

NEWS & FEATURES

PEI director of student aid visits UPEI

Future changes not all for the better

BY SHANNON YOUNKER

THE STUDENT AID ISSUE IS A VERY important one to most of us here at UPEI. To be overly simplistic for a moment, the problem for many students is that they are not getting enough money to live on. The problem for the government is that they are living billions of dollars beyond their means. Unfortunately, students can't run up deficits the same way governments can. On Monday, February 15, the provincial director of student aid came to UPEI. David MacPherson discussed the recent changes to provincially sponsored aid in our so-called sister provinces Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, as well as the reforms suggested by the former federal government. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick have gone from a federal loan/provincial bursary program

similar to the one now in place in PEI to a federal loan/provincial loan program. This loan/loan programme is recommended for all provinces with a 60/40 split between national and provincial funds. With this change, the maximum amount available to a full time student (currently someone taking three courses, although that is under revision) was raised substantially.

In PEI the maximum amount available is now \$5700. Of this, a maximum of \$3360 is provided by the Canada Student Loan Programme and the balance by a provincial bursary. It must be said, however, that very few students receive the maximum in their bursaries. The cost of one year of university for someone living on their own is \$8000. In Nova Scotia, the yearly maximum is now

\$8160 and in New Brunswick, \$7040. Increases are also suggested for special sectors of the students population. Grants for disabled students, and increases in loans for part-time students and students who are parents were discussed.

The "provincial" loans in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are now controlled by the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce in these provinces. This means that students wanting student loans will be scrutinized to the same extent as people getting a loan for a small business, for example. This is disturbing to many students, as was mentioned by UPEISU President, Todd King. King mentioned that the criteria used by the banks for determining one's credit rating could be very strict, and many students could be turned away by having

maxed their credit cards or not paying their phone bills. King also asked MacPherson about the possibility of saving the PEI bursary. Unfortunately, this seems to be an impossibility. Students are going to have to live with the increased debt load if the national proposal is imposed.

In conclusion, it is beginning to become apparent to people other than students that this is a major problem. Accessibility has become such an issue that the enrolment at UPEI was down in 1993 - 1994, for the first time in its history. Reforms are in the works, and students can only hope that CFS (Canadian Federation of Students) and the other groups lobbying in their favour can make sure that these reforms benefit students.

University slashes department budgets

5 per cent cuts across the board-- how will it affect the students?

BY REBECCA MOORE

ALL DEPARTMENTS AT UPEI WERE recently asked to make a 5 per cent cutback in their budgets. Enrolment for the 1993-1994 school year was lower than expected, causing the requested cutbacks.

Inevitably, this will affect the students. The Business School has not finalized anything yet, but if they have to make the cuts there is only one place to turn-- staff. If a faculty member is cut, then the number of sections of electives available to students will be cut.

Another problem would be larger class sizes; and, if more sessionals were hired they would be teaching 30 per cent of classes-- a percentage that is unacceptable to the Dean.

The English department would also have to look to staff cuts. Again, they had not finalized anything when Doctor Lemm, the head of the department, said that the most likely place to make cuts would be part-time staff. Salaries take up 90 per cent of the budget. To pay one full-time professor costs the same as three sessionals. It would make more sense to cut

one position than three, but it is harder to do. Cutting three sessionals would mean the loss of eighteen courses they would normally teach. This would lead to lost classes for students and larger class sizes-- not something for students to look forward to.

The Biology department has a plan that will not affect students-- for this year, at least. Darrel Guignon, head of the biology department, said that the cutbacks will not affect students this year. The department was able to cut back on lab inventory and hopefully

on photocopying costs, by replacing an old machine that needs many costly repairs. Mr. Guignon warns that, even though they were able to successfully make cutbacks with a bit of planning this year, if the cuts continue the students will be affected.

To avoid future cuts the university would need higher enrolment and more revenue-- either from the government or students.



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