

Unhealthy eating a growing concern on campus Students, profs blame social and economic factors

By Daniella Girgenti
The Silhouette (McMaster University)

HAMILTON (CUP) -- Fourth-year biology student Rebecca Goodman knows all about the struggle of trying to balance healthy eating and being a university student.

A busy schedule of classes at all times of the day, all-night study sessions, and extra-curricular activities make it difficult -- if not impossible -- for a student to make healthy choices.

"It's not like you can carry around healthy snacks with you all day; they need to be refrigerated," said Goodman, a student at McMaster University. "Anything of any health value costs too much, so you end up eating out of vending machines."

When Goodman was living in residence, she saw first-hand how easy it is for students to grab unhealthy food.

"I just saw everyone around me and saw what they were eating, and I was kind of disgusted.

You just can't eat candy for three days in a row."

Goodman is not the only one concerned about her health. Lots of students fret over a newly developed beer belly or the freshman 15, but now professors are worried too.

William Haskell, a professor at the Stanford University school of medicine, recently delivered a lecture at McMaster, which addressed how the mechanization of the world and loss of physical activity is causing obesity in many people.

"Mankind changed its energy expenditure with the advent of the Industrial Revolution," said Neil McCartney, chair of the university's kinesiology department. "Once we moved to urbanization because of industry, we lost a lot of our activity . . . and then we've gone to the information technology age where everybody spends more and more hours of the day sitting on their rear ends."

Haskell's lecture pointed out other factors that have contributed to the obesity epidemic, including an overabundance of food.

"If we look at the whole thing of super-sizing, for example, and the fast food industry, those meals are highly calorific anyway, but if you get the super-sized option that costs just a few cents more, the calorie intake can go from something like 750 to 1,700," said McCartney.

Many students want to be physically active and eat healthy, but find it difficult to do so.

"Our society has become very convenient," said Tara-Lyn Elston of the university fitness centre. "We take the elevator or escalator to the second floor, we take the shuttle bus on campus to get closer to our classes."

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Pot trial goes up in smoke Marijuana activist intends to fight all the way to Supreme Court

By Adrien Letourneau
The Martlet (University of Victoria)

VICTORIA (CUP) -- Every Wednesday at 4:20 p.m., dozens of University of Victoria students gather near the campus fountain to show support for sick people who struggle to treat their conditions with medicinal marijuana. While nearly all the students are healthy, the university's Hempology 101 club attracts attention by supporting the use of illegal drugs. During meetings, members of the Cannabis Buyers' Club provide updates on current events involving medicinal marijuana while dozens of students pass joints around a circle.

The activist responsible for Hempology 101, one of the largest student clubs at the university, is Leon (Ted) Smith, but he has not set foot on campus since Nov. 8, 2000. Smith was charged with possession and trafficking, with evidence supplied by an undercover officer who had pocketed one of the joints passed out during a Hempology 101 meeting. Since then, Smith has been banned from campus.

"They took my microphone and speaker," he said.

Four years have passed, and a trial was to begin recently to determine the outcome of the charges. Hoping for an acquittal, Smith's victory would be celebrated by nothing short of his triumphant march back onto university soil.

Instead, the trial has been delayed again until January 2005. Two different trials were scheduled to take place at the same time with the same judge. The final decision was to go forward with another case that had been put off for two years, as opposed to Smith's own trial, which had nearly hit its four-year anniversary.

Smith remains positive, hoping the delay of one his most difficult trials will provide him better grounds to argue what he considers his constitutional rights. Smith

plans to argue on the grounds of freedom of expression, opinion, peaceful assembly and association, claiming he was singled out from the crowd because of his personal views.

"If they were going to charge me with trafficking, then everyone should have been arrested," he said.

He also plans to argue the passing of joints happened between consenting adults.

Smith is the founder of Vancouver Island's Cannabis Buyers' Club, a non-profit organization that provides medicinal marijuana to people with chronic illnesses. The group runs out of Ted's Books, where proof of illness and photo identification enable the purchase of medicinal marijuana and the use of a smoking room.

Police raided Smith's store in 2002 up to six different times, resulting in two different charges involving trafficking and possession. Two of the seizures had been in response to robberies at the store. Two others had been without warrants.

Judge Loretta F. Chaperon stayed these charges Sept. 7 on the grounds the Cannabis Buyers' Club was doing the job the government was not doing, namely providing a reliable supply of marijuana to those that need it. The stay is expected to stick, making the ruling a victory for Smith on its own.

Although there have been no additional arrests related to Hempology 101 since Smith's arrest, both campus security and Saanich police are aware of its activities.

In an interview last year, Chris Horsley, spokesperson for the Saanich police, said: "The police department is still very concerned with drug use on campus. Just because the police aren't showing up every week doesn't mean we are agreeing to what is happening."

"We made our point by charging him," said Hunter McDonald, former director of campus security, in November 2003. According to McDonald, campus security was waiting until the judicial system decides on Smith's case before looking at future enforcement strategies regarding marijuana.

This leaves only three charges with two separate trials to go. Despite the delays and legal pitfalls, Hempology 101 has continued to increase in size.

"People used to be cautious about coming to meetings, but at one point last year we were getting 120 people to our meetings, right in the middle of campus," said Smith in March 2004.

If that wasn't evidence enough of a growing interest in the legalization of marijuana, Smith speaks every Wednesday at 7 p.m. on the steps of the courthouse about his right to educate the public about medical marijuana and his own recent trials. These meetings have yet to be broken up by the Victoria police.

Smith's next trial will involve a charge laid in November 2000 -- a mere seven days after his arrest on campus -- in front of the Greater Victoria Public Library, where he was found distributing pot cookies for a 4:20 meeting.

The trial is scheduled for Nov. 8. Smith said he intends to fight right up to the Supreme Court itself, even if it takes another 10 years.

"The war on drugs is the epitome of a much larger, older struggle than most people realize," Smith said in his book, *Hempology 101*. "It is nothing less than a war on peace, a war on people."

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