

VOLUNTARY FEE IS NOT SO AT CONCORDIA

MONTREAL (CUP) — The administration may be denying it but Concordia students say that they are not being fully informed about a fee they are paying to fund the school's future libraries.

The \$1 per credit charge, described as a voluntary contribution, is automatically charged to students when they register. Those who want to opt out can get refunded if they sign a special waiver form.

Members of the student council say however that the school is trying to discourage people from opting out by hiding the existence of the waiver forms to

new students.

According to former council co-president Karen Takacs, this year the university did not send the waiver forms it usually sends in the package it sends to new students. She also mentioned that information booths, where the forms were also available during registration, were set out of the way.

"I think that not sending out the notices is disgusting," said Takacs. "They probably think that the best way to get students to contribute is not to tell them anything."

Takacs said the university is trying to make it more difficult to opt out because a lot of students asked for refunds last year.

"Considering the amount of money they gave, it's unfair that they're not being informed," said Takacs. "They're being abused."

The so-called voluntary fee has a controversial history. Shortly after its introduction in 1985, an executive of the student council was urged by school officials to make the refund process "as bureaucratic as possible" to discourage requests for refunds. Last

year, over 30 percent of Concordia undergraduates opted out. The remaining students contributed over \$250,000 to the funding campaign.

University official Gary Richards denied the university was trying to withhold information, saying that information letters about the funding campaign were included with the package sent to new students. But Richards, who is working on the campaign, said that it would be "illogical" to include the waiver forms.

"If I was promoting a campaign, I wouldn't tell you how to get out of it,"

he said.

Richards added that the booths were placed far away from registration tables because "there would have been a huge crowd" if they had been any closer.

At UPEI, a \$5 voluntary fee is being charged this year as a student contribution to the Challenge of the Eighties Fund Raising Program. While the administration has not concealed it, neither has it publicized the fact that any student may receive a refund of this fee by applying to the UPEISU Office. ■

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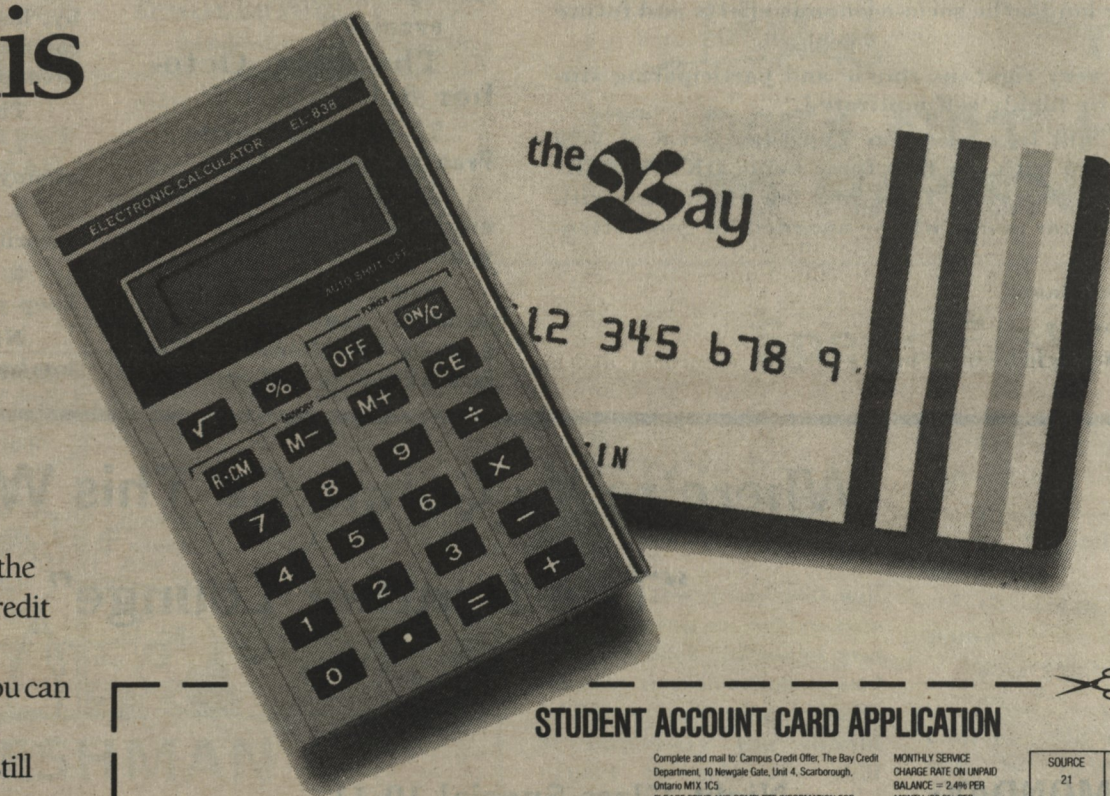
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