are being withheld, did serve products that have since been recalled by Maple Leaf in connection with the outbreak that was first brought to light in mid-August.

In a September 16 release, acting chief medical officer of health Dr. Eilish Cleary assured New Brunswickers that "together, we

[Public Health, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Public Health Agency of Canada] have notified hospitals, long-term care facilities, schools and other higher-risk institutions with respect to the recall and carried out verification checks to ensure products were removed. I would like to remind the public to be vigilant about products on the recall list and to go through their fridges and freezers to remove and throw out any of these food items."

People using the cafeteria on the UNB campus have no reason to worry, according to facility general manager Martin Bayliss.

"Supplies or products from the plant were locked out before the recall," said Bayliss in an interview with the Brunswickan. Bayliss went on to say that Sodexo cuts their own meat on-site, and that the only cafeteria outlet implicated in the recall was Mr. Sub, which "wasn't even open during the recall."

Asked if there was anything else he could say to reassure cafeteria users, Bayliss said, "The Canada

Health Agency visited campus to check our facilities and they were very impressed. I wouldn't worry."

In a related story, the Toronto plant where the listeria-infected meat originated has been reopened, according to a press release on the Maple Leaf site, www.mapleleafaction.com, which has been set up to provide information on the outbreak. As of September 17 the plant has resumed production, and will begin shipping product as usual after rigorous inspection.

UNB student David Pitts feels like the effort to keep the public informed has been successful.

"I have seen signs up at the grocery store which made me feel that I was being informed I guess that there was a recall, and on the news with there being so many deaths and all obviously there's been a lot of media coverage, so I feel as though I have been informed of the danger," he says.

When asked how he felt about the plant reopening, Pitts said "I think if the problem was dealt with I don't really have a problem with the plant being open again."

Its something that I guess is one of those facts of life, and we have to move forward, and I'm not too worried."

Another student, Colleen Goguen, felt that "if the plant had stayed closed, a lot of people would be out of work. They have jobs to get back to, and families to feed, so they can't sit around forever. I'm sure the company is doing everything they can to prevent another outbreak, so overall I think, if the proper measures have been taken there's no reason not to re-open the plant."

The fall 2008 UNBF Student Union Great Computer Give-Away



The UNBF Student Union has received **RECONDITIONED** computers (*speeds 800 MHz or greater, Windows 2000 or XP installed*) from UNB's IT Department to be given away during the fall 2008 term. Please read rules and regulations, listed below, to determine program eligibility.

Due to the limited number of available RECONDITIONED computers, program eligibility will not guarantee award.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility is restricted to **full-time UNBF undergraduate** students with a **demonstrated financial need**. Students must also be in good academic standing (*GPA of 2.0 or higher from the most recent assessment year or 1st year entry to UNB*) for program consideration.

PROCEDURES AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Step 1:** Complete the attached budget sheet. (Budget sheet is obtainable through UNBF's Financial Aid Office located in Room 3, Alumni Memorial Building or by accessing the following websites: <http://www.unbf.ca/financialaid/index.html> OR <http://www.unbsu.ca/>)
- Step 2:** Complete the "Understanding and Consent Section" of the Great Computer Give-Away application **before** submitting complete application to the Financial Aid Office.
- **Please note:** Unsigned applications will NOT be considered for the UNBF Student Union Great Computer Give-Away.
- Step 3:** The Financial Aid Office (Fredericton Campus) will review "completed" applications and send a list of eligible applicants to the UNBF Student Union.
- Step 4:** The UNBF Student Union will complete the draw during the week of September 29 - October 3, 2008 and contact the Great Computer Give-Away Winners (via e-mail) by **Tuesday, October 3, 2008**. Please note, due to the volume of applications, **only the Great Computer Give-Away Winners** will be contacted to confirm award.

DEADLINE - THURSDAY, September 25, 2008



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