



## NUMBERS CONTINUE TO RISE, DESPITE PREDICTIONS

by John Gushue Canadian University Press

THE 1980'S WOULD BE THE DECADE during which post-secondary enrollment bottomed out, the demographers predicted,

But the demographers were wrong. While the age group that traditionally has the heaviest post-secondary participation rate — 17 to 21 year-olds — has narrowed considerably in the last decade, colleges and universities across the country are reporting another year of steady enrollment increases.

An informal telephone survey conducted by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada confirms that predictions made 20 years ago are completely wrong.

"We originally saw the group of 17 to 21 year-olds declining, and we expected the participation rate to be about the same," said AUCC researcher Marino Kristjanson. "Perhaps we were relying too much on connecting these two."

According to the AUCC, enrollment across Canada has increased for the seventh consecutive year. Full-time undergraduate enrollment is up by 1.3 per cent, with the largest increases — 6.3 and 4.4 per cent, respectively — reported in Newfoundland and Saskatchewan.

"We would have predicted differently," said Kristjanson. "I think we would have expected an overall decrease of at least that much."

"These are significant increases, and in a short period of time too," said Kristjanson.

Most education groups and critics say high unemployment rates are keeping many young people in school.

"What we have now is the unwilling student," said Lynn McDonald, federal New Democratic post-secondary education critic. "Enrollment is up because jobs are scarce."

Kristjanson says several factors influence enrollment changes, but agrees poor employment prospects place greater demand for higher education.

"Good jobs aren't easy to come by for young people, and so there is pressure to go to school," he said. "Full-time first year enrollment in Alberta increased more this year than last year, which isn't surprising."

Jean Wright, an accessibility researcher for the Canadian Federation of Students, said groups that traditionally have avoided universities are now unexpectedly enrolling for post-secondary education.

"For example, women who are older and who are going back to school is the trend that no one really predicted," said Wright.

But for the record number of students in Canada's schools, life isn't easy. Besides dealing with jammed classrooms, inadequate resources and outdated equipment, many students are forced to take on student loans — increased in most provinces in favor of grants — to finance their education.

"On the one hand, it's good that the money is available," said Wright. "But it is unfortunate that students have to borrow heavily into debt to go to school."

In British Columbia, where the Social Credit Government abolished the grants portion of its assistance program two years ago, the average student aid debt has skyrocketed to \$15,000, an increase of \$12,000 since 1984.

Howard McMurdy, former NDP post-secondary education critic, said rising fees and enormous debt loads "are scaring away the people who benefited for decades by increased accessibility — women, disabled, natives, minorities and low income groups."

Said counterpart McDonald, "Our participation rate is much higher than in other countries, but we still don't make university or college education very accessible. Financial difficulties here are much greater than in other countries, particularly in Europe."

With federal and provincial governments restraining post-secondary funding, education lobby groups say the quality of education in Canada is being increasingly threatened.

"The problem is really one of quality, not accessibility," says CFS researcher Wright. "The education is still there, but it is not as good as it used to be." Increased enrollment means heavier workloads for the country's faculty, whose numbers have far from matched the swell in classroom sizes.

Welcome, welcome all ye fellow students, full of vim and vigour. I surely hope that one of your New Year's resolutions is to be financially responsible and keeping in line with this watch out for details about a short workshop on "Student Money Management — the tale of the loaves and the fishes."

Word from the Student Aid office is that bursary cheques will be out in mid-January. Also, a reminder to seniors planning to attend graduate or professional school, the deadlines are coming quick so get moving.

If I can be of assistance please feel free to drop by the office, first floor of Main Building. My office hours are as follows,

9 — 1 pm Monday  
10 — 1 am Tuesday and Thurs-

day  
12 — 1 pm Wednesday  
10 — 1 pm Friday

Upcoming Bursary Deadlines: Catholic Women's League Bursary These bursaries are awarded to Catholic female students. Financial need is the primary consideration. Applications may be picked up at Student Services. DEADLINE: January 30

UPEI Memorial Bursary A number of bursaries (usually around 15) valued at \$200 are awarded to full-time students, in any year, in the second semester. Primary consideration for this bursary is financial need. The deadline is sometime in early February. Applications may be picked up from either Student Services or the registrar's office.

Have a good week!

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### ESSAY CONTEST ON TERRORISM

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2. Terrorism will be stopped using education, communication and mediation, not retaliation.
3. The concept that non-violence will win over violence proposed by Leo Tolstoy and practised by Mahatma Gandhi will be effective in ending terrorism.

**Rules:**  
1500 words or less.

Postmarked no later than March 31, 1987.

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Endterror  
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