

If Books Grew on Trees

By Adam MacIsaac
Contributor

It isn't hard to see that there is a problem with continuing education beyond high school. The government will respond in their usual way to the actions taken by a modest amount of UPEI's students who protested and caused headaches for those in the downtown government buildings two weeks ago. I often wonder if that is all that can be offered towards furthering education.

It is understandable that not everyone is into activism, but with a topic that is so closely related to acquiring higher education, you would think that there would be more interest. My proverbial hat goes off to those who took time out of their busy schedules to participate and voice the mounting student concerns -- especially to those with Twisted Sister solos.

Even though the meeting with the Minister of Education was abrupt due to her prior commitments, there were many student opinions put forth about possible ways to ease our burdens. One student raised the point that he has accumulated a huge list of jobs on his resume in order to afford the increased tuition fees, while the response was that you have to devote a lot more than just the knowledge you receive to complete university. I personally was appalled; with such reliance on the farming, fishing and tourism industries on Prince Edward Island, anyone who has searched for a job over the winter months understands that finding one is not an easy task. Personally speaking, the ability to obtain a job that pays well enough while still being fulfilling to the employee is a rarity in the summer,

let alone during the snow-stricken months of winter.

I may be sympathetic towards those who have to support themselves while attending university only because I personally know the feeling all too well. Being an independent student who only has a fixed income based on the farming season has caused many obstacles during my quest for post-secondary education. Since the beginning of this semester I have been waiting on a little bundle of joy, although to my recollection I was not informed that it needed this much time to develop.

Any university student around knows the hassles and headaches that sprout from student loans. Everyone has heard a student loan horror story or two, but I have had the intimate privilege of living one. It all began with the release of the same information in triplicate, and continued on to the allotment of a semester's travel allowance substantial enough only for a moped. It then progressed to the stressful waiting for when my loan papers would arrive at UPEI, to their eventual disappearance into the Bermuda Triangle -- or so it seemed. It is understandable that paper work does take some time, I am not here to argue that, but I wish to bring to light the question of how someone is expected to survive during this waiting period. No more than a week and a half ago I took the incentive to swallow my pride (instead of dropping out of my courses due to my lack of resources) and fall back onto the government to be my savior. Since then I have been having major issues with the relation of my future

aspirations -- I did not want to extend my hands again only to feel the harsh reality that was placed in them a few days prior.

So, like any logical person bursting at the seams with stress, I sought currency from a line. Since university doesn't mix well with unemployment, my only option was a line of credit to fill the space between. While it was a minor problem for myself to obtain the credit, I think of those who do not have the credit rating to allow for this, and those attending school from other provinces who have to travel home to obtain

forms of credit for their education. With the weight of the financial burdens lifted off of my shoulders I was able to focus on the reason for all this extra stress: my courses. With midterms only a few days away I spent a bulk of my time reading from books that were at least four editions out of date, but were my

only chance of grasping the material covered on the upcoming tests. Although I haven't received any marks back, I have a greater appreciation of the early 1990's university student and their infatuation with Ace of Base, which was well documented throughout my study material.

With the relief from midterms flowing over me like a euphoric drug I could now finally relax and check up on the status of my student loan. With a quick call I found out that my loan papers were sent out on December 26th, but did not arrive at UPEI until recently. I imagined my loan papers travelling to the places I wish I had been able to visit over spring break, but awoke from my daydream to the reality of grading potatoes in order to afford food and oil. Not every university experience is similar to mine, but I know that there are those who also understand that you can end up with the same education with a few cents in late fees from the library instead of \$XX,XXX for a framed piece of paper.

*Looking for a Rewarding, Well Paying
Career for Men and Women?
What about Occupational Therapy?*

*Do you have 30 credit hours of
1000 level or higher university approved courses?
Maybe Occupational Therapy is for you!*

Starting salaries around \$40,000 Cdn especially if
you start your own business.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: MARCH 15, 2004
For September 2004 Admission to
Dalhousie's B.Sc.(Occupational Therapy) Program
Website: www.occtherapy.dal.ca
E-mail: occupational.therapy@dal.ca
Phone: (902)494-8804



Dalhousie University
School of Occupational Therapy