

University of Victoria student missing

By **DARREN STEWART**

VICTORIA (CUP) — A student at the University of Victoria was still missing last week after more than two weeks in what police are describing as a suspicious case.

Steven McLaughlin was reported missing on Dec. 23 after he failed to show up at his parents' house for the Christmas holidays.

Police say he was last seen the day before, and hasn't checked his answering machine, accessed his bank account or used his vehicle since then.

"Everything he has is here," said officer Paul Morrison, of the Saanich division of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

"We have to be suspicious. We can't rule out suicide, his just taking a holiday or even foul play."

Search and rescue teams have combed the university area and the surrounding brush and beaches with helicopters in the hopes of learning something about McLaughlin's whereabouts. But they've had little luck.

"This is strange for any case. I mean, where is he? We have nothing attached to this person to lean on," said Morrison.

A psychology professor who was the last person to see McLaughlin says he was on campus that day looking into on-campus employment.

McLaughlin held down several jobs at the university and volunteered periodically for the campus radio station.

Police say they're hoping that with all the people who knew McLaughlin through his various connections to the university, somebody will be able to give them a clue about what happened.

The university's own security department would also like to get to the bottom of the case.

"It's primarily a police investigation," said Ken Morrison, assistant director of campus security services. "But we're offering any sort of assistance or information they need to find this gentleman."

Legal defence fund for APEC protesters growing

By **CARLA TONELLI**

TORONTO (CUP) -- University faculty across Canada are boosting a nation-wide movement of support for student protesters at last year's APEC summit in Vancouver by sending cash to help fund legal costs for the inquiry set to resume in the next few weeks.

By prompting the Canadian Association of University Teachers to send the latest donation of \$500 to the APEC Protesters Legal Defence Fund, faculty associations from coast-to-coast have contributed \$7,000 to the fund collected by the British Columbia Federation of Labour. So far, about \$115,000 has been raised from individuals and labour unions.

Jim Turk, executive director of the association, says it's a disgrace the federal government has refused to take responsibility for the students' expenses, which have been climbing upward of \$240,000 since October when their defence lawyers stopped working for free.

"It's unbalanced for the government to say the students aren't entitled to legal defence when all the other parties involved are," Turk said, pointing to Ottawa's decision to pay most of the legal costs for the RCMP and the federal departments involved

in the hearings.

"The student protesters are every bit as much a central part of the hearing as all the other participants," Turk added.

The Canadian Association of University Teachers, which represents 56 faculty associations and 28,000 professors and librarians across the country, says it's deeply troubled by the treatment of the student protesters at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit last year, as well as at the RCMP Public Complaints commission hearings.

"It's not surprising at all that faculty would support students," said Miriam Sobrino, director of communications for the B.C. Federation of Labour.

"They're at universities and post-secondary institutions, which are supposed to be places to expand knowledge and not be afraid to try out new ideas."

What is surprising, Sobrino says, is that so many individuals have lent financial support to the students' legal defence fund even with the risk of landing their names on government surveillance lists.

"If you're on the record as supporting this, that means you're on the record as opposing the federal government,"

Sobrino said.

While the students may not be accused of crimes per se, the aggressive manner in which they've been interrogated by Ottawa's lawyers justify the public funding of their defence, she added.

But the federal government maintains that because the students are not accused of anything, regardless of interrogation tactics, they're on their own to fund legal costs.

"They are the ones making the accusations," said Athana Mentzelopoulos, spokeswoman for the federal government's lawyers.

Government regulations require that Ottawa cover the costs of legal defence whenever a government employee is accused of anything, she added.

"The question has remained, why do (students) require legal assistance?" she said.

The three Canada Justice employees working as federal government lawyers cost around \$2,000 a day, Mentzelopoulos said.

Anyone wishing to contribute to the legal defence fund can send cheques to the B.C. Federation of Labour, APEC Protesters Legal Support Fund, c/o Ste. 200, 5118 Joyce St., Vancouver, B.C. V5R 4H1.

University suspends prof after marijuana conviction

By **DARREN STEWART**

VICTORIA (CUP) -- Sociology students at the University of Victoria were met with a shock last week when they returned to classes to find out the school has suspended one of their teachers.

Following a recommendation from university president Dr. David Strong, the school suspended Prof. Jean Veevers and relieved her of her duties.

Effective immediately,

the interim suspension follows Veevers' recent conviction in British Columbia Supreme Court of cultivating marijuana for the purpose of trafficking.

Veevers has been on medical leave since April 1997, when police raided her home and found an elaborate marijuana-growing operation.

She pleaded guilty to the charge of growing the substance for the purpose of trafficking last October. Her Dec. 4 sentence included a \$15,000

fine, a one-year conditional sentence that she can serve at home and 60 hours of community service.

In a prepared statement to the public about the decision, Strong said the suspension was based on evidence submitted to the court during Veevers' trial.

While Veevers declined to speak to the media herself, her legal counsel, Mel Hunt, said she was surprised by the suspension.

"She was quite astonished," he said. "She certainly didn't expect anything like that."

Hunt said Veevers plans to fight for her career by invoking the university's arbitration process to challenge the suspension.

"If the arbitrators decide there is no just cause for dismissal then that will be the end of this," said Hunt. "But if they decide there was just cause the case goes to the

board of governors to decide. One would expect them to follow the president's recommendation."

The university administration agrees the issue is far from resolved.

"The president has made a recommendation and the board makes a final decision," said Bruce Kilpatrick, director of communications with the University of Victoria. "There is no indication when this will happen as of yet."