

UNB receives Recreational Partnership Award from city

Award recieved for improvements to Chapman Field

by Lauren Kennedy

After a project that was two years in the making and exceeded the \$3M mark, the University of New Brunswick's improvements to Chapman Field have been recognized by the City of Fredericton.

Each year the City of Fredericton's development awards recognize key examples of development projects undertaken by the City; this year they were presented on December 18, 2008. UNB was the proud recipient of the Recreational Partnership Award for the changes to Chapman Field's soccer

complex.

City Councillor Cathy MacLaggan nominated this prestigious Ward 11 award to the soccer field.

"The improvements to Chapman Field are important to UNB, to the City, and community of Fredericton," she said. "This facility will benefit local soccer and other sports activities, and will support both youth and adult sports and sports events."

These improvements include an upcoming installation of a bubble dome structure that will cover a portion of the field and a complete resurfacing of the turf, which was replaced with a synthetic surface. MacLaggan sees the resurfacing as having many benefits.

"The new synthetic surface will be safer to play on and will help keep games on schedule during times of inclement weather, compared to natural grass fields that become unplayable. As well, the synthetic surface will also reduce the use of gas-powered mowers and other maintenance requirements with environmental impacts," she explained.

As for the reason why MacLaggan

chose to nominate this particular sector of the city and UNB, it is all about the positive energy that a project creates.

"Public institutions such as UNB and non-profits make an extremely important contribution to Fredericton and I would like to recognize and support that positive energy whenever I can. That is why I chose UNB's improvements to Chapman Field, the new and improved home of the Varsity Reds men's and women's soccer teams," she said in her notes during the presentation.

Besides having the students enjoy the benefits of the field's facilities, the City will profit as well. The improvements will benefit the Fredericton area by creating more recreational opportunities for the citizens to enjoy. Particularly, the City's Community Services Department will benefit from over 1,500 hours of field time allocated to them from the beginning of April to the end of October, in which the hours will be controlled by the department. MacLaggan sees it as very important that the public know of the City's access to these facilities and recognize the diverse recreation facilities that are available.

UNB Athletic Director, Kevin Dickie, and Men's Soccer Coach, Miles Pinsent, accepted the award for UNB. The award itself will be displayed in the Chapman Field Club House once it has been completed.

In an interview with the university, Dickie had the following to say: "I'm pleased that we were able to partner with the City of Fredericton to make the Chapman Field Turf Project a reality and I'm really glad that we were able to do something that will make such a difference in the community."

"It is a wonderful example of a partnership of UNB and the City, showing that UNB is a very important part of the community and we are very proud of UNB and its sports teams," said MacLaggan. "It is truly a good news story to see that the Varsity Reds men's and women's soccer teams have a fine new home field."

The official opening for Chapman Field was held October 13, 2007.



Andrew Meade / The Brunswickan

The official opening for the field was held last year. The award will be displayed in the Chapman Field Club House once it is built.

Highway Overpass: The city's view



Andrew Meade / The Brunswickan

UNB student Leslie Bruce was struck by a vehicle and killed crossing the highway behind the Aitken Centre in 2006. An overpass may be the solution to ensuring student safety when crossing the highway.

by Naomi Osborne

Even though students have been strongly advised not to cross the highway, some still do. An overpass along the highway may suppress the safety concerns for students living off campus.

When given the option of taking the extra two minutes to go under the bridge and around or crossing the highway, most students will without hesitation choose the more direct path.

In the past, route eight, which connects to the Princess Margaret Bridge, has proven to be a very dangerous highway for students to cross.

Though the issue of highway crossing safety is always considered important, some groups have been pushing for greater awareness since UNB student Leslie Bruce was killed crossing the highway behind the Aitken Centre in December 2006.

Mayor Brad Woodside believes that

something needs to be done to provide safety for students. Building an overpass may be a good idea, says Woodside, but he believes it may not be the best solution.

"We need about three overpasses, not just one," said Woodside. "Then there is the question of, 'Will people use them at all?' Studies from other cities that have built overpasses have shown that most people still go across the highway even when there are overpasses in place," said Woodside.

The City has taken measures in the past to prevent high school students from crossing the highway behind the Uptown Centre by putting up a fence. However, according to the mayor, students just cut holes in the fencing instead.

"I think it is human nature to go from point 'A' to point 'B' with the path of least resistance," said Woodside.

He said that students should realize that if they do not take into consideration the speed of the oncoming cars, it could be deadly; something needs to be done to help protect students and educate them on safety issues regarding the highway.

As of right now, there has not been any money set aside for the funding of overpasses along the highway because the City is not certain if it is the best solution. However, the issue has been addressed and is currently being looked at, ensured Woodside.

Overpasses may not be the best solution to the problem, said Woodside, because it is difficult to ensure that students will use them. When it comes down to it, people are going to cross the highway if they want to, and an overpass is not going to stop them.

Woodside feels it is important to put up three overpasses, that way the problem can be addressed in all of the areas where student safety is critical.

"If you put one in the middle, it won't solve the problem, so it's a very difficult situation."

Three overpasses would provide more options for students crossing the highway. A decision is expected to be made soon so that action can be taken to make sure students are safer.

"The question that needs to be asked is whether or not it is the highway or the lack of responsibility of the person," said Woodside.

Students urged to go green

from Challenge page 1

Other academic and non-academic work that supports your submission must be referenced.

Integrate elements of environmentally-based community design. This may include, but is not limited to, transportation/transit issues, energy efficiency, water conservation, ecosystem management, air quality, environmental health, landscaping/tree preservation/urban forestry, and development planning.

Describe what structures/mechanisms must be instituted to support your ideas. For example, what changes in regulation, governance structures, technical standards or technology would be required.

Show some benefit for at least one of the following community components: at-risk neighbourhoods, arts and culture institutions, and shared community spaces.

There will be four prizes of \$25,000. The participating students will receive \$12,500 and the other half of the cash prize will be donated to the student's university.

The contest is open to all Canadian legal residents currently enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate program at a Canadian university or college.

For more information on the competition, visit www.tdcanadatrust.com/gogreen. The deadline for submissions is January 25, 2008 and submissions can be emailed to tdaward@td.com. Winners of the competition will be announced on March 31, 2008 in Toronto.

There are already a number of entries made by different schools across Canada. These ideas will hopefully trigger students to begin thinking more about the environment and to become more ecologically friendly. It is up to the youth to take on the initiatives to save our environment. TD Friends of the Environment Foundation is just one of few companies that are encouraging students to become creative with ideas to help reduce the impact on our environment.

New pension plan beneficial for all parties: Murray

The new pension plan has saved students from paying extra in their tuition fees

by Naomi Osborne

The University of New Brunswick, along with its faculty association has decided on a six-year pension plan that it believes will benefit the students, the faculty, and the university.

After ten extensive months of negotiating, both sides have come to an agreement on a defined budget plan. This plan is better known as the 50/50 plan, where both the university and the faculty association share the risks and costs by taking 50% of each.

Daniel Murray, Vice President of Finance and Corporate Services at UNB, was a part of the process that worked to protect the interests of the students and the university from any increases in costs or tuition.

"Coming to an agreement with unions on pensions is very difficult, but we did it," said Murray. "We think we protected the university's interests and put together a plan that protects students from any increases."

Every year, UNB is given a budget of \$160M, where \$1.7M is allotted for the pension plan. The budget receives its entire revenue from two different sources, namely, government funding 50-60% and students paying the remaining 40% through tuition.

"You could take anything in our budget and say, 'Well, our students are paying this amount of dollars for heating costs,'" said Murray.

An evaluation of the pension plan was done in 2002, at which time there was a shortfall of \$22.5M. There were two reasons for this deficit, the first being that there was a downturn in the stock market, so the returns simply were not good for the whole market in general. The second reason was that more people

had retired from the university than was predicted during 2001-2002, explained Murray.

The university immediately began working with the faculty association on improving the deficit. With the help of an independent consultant, they were able to improve their financial situation.

"We knew at that point that unless we put in a financial improvement plan, it would likely get worse," said Murray.

The new pension plan essentially puts a cap on the operating budget. Of that budget, 11.5% goes into the pension plan. The worry was that the 11.5% would increase to 13-14%, which would consequently result in students paying more towards the pension plan.

However, with the cap on the percentage, students no longer have to worry about the costs increasing.

"At the end of the day, we came up with a plan that was approved by the board and the faculty association," said Murray. "The basic deal was that the faculty members agreed to reduce the value of their pension benefits for six years."

This will reduce the value of these pensions by 15% over the next six years, decided with the intention of reducing the money poured into the plan.

"People don't do things like this because they are nice, they do it because it is in their best interests. They wanted a plan with more stability so by agreeing to the 15% reduction, it allows the plan to continue and be stable," said Murray.

When the deal was made, \$4M was put in upfront, but they spread it out over six years. The university put in \$2.5M and the faculty association put in \$1.5M, working out to \$416,000 every year that goes into the pension plan.

The main goal of the whole process was to make sure that the 40% of the budget that students are paying would not increase. According to Murray, if the plan was not put into action, students would have been paying an extra \$150 a year in their tuition fees towards the pension plan.

"11.5% is a high number and we want that number to be lower in future years, but our primary concern was to make sure it didn't go any higher," said Murray.

Law professor contests death penalty for Canadian on death row

by Frank Appleyard
The Fulcrum
(University of Ottawa)

OTTAWA (CUP) -- A University of Ottawa professor is preparing to take on the Canadian government over its decision to not seek clemency for a Canadian citizen on death row in the U.S.

Alberta resident Ronald Allen Smith was convicted of murdering two Black-foot tribe members in Montana in 1982. He is currently on death row in the U.S. for his crimes.

On November 1, the Canadian government announced that they would not help to get Smith off death row.

Now, Craig Forcece, a law professor at the University of Ottawa, has joined three Toronto-based lawyers and filed for a judicial review of the federal government's refusal to seek the commutation of Smith's death sentence.

Forcece, a professor at the U of O since 2003, said the decision contradicts the government's historical efforts to secure clemency for Canadians facing the death penalty in foreign countries.

"We are asking a federal court in Canada to quash the decision made by the government in November and compel the government to persist in what had to at that point been their consistent efforts to seek [the] commutation of Mr. Smith's death penalty," said Forcece.

He said the Canadian government has

"with a nudge and a wink endorsed the death penalty."

Forcece said his interest in the case stems from a desire to banish the death penalty debate from Canada for good.

"[In the U.S.,] a significant number of the idealistic young people who [come] to practice law do so in hopes of subsequently graduating and combating the death penalty in the U.S.," he said.

"In Canada, the students I teach come to law school to champion environmental causes, or to promote human rights internationally. I took this case because I don't want any Canadian law student to ever have to come to a Canadian law school with aspirations of being a death penalty fighter."

Forcece said that he is determined to see the case through, even if he is feeling little excitement about the idea.

"The decision made ... at the beginning of this month was horrendous and called out for close scrutiny under our Charter of Rights and other legal principals," he said.

"One doesn't wake up in the morning and contemplate, 'What am I going to do for the next couple months? Well, I might as well do a death penalty case.' This is something that you have to do."

While Smith still has an appeal pending in the U.S. court system, Forcece feels that the commutation decision has become the larger issue.

"The death penalty is abhorrent for two reasons," he said. "The first is that murder is wrong, whether it's murder by the individual or murder by the state. If that doesn't persuade people, the death penalty is wrong because our legal systems — here, in the U.S., and

everywhere — are fallible. We are not omniscient enough as a society or a legal system to presume that we can impose a penalty for which there can never be any retraction."

On November 1 Minister of Public Safety, Stockwell Day, sparked the controversy.

"We will not actively pursue bringing back to Canada murderers who have been tried in a democratic country that supports the rule of law," he told the House of Commons.

Both Forcece and Canada's opposition parties alike have indicated that the statement effectively flouts a long-standing Canadian tradition of lobbying foreign governments to show mercy to its citizens when facing the death penalty.

Liberal Senator Serge Joyal tabled a motion on November 29, urging the government to rethink its decision and seek a commutation to life imprisonment for Smith.

"The government decision to permit the imposition [of] the death penalty on a Canadian citizen by the state of Montana is contrary to Canada's international obligations ... It flies in the face of our heritage, in the belief of the sanctity of life that Canada implemented through its decision to abolish the death penalty 30 years ago," Joyal said.

"Capital punishment is not a punishment that you support in some circumstances and not others, and claim that you're still against the death penalty. You're against the death penalty for fundamental principles," he said.

"To me, it's very dangerous to go along that route, as you are paving the way to reintroduce the death penalty."

calling all writers. be a part of the action.

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