

## Tuition Fees On Continual Up-surge

(Source: Ottawa Bureau, CUP)  
by Samer Muscati

Times are tough for university students in Canada, and according to a new report by Statistics Canada, the future does not look any brighter. Tuition fees have more than doubled over the past decade, and student leaders fear that the situation will become bleaker as financially strapped universities desperately find ways to cut costs and increase revenues.

Last year alone, tuition fees for university students nation wide increased on average by 7.3 per cent. Alberta and Ontario led the way with average hikes of 10.7 per cent, and 9.8 per cent respectively, according to Statistics Canada. In British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, fees rose between 5 and 6 per cent, while in Atlantic Canada, the hikes ranged between 6 to 8 per cent. Quebec fees rose on average only 0.3 per cent, despite massive hikes in the province's previous 5 years.

The figures come as no surprise to Michael Mancinelli, national deputy chairperson for the Canadian Federation of Students. He said that if current trends continue, only the rich will be able to afford a decent university education. "It's a pretty bleak announcement," said Mancinelli. "There's no cause for optimism. The hikes will have repercussions which will result in a system of elitism that will reduce accessibility to universities."

Federal Human Resources Minister Lloyd Axworthy told the Canadian University Press that the tuition fee increases are "a constant problem."

"What we're now trying to do is to provide a solution," said Axworthy. "We've introduced a new student loans and grants program, and we hope to be in a position to continue to provide more assistance to students who need it."

Under the Canada Student Loans Program announced in August, a new student debt strategy will provide \$50 million in extra grants by 1998-1999 to students with special needs.

"I hope that we will be able to raise that [amount] substantially," Axworthy said.

Axworthy said that there is not a lot more that he could do to help students since ultimately each province decides how much funding it will provide its universities. As part of last year's federal budget, the Liberals created the Canada

Health and Social Transfer (CHST) -- a cheaper, no-strings-attached replacement for current federal transfer payments for health, welfare, and education.

The federal government plans to cut \$7 billion in transfer payments to the provinces by 1998. Guy Caron, chairperson for the Canadian Federation of Students, has said that the CHST will shoot tuition fees through the roof.

CFS has planned numerous campaigns to raise awareness on the CHST and its ramifications on post-secondary education.

Mancinelli says that the new grants the federal government are dishing out are only a drop in the bucket, and are a cop-out. He said that the government's priorities should be reducing the heavy debtloads that students must carry from high tuition costs and unemployment.

The Statistics Canada report also shows that tuition fees have soared in every province since 1986, and have far outstripped the rate of inflation. While inflation went up 34 per cent from 1985/86 to 1994/95, university tuition fees increased by 134.4 per cent during the same time period.

The biggest jump occurred in Quebec, where fees have more than doubled since 1990.

The document states that a decline in federal and provincial funding has increased the importance of student fees as a source of income for universities. However, it does not draw any implications or conclusions on the impacts to students due to a lack of hard evidence, says the survey's manager Mongi Mouelhi.

## Minister Announces Atlantic Tourism Conference

The Honourable David C. Dingwall, Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunity Agency (ACOA), announced today that ACOA will host the Atlantic Canada Tourism Conference in cooperation with the Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership. The conference, which is slated to take place in the spring, will provide a forum for Atlantic tourism industry leaders, experts, and government representatives to discuss key issues facing today's tourism industry.

"Tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in the world economy," said Mr Dingwall, "Nearly 83,000 people -- about 7 percent of the Atlantic workforce -- are now employed in tourism related jobs in the Atlantic region. And that number will continue to grow. The Atlantic Canada Opportunity Agency identified tourism as a high growth sector several years ago and has been working with the four Atlantic provinces, the four provincial tourism industry associations and the Canadian Tourism Commission to coordinate a regional approach to tourism. This conference is another milestone in that effort and will go a long way toward advancing the regional strategy that will take the tourism sector into the 21st century."

In 1993, ACOA brought together all the key players in the regional tourism industry to form the Atlantic Canada Tourism Partnership (ACTP). This association has already been responsible for making significant gains in the promotion of Atlantic tourism.

The 1994, ACTP Atlantic marketing campaign attracted 57 co-op partners, most from the private sector, who invested \$350,000. The campaign generated 35,000 inquiries. The 1995 campaign has been even more successful. It has attracted 66 co-op partners who have invested \$575,000 and generated some 103,000 inquiries. This has translated into more than 28,000 visible parties -- at an average of three people per party. This means that the ACTP's marketing efforts resulted in approximately 84,000 additional tourists in Atlantic Canada this year alone.

"By pooling resources and acting in a united fashion, the ACTP has given

stakeholders in the region's tourism industry results that would have been made impossible to achieve had they continued to act alone," said Rory Beck, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Tourism for Prince Edward Island and ACTP government co-Chairperson.

Paul Lanno, ACTP Industry co-Chairperson, added "The Atlantic Canada Tourism Conference is a good example of the kind of constructive cooperation that now exists between federal and provincial governments and the private sector."

### Tourism Industry's Contribution to the Atlantic Economy

**\$2.2 billion annual revenue for  
Atlantic Canada (1994)**

**\$692 million annual tax revenue  
(3 levels of government for 1993)**

**Provincial GDP from tourism  
receipts (1993)**

**Prince Edward Island  
7.5%**

**Nova Scotia  
5.6%**

**New Brunswick  
4.7%**

**Newfoundland and Labrador  
4.8%**

**By percentage of gross provincial  
product earned from tourism, the  
provinces of Prince Edward Island,  
Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and  
Newfoundland rank 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th  
in the country respectively.**

**Atlantic Canada contributes  
7.25% of Canadian tourism sales**

**Atlantic Canada mirrors the  
mix of travel in Canada - 85% do-  
mestic and 15% international**

**83,000 tourism-related jobs in  
Atlantic Canada (1994)**

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