

# THE GEM

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## Research And Development Commitments Cut

Ottawa (CUP) — The federal government's commitment to quality research is eroding, warn scientists and research groups.

The National Research Council has been told to cut \$20 million from its budget, and find another \$74 million during the next five years as part of Canada's \$800 million share of the American space station project.

NRC president Larkin Kerwin said as many as 200 scientists could lose their jobs, while some NRC departments and facilities will be either shut down or sold.

Kerwin, calling the government decision "regrettable", said the council administrators have tried to minimize losses. "We have looked carefully at all our programs and have had to take some very difficult decisions," Kerwin said.

The NRC cutback follows a decision this winter to freeze guaranteed funding to the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, which fund most research on Canadian campuses. As well, the government last year cut 50 per cent of the budget of the Science Council of Canada, a policy and advisory body.

Science and technology minister Frank Oberle, who has been attacked almost daily in the House of Commons by opposition critics, staunchly defends the government's move to reduce the federal deficit, and said reported damage to Canadian research is exaggerated.

"There will be no layoffs and no pink slips (at the NRC)," said Oberle, even though senior NRC officials say layoffs are inevitable.

And even if layoffs are avoided, they say, research will suffer because of insufficient funding for equipment, supplies, and support staff.

"Of what I can see, budgets are dropping, and support is disappearing," said NRC physicist Zbigniew Basinski, a member of the Order of Canada who studies metal strength and fatigue.

"Funding restraint (is making) my research impossible," he said.

By Derrick Webber

A \$5 ANNUAL FEE HAS been proposed by SU president Rob Kelley at the regular Student Union meeting last Sunday night. The Semi-voluntary fee is to go towards the university's new fund raising campaign seeking 5.2 million dollars for the restoration of Main, Cass, and the Arena buildings. The Kelley proposal asks for \$5.00 to be collected from every student at registration time once a year for the next five years. Students not wishing to contribute could be refunded their money by going to the Business office.

The university campaign, known as 'Challenge of the Eighties', has been going since mid-summer. Student Council was approached at the Nov. 2nd Student council meeting for a commitment of \$50,000 from the student, but Kelley decided against a firm commitment, but rather contribute whatever funds are collected through the proposed refundable \$5.00 fee. This plan could raise as much as \$45,000 for the restoration campaign, depending on the number of students requesting refunds.

"From our point of view, the really terrible thing is that morale is going below sea level," he said.

Mosur Sundaresan, chair of Carleton University's physics department, said scientists outside the NRC also have reason to lose heart. "Although we have not been directly affected, we are very concerned about the future," he said.

"We are not convinced the government are [sic] very concerned about the future. We are not convinced

the government should be putting [sic] so much money into the space station project on such a long-term basis," said Sundaresan.

The Canadian Association of University Teachers is not opposed to Canadian participation in the space venture, but CAUT president Allan Sharp said the cut "is another wrong step to take."

"Canada provides too little money for research in Canada. Mr Oberle seems to be of the view that science

policy in Canada can be improved without new funds," said Sharp.

"We think improving science policy will require new money. Mr. Oberle is going to have to accept that fact, somewhere along the line," said Sharp.

David Orlikow, New Democratic technology critic, said the private sector will not provide as much financial support as the government is expecting it to.

## Student Union Proposes New Fee

The reactions of other councillors to the plan appeared favourable at the SU meeting, and a General meeting of the student body has

been called for Friday, Nov. 28th at 10:30 in the Robertson Library fishbowl lounge to present the idea

and allow students to voice any concerns.

The proposed refundable fee idea closely resembles the UNB student union fund raising plan, allowing those who really need the extra five or object to the campaign to be

returned their money. The amount of \$5.00 also compares quite favourably to amounts charges at other maritime Universities, such

as Dalhousie in Halifax, whose student union levied a fee of \$15.00 per student.

## Other Councils Make Deals

FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGNS by other maritime universities have resulted in deals being struck between Student Unions and the university administrations.

The University of New Brunswick just wrapped up its Third Century Campaign that looked for over \$10 million in funds for general renovations and projects. The UNB Student Union, headed by president John Bosnitch, agreed to a \$5 per student increase in SU fees to help out with the campaign, but on a voluntary basis. The fee was collected from all students, but those not wanting to contribute to the campaign could apply to the university for a full refund. Also,

although UNB's Third Century Fund is for general projects around campus, the funds contributed by the UNB student union have been placed in trust by UNB for use only on renovation and improvement of the university-owned student union building. Requests for such improvements are made by an advisory council of student members, and, according to staff at the UNB Brunswick newspaper, the plan has been working well with the university so far agreeing to all requests.

Dalhousie University in Halifax has begun its own six year fund raising campaign for \$25 million. In the past, Dalhousie students

have been subjected to tuition increases of between 10%-12%, leaving them with one of the highest tuition rates in Canada. When asked to contribute to the fund, Dal student union struck a bargain with university president Andrew McKay to allow tuition increases of no more than 4% annually for the first three years of the campaign, and then between 3% and 8% for the last three, depending on cost of living changes. In return, Dalhousie students have agreed to pay \$15 a year over regular student union fees. Dal students hope that this limit to increases will shift where the university looks for extra funding away from the students and more to other sources.