

EDUCATED SOLUTIONS

BECAUSE OUR FUTURE DEPENDS ON HIGHER EDUCATION.

WHITHER ARTS?

FIGHTING TO KEEP CREATIVE PROGRAMS ALIVE
AT CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES

THE FINE ART OF CHOICE

ARE SCIENCE & ENGINEERING PROGRAMS THE ONLY DOORWAYS
TO A MEANINGFUL UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE?

FIND OUT HOW TO JOIN THE INTERN ARMY

PLUS

BOB RAE TALKS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION • IS YOUR UNIVERSITY FOR SALE?
HOW SHOULD STUDENTS PAY FOR THEIR EDUCATION? • TARGETING ACCESS AT AN EARLY AGE

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12 WHITHER ARTS?

All across Canada, creative departments are slowly being starved of needed funds. But students and professors in arts programs are far from beat.
GRAEME STEWART

16 THE FINE ART OF CHOICE

In today's university, certain programs are viewed as bigger moneymakers than others. Given the high cost of university, many students feel pressure to choose a degree that delivers the dollars.
JESSICA ROSE

20 JOINING THE INTERN ARMY

More and more students are using internships to break into the workforce. Trouble is, working for free makes it hard to pay the bills.
KASIA SARNECKI

MESSAGE FROM THE ADVISOR TO THE PREMIER

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION REVIEW
HON. BOB RAE

KEEP THE STUDENT VOICE STRONG

KATHLEEN WYNNE

HEY PAUL!

earmark some cash for higher education
BRETT BERGIE

DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE TRADES

HIGHER EDUCATION IS MORE THAN JUST UNIVERSITIES
DEBBIE SPENCE

SCHOOL SUCCESS BEGINS IN THE COMMUNITY

NORMAN ROWEN & MARNI SCHECTER-TAYLOR

WHY NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS MATTER

NOUMAN ASHRAF

TARGETING THE DEBT DEMOGRAPHIC

GETTING STUDENTS ON CAMPUS 'PUMPED'?
ERIKA SHAKER

PAYING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

PROGRESSIVE REPAYMENT LINKED TO INCOME
DR. NICHOLAS BARR

INCOME CONTINGENT LOAN REPAYMENT PLANS

THE SIREN SONG OF STUDENT ASSISTANCE
DR. MARK ROSENFELD

6

7

8

9

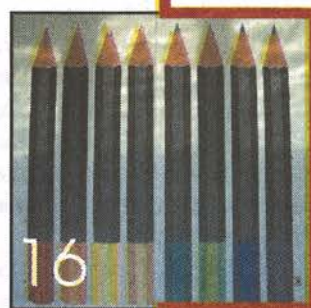
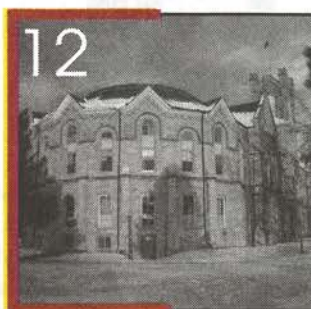
10

11

26

24

25



Cover photo: Entrance to Hamilton Hall at McMaster University. Hamilton Hall was the original home of the Faculty of Science at the university when it opened in 1930. (Photographed by Adam Spence.)

PHOTO ESSAY 27

CORPORATE CAMPUS:

THIS LECTURE IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY...

BY ADAM SPENCE & CLIFF VANDERLINDEN





EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *EDUCATED SOLUTIONS*, a magazine that recognizes and explores the unique challenges faced by Ontario's university students. This publication provides a much-needed forum to address the concerns of our province's undergraduates, both through their own investigative journalism and through perspective articles by individuals and groups who are working to change the system.

We've all heard the statistics on higher education in Ontario. The province ranks last in Canada in per student funding. Over the past decade, tuition at Ontario universities has more than doubled. The average debt for an undergraduate student in Ontario with a loan is \$22,700. Students, however, can often feel far removed from the discussions of policy analysts and decision makers, despite the fact that their own stories often reveal more about the experience of being a university student.

The passions, interests and concerns of students are important in perceiving a larger picture of the province's post-secondary system. The features in this issue, all written by students or recent graduates, discuss the importance of a well-rounded, high quality educational experience, from the impact of underfunding to the significance of an arts or liberal arts degree to the value of internship opportunities.

Also important are the ideas and initiatives of those who endeavor everyday to make education more affordable, more accessible and of the highest quality. The perspective articles in this issue present expert opinions on a wide-range of issues related to higher learning, including student engagement, early intervention programs, community supports, students with dependents, corporate funding and a point-counterpoint debate on paying for your education.

This is an important time for Ontario students. The mandate of the current Postsecondary Review is to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the province's post-secondary system and we encourage you to get involved. *EDUCATED SOLUTIONS* is designed to provoke thought and promote insightful debate on the issues that affect the quality and accessibility of higher education, allowing Ontario's students to become active participants in the shaping of their post-secondary experience. Our future depends on higher education and I hope that the educated solutions presented in this magazine will get you thinking and, more importantly, inspire you to share your thoughts with others.

Thank you to everyone who supported this endeavor, particularly Adam Spence and Graeme Stewart. Their commitment to the project and unwavering dedication gave us all the encouragement we needed to fulfill our vision.

I hope that you enjoy this issue of *EDUCATED SOLUTIONS*. Please feel free to contact me with your questions or concerns – we look forward to hearing your feedback.

Kathe Rogers
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EDUCATED SOLUTIONS

BECAUSE OUR FUTURE DEPENDS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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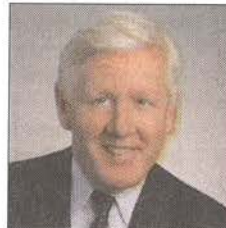


KASIA SARNECKI

No rookie to interning herself, Kasia Sarnecki has completed over four internships in her five years at university; the most recent was this past summer in New York City at a Top 40 radio station. She is a recent graduate from the University of Western Ontario with both a BAH in Media and Information Studies and a Masters in Journalism. Kasia enjoys both broadcast journalism and print journalism, in which she is able to be an investigative journalist who can also keep in tune with the latest radio hits.

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Jessica Rose is a third-year journalism student at Carleton University. She moved from her home in Burlington, Ontario to pursue an education in the writing field after completing a fulfilling high school co-op placement at the local newspaper. With an emphasis on history and mass communications, the journalism program has allowed her to explore and report on crucial issues, concerns and topics that are relevant to the Ottawa community. Her goal is to use her writing as a tool to inform and educate Canadians on societal issues that affect citizens across the country.

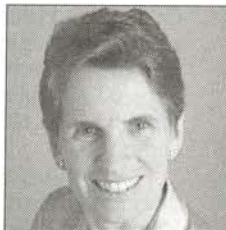


HON. BOB RAE

Bob Rae is Chancellor of Wilfrid Laurier University and a partner at Goodmans LLP. He has a BA and an LLB from the University of Toronto, was a Rhodes Scholar from Ontario in 1969, and has received honorary doctorates from the Law Society of Upper Canada, the University of Toronto and Assumption University. Mr. Rae served as Ontario's 21st Premier, and was elected eight times to federal and provincial parliaments before retiring from politics in 1996.

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Kathleen Wynne is the Member of Provincial Parliament for Don Valley West. She holds an MA in Linguistics from the University of Toronto (1980) and an MEd in Adult Education from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (1995). Politics has been the dominant focus of Kathleen's work in recent years. In 2000, she was elected as the Public School Trustee for Ward Eight on the Toronto District School Board. She was also one of the founders of Citizens for Local Democracy in Toronto, as well as founder of the Metro Parent Network (now the Toronto Parent Network).

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HON. BOB RAE

MESSAGE FROM THE ADVISOR TO THE PREMIER POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION REVIEW

In May of this year, I had the privilege of being asked by Premier Dalton McGuinty to review the design and funding of Ontario's post-secondary education system.

This review is an opportunity to chart a course that ensures Ontario has a bright future as a learning province, supported by a high-quality, affordable and accountable post-secondary education system.

Admittedly, I enter into this task with a bias. I believe that education is the bedrock of modern society. We seek it to succeed as individuals and we depend on it as a civil, democratic society, competing in an age of

been before. It is **the** method of human improvement.

Premier McGuinty and Mary Anne Chambers, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, have asked that my recommendations be submitted to them in January 2005. There is no time to waste and work has begun already.

The Review is being carried out in three key stages. During the summer, I began to examine past studies and reports on post-secondary education and undertake research and analysis of best practices in Ontario, other parts of Canada and beyond. During the next three months we will be listening to Ontarians' ideas about post-secondary education, including extensive consultations with the public, stakeholders and knowledgeable experts. All of this input will contribute to a written report to the Premier and Minister early in 2005.

I am being assisted by an expert panel that includes Leslie Church, a law student and former executive director of the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance; Ian Davidson, chief of police for Greater Sudbury; former Premier the Hon. William Davis; Don Drummond, senior vice president and chief economist with TD Bank Financial Group; Dr. Inez Elliston, retired educator and community leader; Richard Johnston, past president of Centennial College; and Huguette Labelle, chancellor of the University of Ottawa.

The consultation phase has just begun with the release of a Discussion Paper that provides the context for our ongoing dialogue on this issue of importance to all Ontarians. I will be travelling all over Ontario to engage people in a discussion of higher expectations for higher education. In all, I will visit 14 communities, hosting 16 public town hall meetings and a number of roundtable discussions with key stakeholders.

www.raereview.on.ca, for specific times, dates and locations. You can also sign up for e-mail updates that will keep you informed about the Review's progress.

In the meantime, you don't have to wait for us to come to you. Our Discussion Paper can be downloaded from our website and papers, ideas or answers to our questions can be submitted by fax, mail or via the internet. Our fax number is 416-323-6895. Our mailing address is Postsecondary Review, 2 Bloor Street West, Suite 700, Toronto, ON, M4W 3R1.

I want to hear about your vision for a

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information and science. Education is essential to Ontario's prosperity and it warrants investment.

I also believe that every qualified person, regardless of their income, should have the opportunity to develop to their full poten-

learning province. How would you improve the way our post-secondary system works? Do colleges and universities have too much, or too little autonomy? Are the pathways from high school to college and university clear enough? Is quality improving or dete-

**To learn more about Bob Rae's Postsecondary Review, or for more
information on how you can participate during consultations happening in
your community, please visit www.raereview.on.ca.**

tial, through higher education and the diverse opportunities it creates. From a child's first word to a woman's brilliant industrial design to a young man's groundbreaking cancer research, learning takes us where we have never

The town hall meetings are scheduled to be held at post-secondary campuses throughout October, November and December. Please watch for advertisements in your local newspaper or visit our web site,

riorating? How do we best fund the system to ensure both opportunity and excellence?

I hope you can give me your ideas and advice and I look forward to hearing from you.

KEEP THE STUDENT VOICE STRONG



KATHLEEN WYNNE

Shortly after my election last October as the MPP for Don Valley West in Toronto, Premier McGuinty asked me to serve as Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

The opportunity to serve as a steward of post-secondary education and training in Ontario is a significant one. Ontario has a rich history of commitment to public education and we must build on that legacy to strengthen our democracy and social fabric. It is high time that we, as a society, renewed our commitment to an educated citizenry and there is much work to be done. It is unac-

It is critical...that those of you who see how your peers struggle every day are empowered to pass your message along to government.

ceptable, for example, that while a secondary school diploma is a necessity for most employment in Ontario, still nearly 30 per cent of high school students leave without this important credential. As we write policies and make funding decisions, it is our collective responsibility to ensure these students are not forgotten. After all, our Ministry's student population comes primarily from the secondary system and we need to ensure that a range of education options lead students into apprenticeship, college and university streams.

In the last year, I have been impressed by the level of students' commitment to ensuring their peers have access to post-secondary opportunities. I have visited campuses where student donations have equipped resource rooms for students with disabilities and I have met with the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA), the College Student Alliance (CSA) and the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), all of whom speak eloquently about their fundamental concerns around equity and access issues.

The student voice is a significant one. It should not be underestimated by either students or policy makers. The energy, insight and optimism of students are necessary leavening agents in the decision-making processes of elected officials. Many of us are much older, with our student days long behind us, and

perhaps have lost some of our faith that the best things are possible. We need the push of the student voice asking hard, honest questions if we are to make decisions that are truly student focused.

That is not to say that the answers that emanate from Queen's Park, Ottawa or any seat of government will ever be absolutely in line with the wishes of any particular student group. It is critical, however, that those of you who see how your peers struggle every day are empowered to pass your message along to government. What is even more helpful, and the OUSA executive is particularly skilled at this, is when student advocates lay out the problems they see and suggest possible solutions. I have been very impressed at the level of sophistication of the arguments presented by students and by the quality of their analysis.

One of the ways of ensuring an educated populace is to provide opportunities to those adults who did not complete their schooling and want to return. This summer, I was engaged in a review of Adult Education in the province. Adult students, as we are defining them for the purpose of the review, are those who are not enrolled in a diploma or degree program at a college or uni-

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versity or in an apprenticeship program. Instead, they are involved in literacy, English or French as a Second Language and academic upgrading programs in order to move into post-secondary programming or employment and so that they are equipped with the skills needed to participate more easily in their

communities. They are also adults, up to and including those in their senior years, looking for community connection, personal and social enrichment through learning opportunities, including non-credit, general interest courses available at local schools, colleges, universities or community agencies.

Unfortunately, their voices are not often heard because very few adult student organizations exist to serve this group of students. This does not mean they are not passionate about their own learning experiences. As I met with these students during the course of the review, I found they were among the most passionate students I have encountered.

Talk to politicians at all levels of government and never let us off the hook when you ask a tough question!

In many cases, because of the complications in their lives and their commitment to succeed, they are even more motivated than a student who has come directly from secondary school into post-secondary.

As policy makers, we must have a comprehensive view of the role of education in our society. In her new book, *Dark Age Ahead*, writer Jane Jacobs addresses this and counsels that, "a vigorous culture capable of making corrective, stabilizing changes depends heavily on its educated people, and especially upon their critical capacities and depth of understanding." Our vision for education in Ontario must encompass helping children right from the beginning to learn and to be curious; we must advocate for a strong post-secondary and training system and we must support older students to find their path into the workforce and if they falter, we must lend a hand to help them get started again; we must open doors for newcomers to take part fully; and when our elders want to continue to learn in order that they stay healthy and remain a part of the community, we must do what we can to facilitate their participation.

I believe that this is our task. We need to work with students on all educational paths to come close to achieving this vision. I encourage OUSA and all Ontario students to make their voices heard. Talk to politicians at all levels of government and never let us off the hook when you ask a tough question!

HEY PAUL!

EARMARK SOME CASH FOR HIGHER EDUCATION



BRETT BERGIE

There is a crisis in post-secondary education. The most critical is the stark reality that individual Canadians who want in the system are not always finding access. In addition to the obvious financial barriers, demand for enrolment is higher than available space in the system. Large public funding cuts to post-secondary education, over the last decade, have taken a toll on access and overall quality. There is a sense of urgency toward repairing our post-secondary system, which will require collaboration from Ottawa in addition to the provinces.

Access to the post-secondary system is under stress. Students are taking longer to graduate, more mature students are choosing to return to the classroom and high school students are continuing their studies to post-secondary in greater numbers than ever before. With increasing demands on limited space, the academic entrance bar for admission continues to rise, resulting in Canadians finding the post-secondary system increasingly difficult to access. The University of Calgary, for example, received 15,300 applications for first-year admissions this past September. Some 10,500 applications were rejected and 4,800 applicants were offered admission. Only students coming out of high school with an average of 82 per cent or greater were considered for admission. In 1995, the academic bar for admission to the University of Calgary was set at 65 per cent.

Fiscally-minded governments have slashed public funding to post-secondary education institutions, resulting in costs being continually offloaded onto individual users and their families. This has come in the form of alarming tuition increases that have more than doubled, nationally, since 1991. Unfortunately, for many, the costs have become too burdensome. Students who drop out of post-secondary education, delay studies to post-secondary or choose not to go on to further studies cite financial concerns more frequently than any other reason for their decisions. For these individuals, the financial risk is too great in making ends meet during the academic study period, combined with the prospect of accumulating taxing student debt. Students coming from low- to middle-income backgrounds generally absorb the greatest financial pressure.

There seems to be growing evidence that students are choosing post-secondary programs based on their ability to pay rather than allowing their academic interests to guide their choice. A recent study at the University of Western Ontario revealed that the average family earnings of incoming medical students

jumped from approximately \$80,000 to \$140,000 since tuition was deregulated. Governments should be encouraging greater participation in such professional fields as medicine, nursing and dentistry, since those professions are certainly not experiencing a surplus of workers. Yet we seem to be witnessing the opposite in public policy.

Doubling tuition levels has not fully compensated for institutional budget shortfalls that have arisen following a decade of large public funding cuts. A funding gap has been realized through federal cuts to provincial transfer payments and simultaneous provincial cuts to post-secondary education. Institutions have been forced, as a result, to make

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cuts at every corner and quality is suffering. High vulnerability is exemplified by less program choice, high student/faculty ratios, less meaningful interaction between students and instructors, overcrowded classrooms and students and faculty retaining and using outdated equipment.

Canadians expect to have a post-secondary education system that is both of the highest quality and accessible to all. To this end, broad political will is required from both the provinces and the federal government to reverse a decade of unsettling trends. As a top priority, public funding of post-secondary education needs to be addressed in a positive and meaningful way. There is room for the federal government to attempt to have a

greater role in post-secondary education funding and this ought to be explored. Of course this would require a willingness from the provinces to allow some federal intrusion into education, which is a provincial jurisdiction.

A critical step would be for the federal government to remove post-secondary education funding from the Canada Social Transfer (CST), which is currently absorbed into general operation budgets of provincial governments for all social spending, with the exception of health care. Instead, the federal government should move to create an earmarked transfer that will provide direct federal funding to provincial post-secondary budgets. Other social spending priorities would still receive funding from the CST. To compensate for the federal intrusion into education, the federal government should be willing to apply no further strings to the dedicated transfer outside of ensuring it be spent on post-secondary education priorities.

Returning to political will, it would be important for both orders of governments to create national goals on post-secondary education through a Pan-Canadian Accord and that an earmarked transfer be the first step. The success of an earmarked transfer would depend on the federal and provincial governments agreeing on important accountability mechanisms. Such mechanisms need to be in place to ensure that extra federal dollars into provincial post-secondary education budgets do not amount to a decrease in provincial post-secondary spending. The federal and provincial governments must also work to ensure that funding levels, incumbent on both orders of government, will be adjusted for inflationary pressures and will also accommodate increases in student enrolment.

There is little question that public funding has compromised system-wide accessibility, program quality and our post-secondary institutions' ability to be innovative. The demands of today's economy are such that Canada needs access to more post-secondary graduates than we are currently able to produce. Our post-secondary education system is increasingly difficult to access and willing Canadians are already being left behind. As a result of this reality, Canada cannot sustain the growth of our economy, to its potential, without looking beyond our borders to seek highly skilled and trained workers. Reversing a decade of unsettling post-secondary education trends produced by fiscally constrained governments certainly cannot sustain a waiting period. Governments, of all levels, must act now to fill the existing post-secondary education funding gap.

DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE TRADES

HIGHER EDUCATION IS MORE THAN JUST UNIVERSITIES



DEBBIE SPENCE

How does the definition of higher education impact career path selection? The predominant destination of higher education seekers appears to be a university or, in some cases, a college campus, and many may argue that a standard BA meets only the minimum requirements.

Higher education seems to be the ultimate goal of most educators, governments, parents and youth. Many of their reasons for encouraging this particular pathway can be validated through the impressive employment opportunities, salary potential and general accolades. However, the same benefits are found in the often misrepresented route of apprenticeship. It is the impact of stereotypes, the North American class system and inaccuracies reinforced by gatekeepers that *hide* skilled trades as viable career options.

It appears youth are heavily influenced by this message. In a recent study by Dr. Alan King, approximately 70 per cent of grade nine students in Ontario stated their long-term goals were to attend university. In reality, only 28 per cent of Ontario students enter university. Does this mean that the remaining students haven't reached their higher goals? Have

expected to be created in the Canadian economy between last year and 2004. The largest portion of new job creation is expected in occupations that require a community college diploma or trades certificate, such as construction and transportation trades, health and computer sciences, firefighting and police work. In this case, are educators and parents doing a disservice to students by encouraging the traditional concept of higher education?

In this increasingly politically correct society, we are still not providing equal time and respect to all career paths. This point can be supported by King's responses from educators: "...there appears to be a belief among some educators that co-operative education is for those students who are not college or university bound...it is then likely that academic students, especially those who are university bound, may actually be discouraged from participating in co-operative education." Co-operative education is a direct route to an apprenticeship, more specifically through the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP). Generally, faulty correlations are created by educators, where academic students

approach. Some employers choose to increase their perceived odds of accessing a better potential apprentice by hiring primarily through two-year technical programs at the college level. Many unions prefer a reasonable period of on-the-job experience before accepting an apprentice into their system. This sets up the careful balance between overselling all skilled trades as easily attainable options and discouraging youth from pursuing this career path.

There are over 140 skilled trades careers in Ontario, so not all of them have immediate shortages. Electrician is one example. It also happens to be one of the more popular trades, which creates frustrations with youth and parents. It is important to emphasize that just as there is competition to get into a prestigious university, there can be immense competition to access an apprenticeship as an electrician or several other trades. Should these cases not raise the profile of the skilled trades and those trying to get into them?

How can we elevate skilled trades to a higher and more realistic level? One specific solution, developed by the Skilled Trades Alliance, is an Apprentice Student Society that

The federal Labour Department's updated Job Futures manual reported some form of post-secondary job education or training will be required for 72 per cent of the 1.3 million new jobs expected to be created in the Canadian economy between last year and 2004.

these students lowered their expectations to pursue alternate options to university? King's study also uncovered statistics for the remaining pathways: 23 per cent were college bound, 24 per cent went direct to work and 25 per cent left high school before earning their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). King's study was unclear as to the path youth took for apprenticeships, college bound or direct to work, reinforcing the lack of clarity in apprenticeships as pathways.

Clearly, there are many factors that could change a high school student's path and mind between grade nine and grade 12. However, a 40 per cent shift is significant and worth investigating.

A healthy economy dictates a varied distribution in employment. The federal Labour Department's updated Job Futures manual reported some form of post-secondary job education or training will be required for 72 per cent of the 1.3 million new jobs

are primarily directed towards university programs and seemingly non-academic students are encouraged to explore the second choice alternatives of direct to work employment and apprenticeships.

Educators are not solely responsible for this faulty thinking; government plays a role, too. In the provincial government's well meaning efforts to encourage youth to pursue apprenticeships, they recently announced fifteen hundred \$1,000 scholarships annually for high school *leavers* who return to complete school and enter apprenticeships. Does this not feed into the falsehood that apprenticeships are for dropouts and those less academically inclined? This harmful message clearly reaches skilled trades employers. What kind of talent pool do they believe they have to choose from? It is not surprising that the preferred method that skilled trades employers (small to large) recruit through is co-operative education — the try before you buy

works with OYAP students and current apprentices. The purpose of this innovative Apprentice Student Society is to raise the profile of apprentices, create an equally represented student body to college and university programs, advocate, more adequately understand their needs and challenges, and provide services and networking opportunities. Other solutions call for co-operation between this broad-base group of skilled trades stakeholders, which include small, medium and large employers, educational institutions and training facilities, governments, unions, associations, apprentices and journeypeople.

The Skilled Trades Alliance — a community-led, community-driven initiative with the purpose of engaging skilled trades stakeholders and leveraging local, regional and national resources in an unprecedented partnership to strengthen and sustain the skilled trades workforce — is one such entity poised at targeting many of these issues.

SCHOOL SUCCESS BEGINS IN THE COMMUNITY

NORMAN ROWEN & MARNI SCHECTER-TAYLOR

Most of us would agree that our enthusiasm for college or university began early on in high school or even at home. The high school courses we chose and our academic performance determined the post-secondary program we were able to attend and therefore guided our career paths. The most common indicators of high school achievement are attendance, credit accumulation and graduation rates. Less examined, and arguably more important, are aspiration and attachment.

What are the risk factors preventing secondary school achievement for thousands of young people within our Canadian mosaic? Surprisingly, many of the risk factors exist completely outside of school and are found in the community.

Economic and cultural factors play a significant role in how well a student performs in school – both academically and socially. The cost of getting to and from school, school supplies, nutritious breakfasts and lunches, private tutoring or mentoring, online access, university applications and tuition can be either crippling or simply out of reach for families that are living at or below the poverty line.

The cultural diversity of many of Canada's urban centres means that English is often a second language for both the students and their parents, who would normally advocate on their behalf.

The educational success of our youth depends on more than just the actions and attitudes of individual students, parents, or teachers; it depends on the strength of our communities and the development of networks of social trust.

The consequences of not increasing the secondary school graduation rate are significant and extend beyond the waste of human capital. The quantifiable negative effects include:

a) the significant correlation of education and income and the significantly higher unemployment rates for dropouts;

b) the continuing program costs to address youth unemployment (including both the provincial Job Connect program and the federal Youth Employment Strategy, each of which spend over \$100 million annually in Ontario);

c) additional housing and social service costs and higher direct costs for policing and health;

d) the considerably higher incarceration rates for those without a high school diploma, increased use of health services and higher disease rates for low-income residents which are associated with an increased understand-

ing of education and income as key social determinants of health.

In addition, estimates suggest that the savings in public expenditures and increases in tax revenue by improving the educational success of the most disadvantaged is considerably in excess of the costs of achieving such outcomes.

A commitment to closing the achievement gap, however, is not merely about economic and social benefits, but is a moral imperative as well. Michael Fullan, former dean

The educational success of our youth depends on more than just the actions and attitudes of individual students, parents, or teachers; it depends on the strength of our communities and the development of networks of social trust.

of the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education (OISE), states that "reducing the gap in educational attainment is part and parcel of societal development in which greater social cohesion, developmental health and economic performance is at stake. Mobilizing the untapped moral purpose of the public in alliance with government and educators is one of the greatest advances to the cause that we could make."

As well, results from numerous studies of federally sponsored youth programs in both Canada and the United States suggest that the costs of addressing the dropout problem after the fact are considerable and the effectiveness of such programs highly questionable. The lessons learned from the litany of previous attempts include that dropout prevention is both programmatically effective and cost effective.

In addition, the findings related to adopting a youth development approach amplify the need to consider the role of communities in student success.

Specifically, evidence with respect to mentoring, academic support, recreation and related programs suggest that key risk factors are present in the community and, as a consequence, the likelihood of successful outcomes is increased when protective factors are created in our communities.

In contrast to existing efforts, the Pathways To Education Program stands as an example of a community-based approach explicitly designed to reduce the dropout rate and increase post-secondary access for youth in the most economically disadvantaged community in Toronto.

The Program has, over two years, shown clear and consistent results. Predicated on an understanding that the risk factors exist largely in the community, the program is:

a) Comprehensive, providing four integrated supports (academic, social, financial and staff/advocacy) over four years of secondary school; developed after considerable research in the community and with respect to best practices of related programs;

b) Accessible; that is, open to all students, enrolling fully 95 per cent of geographically eligible students and parents in each of its first three years with a total of over 400 students in the three consecutive cohorts;

c) Demonstrably effective, cutting in half the proportion of grade nine students with the most serious attendance problems, and similarly halving the proportion of students with the most serious academic problems (five or fewer grade nine credits) compared to previous youth from the community; Pathways To Education participants significantly increased the proportion earning their English, science and math credits and have generally outperformed their peers at the same schools, in many cases significantly;

d) Cost effective;

e) Accountable, ensuring the collection and reporting of data as an integral feature of the Program's development, delivery and improvement;

f) Embodying the principle articulated in the Rozanski report, namely the need to engage the community, business and industry, labour and volunteers in order to close the achievement gap; more than 200 volunteer tutors and mentors contribute more than 10,000 volunteer hours annually.

Most importantly, the Pathways To Education Program is a model that is being sought after by other communities and is replicable across the country. We look forward to a time when we can help thousands of young people realize their full potential via a post-secondary experience.

WHY NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS MATTER


 NOUMAN ASHRAF

Throughout various campus communities, we witnessed the media-aroused din of what sounded to some like a barbarian invasion. Unless you've been living like a barbarian yourself, you know to what I am referring. I am, of course, speaking of the dreaded double cohort. Don't get me wrong — like most others on Ontario campuses, I believe that there needs to be planning and infrastructural support for changes that affect post-secondary education.

It's just that the double cohort was neither the first nor the only significant demographic shift on campuses in this province. In fact, what this ruckus over the double cohort amply demonstrates is the prevalence of a stereotype of what an undergraduate looks like. The notion that all undergraduate students are in their late teens or early twenties, devote most of their time to studies and have no child-care responsibilities is a myth that must be de-bunked.

Increasingly, the changing complexion of our campuses begs the question: How do we understand the diversity of our student populace? Look around, folks. Many of your classmates are individuals with dependants, seeking educational opportunities at various junctures in their lives. I like to refer to this group as the stealth cohort — student parents (many without partners) faced with specific and serious challenges. This group of students feels marginalized by the dominant group on campus because student parents sense that their presence is incidental to the larger enterprise of post-secondary education.

With all this talk of reform to Ontario's post-secondary education system, it may be time to lend an ear to this group and examine what it is that sets the needs of these non-traditional students apart from the rest of the campus community.

Time and again, three key concerns are articulated by students with dependents as major obstacles to their academic progress: finances, time and child-care. Let us understand at the outset that, more often than not, these three are interconnected and overlapping. Students with dependents have to bear the cost of providing for their children's every day financial needs. This, of course, is in addition to paying for their own university tuition, books, supplemental fees and other costs related to higher education. Given that a significant number of such students are sole support parents returning to school, they have to rely upon the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) as their only source of financial support.

This reliance on OSAP is problematic on

two fronts. Firstly, the OSAP monthly amount for periods of full-time study has not been revised since 1994 and is grossly out-of-date. Secondly, the OSAP maximum amount does not vary irrespective of where you go to school, whether in Toronto or in Thunder Bay. It should come as no surprise, then, that most student parents have to resort to juggling (sometimes multiple) jobs along with school and family responsibilities.

This leads us to their next concern: time. Given the additional demands on their time, students with dependents are often not at

**Let us...take the
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liberty to participate in many of the co-curricular programs that help their peers thrive on campus.

To make matters worse, there is inconsistency among professors when it comes to empathy for family-related excuses for delays in the completion of academic work. This constant stress acts as a pressure cooker that can, in some instances, lead to these students dropping out of university altogether. Those students who choose to tough it out as part-time students, having dropped courses due to employment or familial responsibilities, often have their OSAP funding revoked due to lack of sufficient academic progress.

In order for them to get back in good standing, they must accomplish something that is out of reach for most struggling student parents: support themselves for an entire academic year as a full-time student. This can force many students to forfeit their academic plans due to the inability of the financial aid system to empathize with their non-traditional reality.

The final concern of students with dependents — child-care — must also be addressed. In order for student parents to feel comfortable enough to participate fully on campus, there are two essential prerequisites

that must be in place. To start off, they must have access to daycare that is professionally run and affordable in order to meet all of their child-care needs. Secondly, they should feel that their entire family is welcome on campus. Such an inclusive campus environment can only be the result of a combination of policy development and program delivery.

The overarching principle of publicly funded post-secondary education is accessibility. In order for us all to live up to that cherished ideal, everyone on campus has to identify for themselves a role that they can play to make their campus more family-friendly. It all begins with an open mind towards diversity. Furthermore, this acknowledgement of diversity has to instigate a review of existing policies.

Next comes advocacy to the levels of governance that control the purse-strings, be they internal or external to the institution. Such an integrated approach is imperative if a campus is to meet the needs of all of its community members. Many on Ontario campuses may feel intimidated by this call to alter the campus climate, but most campuses already embrace the value of diversity in campus policy and programs (albeit to varying degrees).

What's required is not a complete re-tooling of diversity initiatives, but an enlargement of the vision to include non-traditional students within its fold. In fact, such an inclusive approach not only embraces the realities of non-traditional students, but also possesses the potential to pay dividends in the form of better support for faculty and staff members on Ontario campuses that are contending with similar issues in their personal lives.

Being inclusive begins by being accepting. However, it does not stop there. It extends to setting tangible goals and then measuring up to those goals. It mandates setting our sights on even higher standards to which we must hold our campus community.

I know that some of these are fundamental structural changes that are not easily attained, but we must get started, or else we may never deliver on the promise of accessible post-secondary education for all. Let us, at the very least, take the initiative to foster minor attitudinal changes that will go a long way in making an isolated student parent on campus feel welcome. After all, whatever language the other person speaks, a smile still speaks to them all.

In the process of drafting this piece, I would like to acknowledge the helpful insight of my colleague Jume Straker, who has been a pioneer in working with student parents on campus.

WHITHER ARTS?

BY GRAEME STEWART



PHOTO BY TIM FORT

THE BUILDING LOOKS LIKE A LEFTOVER from another time.

And in many ways, it is. Century-old limestone blocks curve into a huge rotunda and sweep upwards to form gothic towers. A giant, beautifully designed rose-shaped window dominates the north wall. Ivy winds a creeping path across the walls as though the building is part of the ground that surrounds it. The structure suggests a kind of timelessness, permanence and strength.

But it is on the inside where the building begins to show its age. The paint peels from whitewashed walls. Tired renovations like drop-ceilings and fire doors clash with fading hardwood and original high stone arch passageways. New Coke machines stand next to old windows with cracked glass and sills that are slowly rotting away.

Welcome to Theological Hall. Opened in 1879, it is one of the oldest structures on Queen's University campus in Kingston, Ontario. In the basement of this storied building, you'll find the main office for the Department of Drama. Here, the decay is further along.

Exposed pipes jut out of a ceiling so low anyone taller than six feet is forced to stoop. The student lounge sports a fresh coat of green paint only because the students, tired of peeling walls and rotting plaster, painted

it themselves. After years of use, the washrooms in this basement have developed a strange odour that no amount of scrubbing can remove. Until a visit by the exterminators last year, portions of this basement were home to a colony of cockroaches.

Across campus stands a brand new, state-of-the-art chemistry building. A beautiful new home for the Faculty of Commerce gleams a few blocks away. A few more steps from there, and you'll see the busy construction site where a \$24 million Engineering Integrated Learning Centre is nearly complete.

All of the drama department's nearly 250 students pass by these new buildings on their way to class. For many of them, it is hard not to make comparisons. While students in science, technology or business get the goodies, drama kids feel like they get the dregs. Dan Dumsha graduated from Queen's last year.

"I feel like the money they're giving us isn't really equal to what other programs are getting," says Dumsha. "I think it looks better for a university to put money into chemistry and business, build buildings that are going to turn out chemists and businessmen, rather than a theatre that will turn out actors."

And Dumsha isn't alone in his views. "You walk through this beautiful, beau-

tiful campus past these beautiful new buildings into a really old decrepit one with holes in the ceiling. It's frustrating," says Alastair Forbes.

Forbes graduated from the drama department in 2002, and is now making a professional acting career for himself in Toronto. During his time at Queen's, he was especially close to the problems of the drama department. He served as part of drama's Departmental Student Council, representing his colleagues to the faculty and university administration. If you ask him about whether drama gets a fair share of the resources, he'll give you an unequivocal 'no.'

Forbes now shares a small house in Toronto with fellow drama grad Tyler Murree. Like his housemate, Murree's experience at Queen's left him bitter.

"I felt cheated, like I was paying the same thing as everyone else, but wasn't getting the nice facilities," he says. "It was maddening, it was frustrating, because, I mean, what could we do?"

Dumsha, Forbes and Murree complain about buildings and funding. But they will never complain about the drama department itself. They love it. For them, and literally thousands of their colleagues past and present, drama is more than a program.

It is a home. A family. A community of

artists all pushing towards common goals, headed by a dedicated faculty. Students and professors alike sacrifice meals, sleep, even hygiene for their art. Theological Hall is never empty. As the building crumbles, the spirit of its inhabitants thrives.

But perhaps spirit isn't always enough. All across Canada, university programs in the fine and performing arts are being slowly starved. Drama, dance, music, visual arts and film are struggling against a pandemic lack of money in the post-secondary system.

"We're underfunded. That would be the short answer," says Robert Silverman, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science at Queen's. He says the university hasn't had enough money to run its programs for a long time. This means bigger classes, fewer professors and deteriorating equipment and facilities—all because there isn't enough money to go around. For Silverman, the creative arts can't claim special victim status. The lack of funds affects every single program, from psychology to biology to history to politics.

"You can't single out the creative arts. They are no worse off than anyone else," says Silverman. "A drama student gets just as much money as a history student."

True. But what administrators often fail to realize is the arts need more than a history or politics department. They need theatres, studios, cameras, paintbrushes and canvases, as well as the professors to teach students how to use them. In terms of its resource

requirements, drama is more like a science program than anything else. Where biology needs a lab, drama needs a rehearsal space. When a biology student lights up a Bunsen burner, a drama student turns on a stage light.

"The things that make the drama department special are resource intensive," says drama professor Tim Fort. "We have, like any applied arts program, the need for resources beyond a lecture hall to teach the skills we need to teach."

Fort has taught drama at Queen's for 17 years and is now the head of the department. Although soft-spoken, his passion for his discipline and his department is unmistakable. He knows how important his program and others like it are, not just to the university but to society as a whole. It is a recognition that is hard to find outside the walls of Theological Hall.

"We're not funded appropriately for what we do," he says. "And to find those funds would require a much stronger commitment at a higher level to how important culture is to any society, any community."

In the world of university funding, commitment is expressed in dollars and cents, in facilities and resources. This is simple enough to say. But to navigate the world of university finances is a different matter.

In fact, there are few things more complicated.

Universities get their money in a variety of ways. Tuition paid by students is the most

obvious. But this doesn't come close to providing all the money a university needs to function. Across Ontario, tuition only accounts for 44 per cent of total university operating revenue, the highest proportion in Canada. Provincial and federal grants, corporate sponsorship and private donations make up the difference. Of these, provincial funding is easily the most important.

Basic operating grants make up about 75 per cent of the province's total university funding. The first challenge in understanding these grants is to get a handle on the forest of acronyms that go into their calculation. In the government's arithmetic, a student is known as a 'basic income unit,' or BIU.

Depending on the program, year and institution, BIUs are weighted differently. Performing arts students are worth one BIU, engineers are worth two, and medical students are worth five. The total number of BIUs are then multiplied by the number of students taking a full course load, otherwise known as 'Full Time Enrollments,' or FTEs. The sum of all these units makes up the university's operating grant.

This is delivered in bulk to the university. It is up to specific institutions to decide how they dole out the cash. And there is never enough. For anyone.

But the province does provide extra dollars for programs it deems important and 'costly.' With all the equipment and resources needed to run a good drama or music pro-



PHOTO BY ADAM SPENCE

A common scene on Ontario's university campuses. The gleaming face of the School of Business and Economics proudly stands beside its poor cousin, the Faculty of Arts building, now brick-red with envy. (Picture above from Wilfrid Laurier University.)

gram, the creative arts sorely need this additional funding. But just look at where the money goes.

In the 2002-2003 academic year, additional funding for 'costly and high demand programs' meant nearly \$15 million for medical schools, \$34 million for nursing, and over \$75 million for computer science and engineering.

Much of the money for computer science and engineering programs comes through the "Access to Opportunities Program," or ATOP. In 2003-2004, this fund paid out over \$60 million to institutions that increased their enrolment in technology programs.

While millions flowed to computer scientists and engineers, arts students received nothing. As of yet, there is no program to ensure drama, music and art students have the same 'access to opportunities' as their more electronic counterparts.

The picture isn't any more balanced where buildings are concerned either. Almost all new construction on Ontario campuses depends on the province's Superbuild fund, recently rechristened the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal by the McGuinty government. While the province bankrolls new buildings for science, computers and business, there has been little or no effort to invest in arts. The trend is so pervasive that university administrators have given up trying to get new facilities for their arts programs.

"These programs are not something we could ever make a case for," says Dean Silverman. "It's just not something the government is interested in. Let's just say their priorities have been elsewhere."

The significance of this is not lost on Tim Fort and the drama department.

"There's no sense that arts and culture are a priority for the provincial government," says Fort. This is nothing new. For decades, provincial governments from NDP to Conservative denied arts education the funding it required. But with the Common Sense Revolution of Mike Harris, this process reached its zenith.

"With Harris, it was almost a philosophical approach from the provincial government that culture wasn't important. He was, and is, a philistine and a bully," says Fort.

As the province slowly withdrew from its university funding, corporations began to pick up the slack. New buildings, equipment and even faculty positions are now supported by corporate money. But with only a few exceptions nationwide, the arts have been largely ignored by big business.

Queen's recognized the need for a new creative arts building long ago. They even built a model of what the new theatre complex would look like. But the university has been unable to find a willing benefactor.

Sponsoring a new building can be a public relations coup for a company. If the dona-

tion is big enough, the facility will bear the company name. Unfortunately, Queen's hasn't found the company who wants their logo over the front door of a new performing arts building. Silverman says the offer is still open to anyone with a chequebook.

"If you want, say, the Coca-Cola theatre, we'll build you the Coca-Cola Theatre. Just put up the money," he says. Still, most companies find it more prestigious to fund technology or science buildings, not the arts.

So without an interested corporation, and with no hope of provincial money, the model for the new performance hall has gone into storage.

Of course, all of this gets back to the question of commitment. For corporations and the province, science and technology are just more attractive. This isn't malicious; it just reflects the ideology underpinning the provincial government's approach to funding.

Every dollar spent in universities has to be justified to the province with numbers, with projected revenue. The big motivator is student space. If funding a program or building a new facility gets more students through the door, then it is a good idea. With a high average tuition level of \$4,960 in Ontario, more students means higher revenue.

There has been more student demand for science, technology and business programs in the past few years than for the creative arts. According to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, the demand for creative arts decreased 28 per cent from 1988 to 1998. The demand for engineering and science programs steadily rose during the same period. If a university is after more students, applied science and technology seems a safe bet.

Evidence, however, suggests the decline in interest for arts programs and increased demand for technology programs is largely due to government policy pushing students into certain fields. The ATOP program's primary goal was to increase enrolment in technology programs. It worked a little too well. Jeff Henry is the Vice-President of Education for the Waterloo Federation of Students at the University of Waterloo, a university known for aggressively pursuing ATOP funds.

"We have so many students in engineering, we've actually been de-enrolling these programs," says Henry.

In fact, ATOP pushed so many students into these programs, graduates are now having trouble finding work. The program was designed to meet the needs of a technology sector experiencing record growth. That growth is now over.

"The bubble is gone. It's going to be challenging to find work," says Henry.

Programs like ATOP reflect a shift in fundamental educational philosophy by the provincial government. The creative disciplines

belong to the old 'liberal arts' tradition, where post-secondary schooling was supposed to develop the individual. Now, the province sees the university as a place for job training and targets money at 'employable' fields.

"The whole idea of a university education is to prepare the student for a job when they leave," says Dave Ross, a spokesman for the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. This emphasis on vocational education influences the program choices of many students, pushing them towards technology, science and commerce programs.

The individual universities are more than happy to play along. Since the BIU formula means institutions get much more money for engineers than they do for drama students, they focus attention on the more lucrative disciplines. Programs like ATOP only sweeten the deal, particularly when schools are chronically underfunded.

"ATOP's problems aren't anyone's fault," says Jeff Henry. "Businesses like Nortel pushed the government into it, and the universities were just desperate for more money." Beyond being unfair to arts programs, many students feel the job-training approach to university misses the bigger picture.

"I think universities are a place where you should get a balance of knowledge, where you are taught how to learn, so that you go out into the world with an educated mind, with an open mind for the future," says Dan Dumsha.

According to faculty and students in the fine and performing arts, any funding argument based on numbers, on economic justifications, will do their programs a disservice. Students and faculty alike believe their importance should not be measured in material terms.

"The benefits of arts aren't as tangible or measurable as science or technology," says Dumsha. "If you're moved by a piece of theatre, or by that great book you read, that can't be measured in terms of units."

What also can't be measured is how fundamental the arts are to human expression and education. But some researchers at Queen's have come close.

In 2002, Rena Uptis and Katharine Smithrim released a study showing education in the arts actually improved math scores in elementary school students. But Uptis, former head of the Queen's Faculty of Education, says this only scratches the surface of the vitality of creative arts at all levels of education.

"We cut off a limb of the human curriculum if we leave the arts out, just as if we left out math or sciences or language," says Uptis. Uptis' study reveals that arts education isn't just about turning out a small group of artists every year. It is about producing well-rounded, thoughtful human beings. She says

commitment is the key to ensuring continued access to the benefits of arts education. Once people recognize how important the arts are, everything else will fall into place.

"We have lots of money in this province to do lots of things. And people find ways of doing the things they think matter," she says.

It's a viewpoint Fort shares. For him, commitment means more than a fatter cheque or a new building.

"We need an understanding that putting resources into the arts isn't throwing them away into some rarified, minor thing. Drama and the arts are central to all our lives. Politically, commercially and all the other ways that culture affects what we do," says Fort.

Some recognition of the arts has come from unexpected quarters. In April of 2000, a collection of CEOs, presidents and directors of large technology sector businesses re-

kind of bottom-line thinking does not allow for an appreciation of why the arts are so vital to everyone.

So chunks of plaster fall off the walls in Theological Hall. Students continue to work in a computer lab the size of a closet. The number of drama faculty dwindles because there is no money to replace retiring professors. As Tim Fort observes, no one has put any significant money into the drama department for 50 years. There are times when it seems the Queen's Department of Drama may go the way of the proverbial dodo.

There have been casualties before. The drama program at the University of Western Ontario was suspended in the mid-1990s. Although a vibrant part of the institution, it was crippled when the administration converted its only theatre into a prestige venue for hosting special guests and fundraisers.

Dr. John Kneale was an instructor in the

ance," says Kneale.

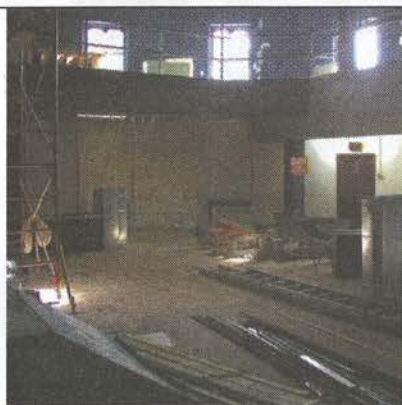
Those who work in the field say there is something profoundly human about the need to create, to 'act up,' to make art. The spirit of those who labour in arts programs will not be crushed.

"The arts are not dwindling despite all the efforts to kill it through malnutrition," says Fort. "I'm heartened by that."

Through sheer force of will, those who love the arts keep their programs alive. Every year, new students wander into the Queen's drama department. They bring with them curiosity, intelligence and the desire to create.

"If I didn't feel there was always energy, commitment and curiosity from the students, I wouldn't enjoy, or even bother, teaching there," Fort says.

And there are small victories for the drama department. A new studio theatre has been built, and the original two theatres have been



PHOTOS BY TIM FORT

A sign of renewal? Renovations recently began in Theological Hall at Queen's University for both the Rotunda Theatre and Convocation Hall - two prime spaces for fine arts. Unfortunately, this small victory was only possible with private donors.

leased a statement calling for more students with a liberal arts education in the technology sector. According to this 'Technology Sector Executive's Statement,' a little mental creativity is just as important to corporations as the ability to re-wire a circuit board.

But as long as the province plays the numbers game, only new science buildings will go up, special funding will go to technology, and the arts will languish in educational limbo. To turn this around, a broader social commitment to the arts is needed — something arts professors say is sorely lacking in today's culture.

"It's not a question of the drama department receiving its due funding. It's a kind of larger sickness in the wider society," says Fort.

A society's commitment to the arts depends on how visible they are in daily life. As university programs are cut, fewer students complete their education with an appreciation for creative pursuits. This lack of exposure means less interest. When more cuts are threatened, fewer people care. It's a vicious circle made worse by the provincial government's almost religious devotion to science, technology, business and market logic. This

program when the axe fell. "When the performance space was lost, we had nowhere to put on our plays, nowhere to teach our theatre arts classes, so the program was suspended," says Kneale. "It would be like saying, 'You've got an honours chemistry program, and you've lost your lab.' How can you offer in any respectable way a chemistry program without test tubes or lab space?"

And there may be more victims to come. From the University of British Columbia to the University of Toronto, the existence of creative arts programs is constantly questioned.

But the arts are far from licked.

Kneale is currently lobbying the administration at Western to re-instate the drama program and has succeeded in drumming up some support. More encouraging, Kneale says, is that the creative arts have not lost their appeal to incoming students.

At outreach and recruitment sessions like the Ontario Universities' Fair in Toronto, Kneale says one of the most frequently asked questions is, 'Do you have a drama program?'

"This tells me there is still considerable interest in theatre arts, in drama, in perform-

extensively renovated. Not a dime of provincial money went into these projects; the funds came from 250 donors who together contributed over half a million dollars. Many of the contributors graduated from the department.

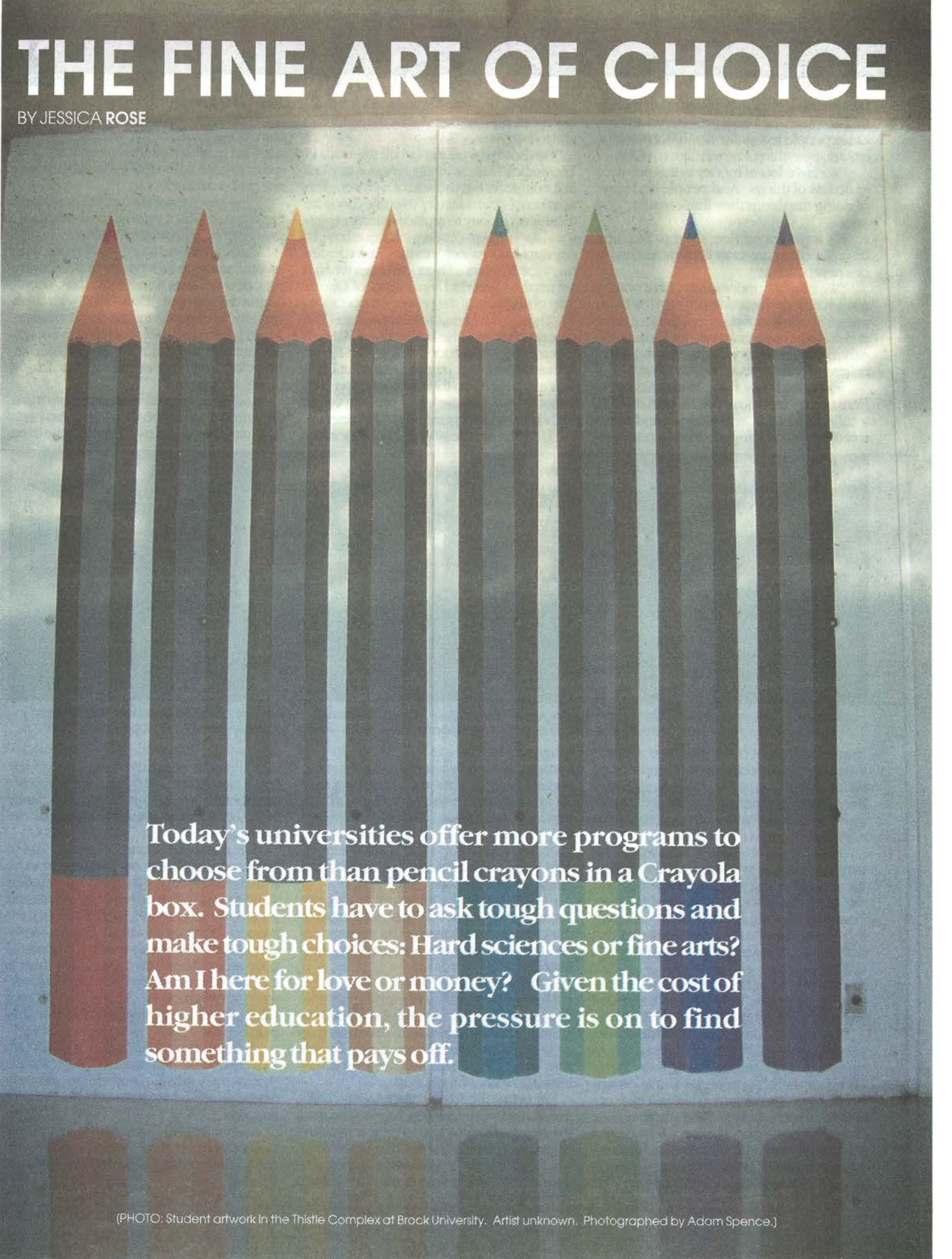
Just as the provincial government has so far proven unable to appreciate the true value of arts education, it may also never understand the spirit that drives the students and professors who work, study and live their passions. So even if there are bats in Convocation Hall Theatre, even if the provincial government doesn't care, even if the smell in the bathroom never goes away and the cockroaches come back, the drama department will still produce artists, thinkers and fuller human beings.

"I believe that despite the funding that's available, artists will make art," says Alastair Forbes. "There will always be people dedicating their life to it, to making the best art they can".

In that respect, perhaps, the inhabitants of Theological Hall are just as much leftovers from another time as the building around them. ■

THE FINE ART OF CHOICE

BY JESSICA ROSE



Today's universities offer more programs to choose from than pencil crayons in a Crayola box. Students have to ask tough questions and make tough choices: Hard sciences or fine arts? Am I here for love or money? Given the cost of higher education, the pressure is on to find something that pays off.

(PHOTO: Student artwork in the Thistle Complex at Brock University. Artist unknown. Photographed by Adam Spence.)

EACH SEPTEMBER YOUNG STUDENTS enter their first university lecture hall filled with optimism and anxiety. Four years and a broken bank account later and students' optimism weakens as they prepare to face the real world.

For many, there is pressure to choose between a major that offers personal fulfillment and one that will eventually pay the bills. At a time when choosing a program means deciding between dozens of possibilities, narrowing them down becomes overwhelming.

Students often ask themselves, "Where will my degree in philosophy take me?" However, a better question to ask is, "How can I pursue an education in a subject that interests me and turn my degree into a financially and intellectually fulfilling career?"

Through the development of skills and individual determination, the university experience can offer more than a means to an end. An education not only opens the doors to career possibilities, but also accelerates personal growth and motivation, making the student attractive to employers in any field.

Nonetheless, young students today feel the pressure to pursue an education geared towards computers, as many high school business and computer courses insist that the future will support those who enter fields such as web development, graphic design and other high-tech industries.

Unfortunately, interests don't always correspond with employability and some young creative minds are faced with the tough decision of choosing between love and money. Prospective students are faced with the pressures of family, society and their own ideals of success to pursue careers in great demand with an immediate economic incentive.

This pressure may mean abandoning dreams of financial success to pursue an education in a fine art. For a young writer who dreams of one day winning a Giller Prize or a prospective theatre major who hopes to win a Tony, the thought of student loans and pressure to enter a field that is more in demand may leave them feeling hopeless. There is a fine line between passion and practicality for many university students, making program choice a difficult personal decision.

For some students, following their hearts

learning experiences, lifelong friendships and unforgettable opportunities, one thing that won't arrive in the admission package is a money back guarantee.

Due to rising tuition costs, 44 per cent of students are forced to turn to loans for financial help. On average, a student in Ontario will leave university with \$22,700 in debt, an astounding number when compared to the average annual income for a visual artist in Canada — only \$12,633 in 1996.

The Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) provides thousands of students with academic loans every year, and the government-funded program advocates taking the decision of choosing an institution and program seriously through extensive research.

An investigation should include examining the faculty of the university and their reputation, as well as looking into scholarship and bursary programs so that students can try to ease the financial strain and accumulate less debt.

"Students need to think about themselves and be realistic," says Sarah McKinnon, the Academic Vice-President of the Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD). Students have the choice between hundreds of programs, at dozens of universities with new and exciting majors that have never before been offered in Ontario.

Carleton University is proposing a major in sexuality studies and Brock University recently embarked on a new popular culture major. Choosing a program is a difficult and intense decision and unfortunately not all students in high school are adequately prepared to make it, especially when it comes to the fine arts.

A high school education gives students the opportunity to explore interests within a standard curriculum. However, it is impossible to expect that the classroom teachings and texts can provide a student with enough knowledge in one particular subject to adequately prepare them to choose a major, while at the same time providing a well-rounded education to include the arts, sciences and math.

Due to a de-emphasis on arts programming in Ontario high schools and elementary schools, students may be discouraged and

a dramatic loss in arts funding over the past decade, making it difficult for students to explore their interests.

A study released in May by People for Education revealed that the number of elementary schools with a music teacher has declined by 32 per cent since 1997/98. Likewise, elementary schools are experiencing a dramatic decline in the number of schools that can employ a full-time librarian, with the number dropping to only 10 per cent in the 2003/04 school year.

A report commissioned by the Canada Council for the Arts concluded that high school programs that motivate students to read, such as "writers-in-schools" programs, encourage an awareness of Canadian literature while promoting creative writing. At the high-school level, these programs are both under-funded and under-utilized.

The report suggests that the lack of awareness surrounding Canadian literature in high schools is the result of curriculum limitations and encourages the creation of an ongoing campaign to increase the presence of Canadian literature in Canadian schools. The report also supports mandatory Canadian literature courses as part of any degree program for training teachers.

This lack of arts education at Ontario public schools means students who excel in a fine art must turn to their community and explore their craft through local theatre groups, bands or arts centres.

"I was a very shy kid, even when I was six," says Janet Pym, a recent graduate of Burlington, Ontario's Student Theatre. "I felt that I could be totally myself and do whatever I wanted and explore drama, which I thought was a comfortable thing," she says.

An outlet for youth between the ages of six and 18, the small theatre ensemble attracts students who want to explore a passion deeper than public school art classes can satisfy. In communities across Ontario, young artists, musicians and actors find that even from a young age artistic expression is essential.

"We all take it very seriously, and it's not just about the theatre," says Pym. "It's about the development of the person," she says of the personal growth she has gained through

A study released in May by People for Education revealed that the number of elementary schools with a music teacher has declined by 32 per cent since 1997/98.

into a fine arts degree means sacrificing a yearly shopping spree or a vacation, but for many others it means thousands of dollars in debt without the guarantee of employment following graduation.

And while university offers memorable

nervous about committing to a fine arts program in university.

Pablo Picasso once said that "every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up." High schools and elementary schools across Ontario have seen

her art.

Early artistic experience can shape more than just the technical skills required to excel, says McKinnon, but they can also be the first stepping stones toward a deeper understanding of how art is used for expression.

"The ideal candidate [for a fine arts education] is a student who has a natural interest and commitment," says McKinnon. The desire to learn and the dedication to an art outweigh technical ability in many cases. "Those things can be taught," she adds.

In 2002, the Ontario government recognized OCAD as a university and gave the institution permission to offer degrees instead of diplomas.

"It was an odd credential," says McKinnon of the four-year diploma program. "Now a student with a fine arts degree can go to law school or decide to teach," she says. "The new degree program opens more doors." A fine arts degree can lead to many things, she adds. "It can be beneficial towards becoming a teacher or a museum curator, as well as learning the life skills to be a good citizen."

This type of degree program offers well-rounded learning that can be applied to further education or entering the workforce, helping to ease students' anxiety over finding a job immediately following graduation.

At OCAD, students divide their time between 75 per cent studio work and 25 per cent liberal studies courses. The skills taught in these liberal courses, says McKinnon, extend beyond perfecting a craft and can be used in varying jobs in many different fields.

Like OCAD, Ryerson University prides itself on degree programs that can open doors beyond a student's graduation. A program in a fine art gives students the tools to move onward to graduate school and other endless possibilities. Ryerson's Theatre School hosts productions to provide students with an artistic outlet as well as to gain the technical skills of acting, dance and behind-the-scenes production.

"It's pure adrenaline," says Pym of Burlington's Student Theatre. "It feels totally satisfying, especially when we've worked so hard for that one moment, and you just get to live it to the full extent. It's totally the best feeling in the world, knowing you worked so hard for something and feeling good about it in the end," she says.

This type of hands-on experience is crucial for anyone hoping to sustain an artistic career, says McKinnon. Youth must experience their first standing ovation or praise for a piece of art in order to fully understand the

view, OCAD gives students the opportunity to show their work to peers and the community through gallery showings, especially for the program's upper-year students.

"People need to look at their own motivation," says McKinnon, especially because a visual art program is much less structured than most. A creative spark can ignite a world of learning and inventiveness. "You have to apply what you know and see where you can take it," she says.

Art can be a social statement merged from personality, experiences and passion. If young minds didn't dare to explore the possibilities of their creativity, the world would be a much different place.

"A fine arts degree can lead to many things. It can be beneficial towards becoming a teacher or a museum curator, as well as learning the life skills to be a good citizen."

Filmmaker David Cronenberg attended the University of Toronto for literature and filmmaker Sofia Coppola graduated with her Bachelor of Fine Arts. Margaret Atwood received her Bachelor of Arts at the University of Toronto and went on to become one of the country's literary leaders.

A fine arts education allows students to take the ability to express an idea and communicate it to others, says McKinnon. A student "must not be afraid to be an individualist," she says, and allow themselves to use their art to affect those around them.

"Our students have a great sense of where they want to be," says McKinnon, "and that is amazing to watch." But for every Atwood and Cronenberg, there are thousands of fine arts students who find that making a living through their craft is unattainable.

"In art we know that 75 per cent or 80 per cent of people who graduate will not do full-time art," says McKinnon. This is why a

themselves financially may face years of economic instability early in their careers.

Successful artists, such as Margaret Atwood, must also pay their dues. "In those days, this was supposed to be enough to support me for a year of writing, and considering what sorts of places I was living in and what I was eating, it almost was. If God had not created the potato, the world would be a sadder place for young writers," Atwood once said, referring to a \$7,000 grant she received in 1969.

Self-employment for artists has increased significantly over the past three decades, increasing by 49 per cent between 1976 and 2000, according to Statistics Canada.

Similarly, Canadian artists find that part-time work in their craft is the most financially feasible way to support themselves while dedicating time to their art. In 2000, 70 per cent of Canadian musicians worked part-time in the field, though 72 per cent of Canadian writers classified themselves as full-time artists.

One opportunity for students to explore their options, while at the same time expressing themselves, is a liberal arts education. Offered at most universities across Ontario, a liberal arts program is designed to allow students to explore their personal interests through selecting electives in varying subjects, including humanities, fine arts and social sciences.

The term "liberal" in a liberal arts education refers to the freedom and luxury of choice. It is a freedom to choose courses of personal interest, to think freely and critically and to strengthen personal attributes in a curriculum designed to teach both career skills and life skills.

The term "arts," however, is more difficult to define. Recently, Simon Fraser University revamped their arts department by giving it a new name. The title Faculty of Arts was "sufficiently ambiguous," says Roger Blackman, advisor to the Dean of Arts for Simon Fraser, to prompt the university to change its name in June to the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. The name change took place in order to make it clear, says Blackman, that the term "arts" does not only include humanities subjects.

In fact, a liberal arts degree can include everything from social sciences, such as an-

Fortune Magazine reported that 38 per cent of American CEOs majored in a liberal arts program, while 90 per cent believed that a liberal arts education greatly strengthened critical thinking skills.

implications of creation.

Even the application process is beneficial, she says. "It is an opportunity to show what their potential is." Along with an admission process that includes a portfolio and an inter-

university level education is ideal, she says. It gives students the flexibility to explore a fine art, while at the same time learning the life skills that the university experience offers.

Even artists who can eventually sustain

thropology and sociology, to fine arts, such as visual art and music.

The curriculum is designed to equip students with tools to be applied to any career, such as communication, leadership and ana-

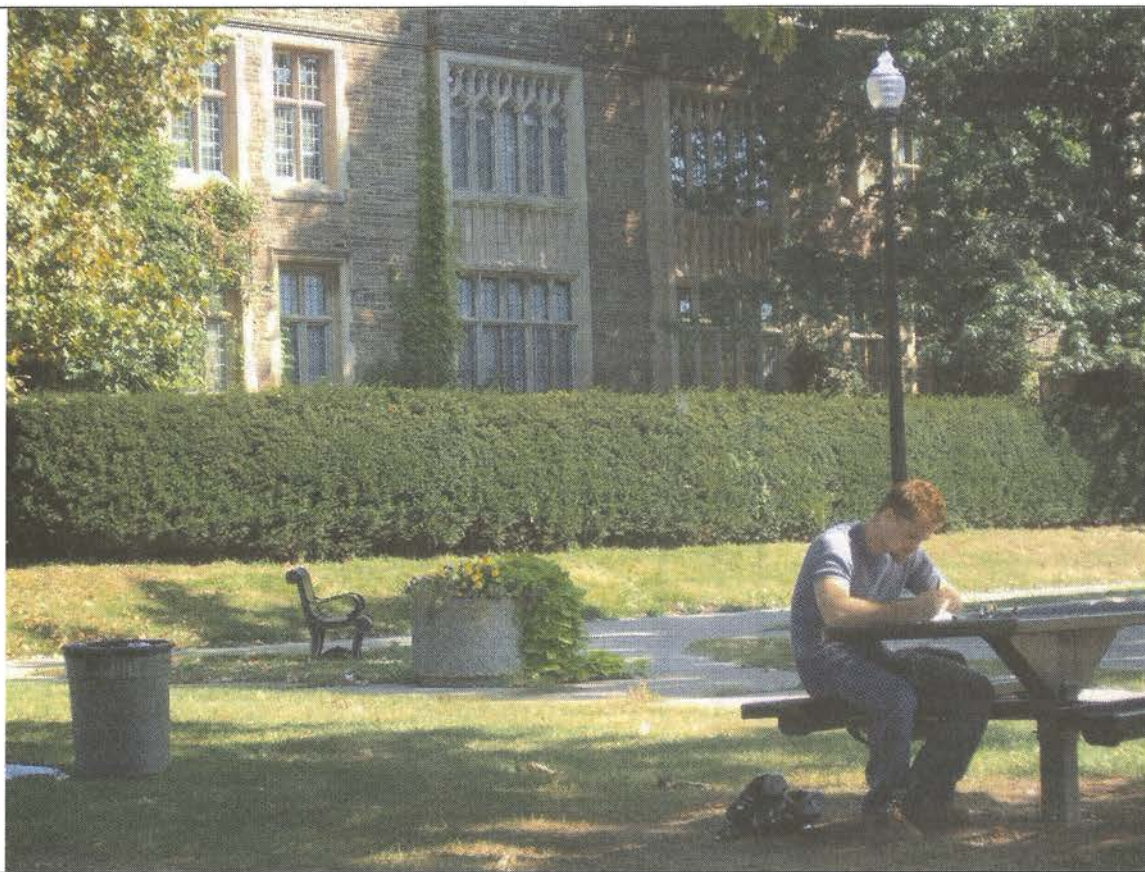


PHOTO BY ADAM SPENCE

A student sits outside McMaster's University Hall examining his course options for the term. University Hall was originally built to host all of the liberal arts programs on campus, and is now home to the departments of philosophy and religious studies. Perhaps the arts love bug will strike.

lytical skills. *Fortune Magazine* reported that 38 per cent of American CEOs majored in a liberal arts program, while 90 per cent believed that a liberal arts education greatly strengthened critical thinking skills.

"Here is what I believe a student needs to be successful in [a faculty of arts and social sciences]," says Blackman, listing curiosity about human behavior, an open mind, a willingness to think hard and the courage to form and express ideas as essential criteria for a liberal arts education. He also says that excellent communication skills and the self-discipline needed to give proper priority to studying are fundamental.

The ideal candidate, says Blackman, is "a student who has all the attributes listed above as well as considerable cortical horse power!"

At OCAD, the faculty is strong in their belief that the mandatory liberal studies are crucial for a student's development. "The theory is that our liberal studies are slightly more applied because our faculty have a background in art," says McKinnon.

At OCAD, even liberal studies courses with a scientific focus are geared towards art. "We try and make it true to what we offer," she says, as the faculty attempts to maintain a relationship between art and a chosen topic, which could be anything from history to bi-

ology.

In a 2001 presentation, Blackman and his colleague John Tietz, also of Simon Fraser University, provided students with four steps to successfully choosing a post-secondary education: shop around, get the facts, choose wisely and keep shopping.

Along with cultivating an appreciation for arts and culture, they told students, enrollment in a faculty of arts and social sciences contributes to personal growth, an appreciation of diversity in views, social development and leadership skills that are ideal for a life-long learner.

No job can remain unchanged by advances in technology and there are increasing requirements to become adaptable to new technical demands. A liberal arts education promotes life-long learning and the ability to adapt to these crucial changes smoothly.

It is true that universities do not offer a money back guarantee — in fact they don't promise any future happiness, success, fulfillment or economic stability.

University can provide a foot in the door through knowledge and learning, but it cannot create the passion inside someone to express themselves.

As technology and the societal expectations of happiness continue to change, one

thing remains the same: youth will always use literature, poetry, music, theatre, painting and many other forms of expression to reveal who they are.

Educated youth have the opportunity following graduation to take the skills and learning experiences they have acquired in university and market themselves to employers.

Navigating the line between passion and practicality is far more complicated than simply choosing a major and it takes more than a degree to find a job.

Students must also have the ability to transition, a quest for knowledge and the well-rounded nature that employers are looking for.

These are all things that the university experience can offer, but only if youth dare to pursue a fulfilling education and absorb all that it offers to them.

In the words of George Bernard Shaw, "a life spent making mistakes is not only more honorable, but more useful than a life spent doing nothing."

Ability and enthusiasm are characteristics that are difficult to suppress, says McKinnon.

Today's university programs are making advances for students to do just that, even if it means taking a chance for something you love. ■

NO EXPERIENCE, NO JOB. NO JOB, NO EXPERIENCE. JOINING THE INTERN ARMY

BY KASIA SARNECKI

THERE'S A CATCH-22 FOR GRADUATING students: they can't get work unless they have experience, but they can't get experience unless they find work. One of the most popular ways to get experience and a foot in the door is through a process called "interning."

Internships were once fondly thought of as free labour for companies. Interns were the lackeys who did the work no one else in the company wanted. But according to recent graduates, some of whom have completed more than one internship before heading out into the job market, interning is essential when gaining experience and trying to establish networks.

While a post-secondary education exposes students to the opportunities available to them, graduates must also be equipped with the right skills in searching out their desired careers. Internships have become a great tool for matching academic learning with practical career skills.

But what about the task of paying off student debts, some of which total upwards of \$30,000?

Laura Jablonski, 24, a graduate of the University of Western Ontario with a degree in Administrative and Commercial Studies and a post-graduate degree from Humber College in Public Relations, says she is expecting "a miracle" to pay off her \$15,000 student loan.

Realistically she knows she will have to find some sort of employment to bring down the costs, but she is worried about how that will actually happen.

The challenge for Jablonski, and many graduates like her, is learning where and how to find work.

According to Statistics Canada, Jablonski is just one of approximately 174,000 students in Canada who graduated this past spring. These graduates will join the 1.2 million people nationwide already looking for work.

The Canadian economy is beginning to recover from early 2000's high unemployment rates, but for some it is not happening fast enough.

To combat a slow job market, universities and colleges are not only advising students to consider internships, but are also offering these opportunities. Career centres at most schools are receiving encouraging feedback on the idea of interning as a means of entering the career world.

Humber College offers a Public Relations

program that is one step ahead of many other programs because it has an internship requirement built right in, says Barrie Doyle, a Public Relations professor at Humber.

"The feedback from companies is absolutely positive. We have companies and organizations that come back time and time again asking for our students."

Advisors at Humber work hard at assigning students to corporations where the learning environment is constructive and the time spent there is meaningful. In return, the company is provided with students who will be valuable contributors.

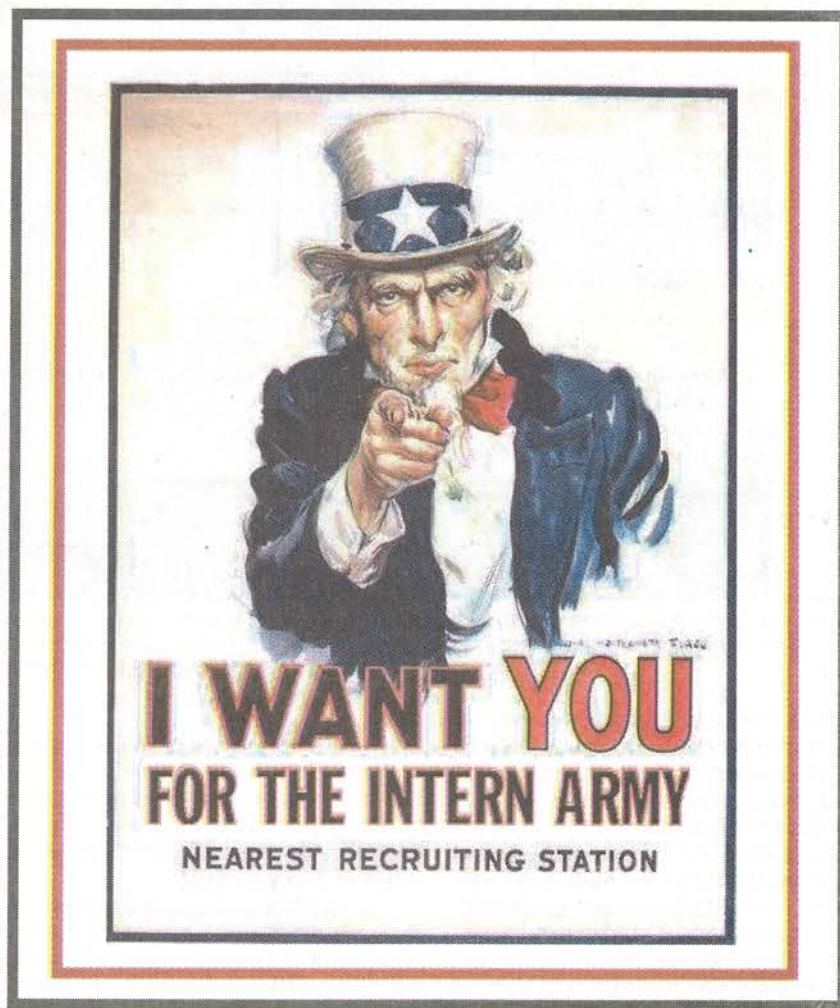
The four major areas in which Humber focuses its internships are government agencies, public relations agencies such as

Fleishman-Hillard and APEX, business corporations and non-profit organizations such as hospitals.

Jablonski found that her internship at Edelman Public Relations was a good fit with her future career goals. She also notes that although Humber guided the internship process, students had to take an active role as well.

A classmate of Jablonski's, Dana Allison, 24, says that Humber gave students an outline of how the internships would be run, but she did further exploring herself by contacting and pursuing several organizations. "I requested to come in for an informational interview to learn more about the organization," says Allison.

Allison's internship at Strategic Objectives



in Toronto paid her \$250 per week and the position has led to a full-time career, something most interns hope for.

Professor Doyle says internships provide a great stepping stone into the workforce for recent graduates. He finds that more students are willing to accept little or no pay in return for the career building opportunities. "The average pay we are seeing is \$9 to \$13 per hour, but most companies are offering honorariums from as little as \$750 to as much as \$1,500," says Doyle.

Jablonski was one of those students, initially willing to take lower pay in return for

opportunities.

"They are already trained and familiar with the corporate culture," says Fraser.

Internships are also about complimenting theory learned in a classroom with the practical experience gained in the workplace, says Mary Giamous, Career Management Consultant at the University of Toronto.

She agrees with Fraser that both interns and employers gain more than they may realize during an internship.

"It's a far better investment by [a company] in their time and money. It also makes students more marketable," says Giamous.

The Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) is one of the most common loan programs that students in Ontario apply for when entering university or college. As of late, OSAP has been used by higher numbers of undergraduate students than in previous years, meaning that the number of graduating students with debt is increasing as well. In 2002/03, upwards of 230,000 undergraduates were enrolled in Ontario universities and 151,000 of those students were eligible to receive OSAP.

After spending four years at university, most of those students on OSAP will have

According to Statistics Canada, 174,000 students in Canada graduated last spring. These graduates will join the 1.2 million people nationwide already looking for work.

better career opportunities. "One of the biggest reasons I applied for the PR program was the internship component. It's a good way to get some practical work experience."

For companies, one of the biggest advantages to hiring interns is that they can gauge a prospective employee's work ethic and evaluate what new ideas he or she may bring. Rob Maurin, Executive Editor of *Fashion*, a Toronto-based magazine, says the benefit for them is the possibility of discovering new talent.

"We may have someone who is a great writer and we can use that talent. We may even be able to launch a career and get to be tied with that new face."

To be considered for continued employment, Maurin says it is extremely important for students to remember that their internship should be treated the same as a real job.

According to Maurin, *Fashion* does not make its interns jump any hurdles, but they do want to see interns putting in effort rather than just time. "Treat it like the huge opportunity it really is."

These sentiments are being echoed in the career centres of universities and colleges across the country.

"Students and recent grads should never turn down [anything]. Every job offers great networking possibilities," says Dave Fraser, Employment Services Coordinator at McMaster University.

McMaster has four different career centres specializing in Science, Social Science, Engineering and Business, along with a general career centre. These centres actively seek out and develop relationships with employers who will in turn hire McMaster students as interns.

Fraser says once an employer has spent a considerable amount of time with an intern, it is to the company's benefit to approach that seasoned intern with employment op-

The difficult part for new grads is waiting out the unpaid or minimally paid work experience for the permanent job offer to come through.

"Only about 10 per cent of internships offered are paid," says Fraser. The result of so few paid positions is more stress for students who have large debts to pay off.

Students must face the reality that their costs won't cease once they get their degree or diploma. The cost of living, which can include rent, automobile maintenance, groceries and other household bills, can seem insurmountable to university graduates, especially those who must prepare to repay student loans.

"The average pay we are seeing is \$9 to \$13 per hour, but most companies are offering honorariums from as little as \$750 to as much as \$1,500."

A recent trend is for new graduates to move home and live with their parents. The choice is not only cost effective, but also allows students to experiment with different career opportunities while taking comfort in the financial safety net provided by their families.

For those who face massive debt upon graduation, Fraser advises students to go to their financial aid offices before graduation and also to try to negotiate with creditors. "Often times students have to resort to going back to the bank to get a loan to pay off a loan."

to pay an average of \$21,500 back to the government, says Wilma Davis of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. This number adds even more stress for recent grads, many of whom will have to explore various means and opportunities to get to their desired career.

Students must prepare for the reality of life beyond university, says Fraser. One of the biggest misconceptions students have is that there are jobs waiting for them once they leave that last class and close that last textbook.

Today, that is just not true. Aging baby-boomers are not ready to retire, so as they stay on longer less job opportunities become available for the newer, younger workforce.

Post-secondary institutions are where the new workforce has to be educated on how to approach their job search. The old cliché that 'university teaches students the skills to think and college teaches students the skills to get a job' is becoming less true as both places of learning are offering real work experience through internships.

At a time when the number of post-secondary graduates is far higher than the number of positions available in the workforce, universities and colleges need to incorporate job training skills to their programs. Students need to learn how to apply the knowledge gained in a classroom to his or her chosen career.

Graduates also need to discover what possible jobs their degree or diploma can lead to. A degree in sociology doesn't mean the graduate will be a social worker. Through university or college internship programs, students will realize that, for example, a sociology degree opens doors to careers in teaching, business, telecommunications, sales and other rewarding fields.

In conjunction with low paying internships, they also rarely consist of a 40-

hour week, forcing the new grad to take on other part-time work, such as working in retail or in restaurants, while gaining experience interning.

While any job can provide valuable learning experiences, taking a part-time job to make ends meet can weigh a person down and get in the way of their true aspirations. Many graduates, including Jablonski, are going to have to look to those not so glamorous jobs until something better comes along. "My internship did not turn into a full-time job, now I have to find something else," she says.

Jablonski's two month internship at Edelman Public Relations paid her \$11 per hour, hardly enough to make a dent in her \$15,000 student loan, but what she did earn were working relationships and networking skills.

"They did pass on a lot of contacts at other companies in hopes of helping me find another job."

Alongside interning, networking has become so important that schools are offering workshops to help students build working relationships. Kathryn Hryb, Career Information Specialist at McMaster, says her department offers a variety of services, including print and online resources on how to network. The career centre also helps students make the difficult transition from student to employee.

"Other workshops include writing cover letters, resume critiquing and assistance in job searching," says Hryb.

One thing graduates, and anyone looking for work, should realize is that as soon as your foot is in the door you begin to network, says Fraser. Often it is not only speaking to people that constitutes networking, but how you perform in your position.

According to Shawn Hughes, Assistant Promotions Director at MIX99.9 in Toronto, initiative goes a long way in building relationships and securing trust.

"I think a lot of students wait until they are done school to [intern], and then are disappointed when they are asked to work for free," says Hughes. "The foundation of work is built on who you know...based on relationships."

"I think a lot of students wait until they are done school to [intern], and then they are disappointed when they are asked to work for free."

CFRB, MIX 99.9's sister radio station, also offers internships. For over 30 years a summer internship program has run that has been offered to all students with at least one year remaining in school. The position was initially called the 'Good News Reporter,' but has been updated to the 'Summer Beat Reporter.'

Dave Trafford, News Director at CFRB, says they take on six students and have them work as general assignment reporters. In the early days of the intern program, students worked on 'fluffy' feature stories which usually ran outside of the newscast, but as the station changed, so did the assignments given to interns.

"The interns are sent to Queen's Park, City Hall and the police departments as general assignment reporters," says Trafford.

Trafford says he makes a concerted effort to recruit students in both college and university by going to networking days and posting positions on school career centre boards.

New York City, possibly one of the largest markets for any chosen career, offers an array of internships, many of interest to Canadian students looking to gain work experience in a large American city. At Z100, New York's number one hit music station, the top rated morning show brings in three or four interns each semester and throughout the summer. Z100 follows the same procedure of recruitment as Toronto's CFRB, but also mentions internship availability on air.

David Brody, Executive Producer of Elvis Duran and the Z Morning Zoo, says the reason he hires interns is to return the favour once done for him, and other radio personalities like him, years ago.

"Our interns are our target demo. Not only do they provide us with helpful hot topics but they are also a good sounding board," says Brody.

Brody admits that internships at Z100

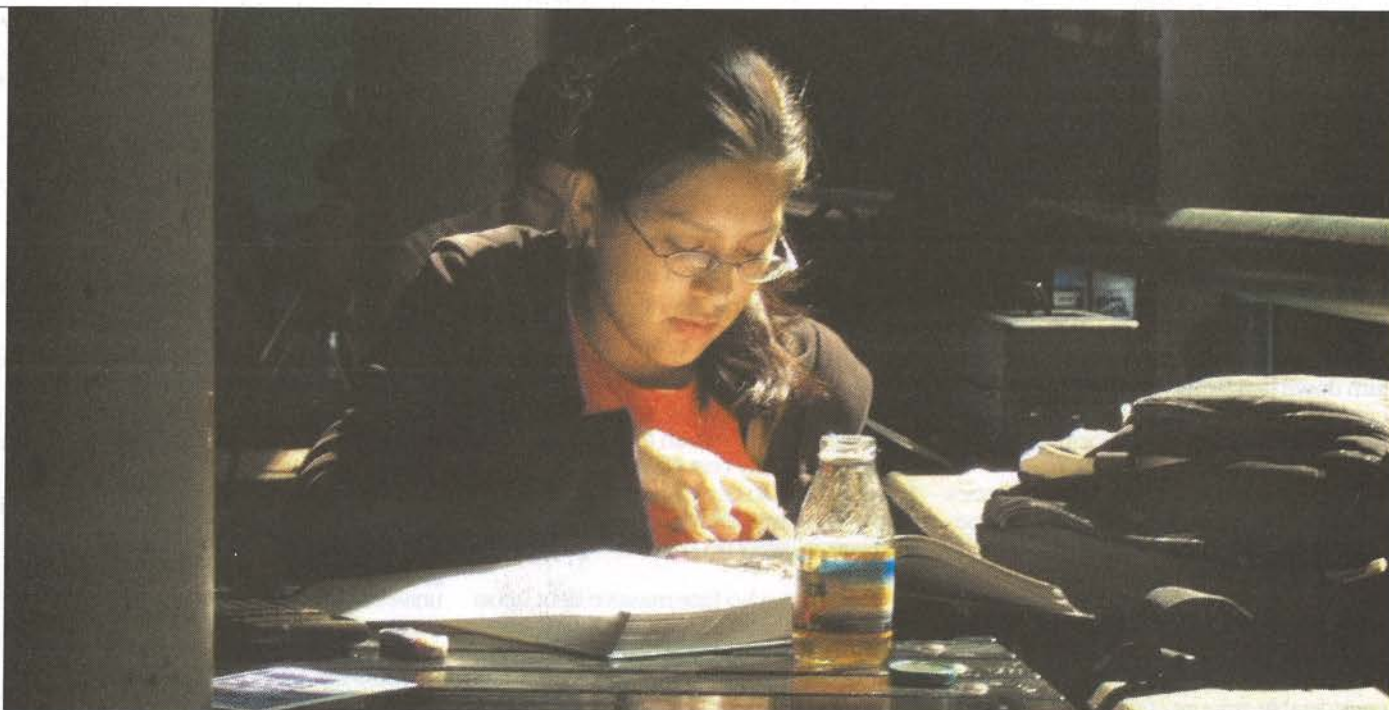


PHOTO BY LAURA THOMPSON

After hitting the books, graduates are faced with the challenge of mounting student debt and the prospect of an internship that might not even cover their interest payments. The experience may, however, lead to further employment.

are hard to get and that if an impressive student is hired, he or she must really demonstrate an interest to work in the industry. He says that students must acknowledge this and set themselves apart from other candidates.

And while appropriate compensation is still an issue for many, Brody says that his interns don't mind being paid in food and concert tickets.

The interns at CFRB are paid a salary, but Trafford says it is not enough to move to Toronto from somewhere like Vancouver; students would need some kind of extra income to make ends meet.

"Our interns are our target demo. Not only do they provide us with helpful hot topics but they are also a good sounding board."

According to Kyle Hume, once a Summer Beat Reporter himself and now CFRB's Newsroom Editor/Entertainment Reporter/Assignment Editor, the learning experience is irreplaceable. Hume says he had the opportunity to do a lot of regular tasks and could not believe he was being paid because it was so much fun.

The opportunities at this radio station seem better than what most students can expect. Interns help the assistant producers of talk shows, assist the traffic department, research, make calls and conduct interviews, and basically back up all those working in the newsroom, says Hume.

"If you're interning here, there is definitely a chance of being hired," says Hume. But Trafford makes sure that no interns are hired unless they have graduated from their program.

"I know I sound like a dad, but you have to finish school," says Trafford. "Sometimes it hurts us to not be able to hire them. If [the student] is that good, we will seem them again."

ment. The company offers over 150 positions to students each term.

Although one reason to join RIM, as posted on the company's website, is for the "pizza luncheons," another reason for many cash-strapped students is the incentive of a regular pay cheque. "RIM believes in fairly compensating and rewarding [its] employees. They also each receive a Blackberry," one of the company's leading technologies, says Pfeifer.

Working for free or for little pay, however, seems to be what most companies are offering today. Students and recent graduates are told that "internships are all about gaining experience."

"It's an altruistic feeling. Many in the office began as interns and we want to help them out," says Maurin of *Fashion Magazine*. Unfortunately, *Fashion* just doesn't have the budget to pay its interns, says Maurin. *Fashion* competes head-to-head with the United States magazine market.

"We do as much as we can with the little we have and interns are a great help," Maurin wishes it were different and that they could pay their interns and admits that it is hard to ask people to work for free.

Large national companies are also getting on the internship bandwagon. Kraft Foods offers over three different interning possibilities to students. "On average 200 students participate annually in Kraft internships in the United States," says Cathy Pernu, Senior Manager, Corporate Affairs.

Kraft Canada was unavailable to comment, but the website of their American counterpart claims that Kraft internships provide students with an opportunity to see how a large corporation works while becoming an integral part of a business team.

Kraft interns are exposed to the Kraft Kitchens, visits to their manufacturing facilities, and spend time at Kraft sales offices, all leading to a well-rounded intern experience.

Pernu says the interns at Kraft are paid positions with compensation based on the assignment itself and the year of college completed. The Kraft website also says that many students may be eligible for subsidized housing through the internship program.

pursue. And they are not solely great opportunities for students, but also for the companies that hire them.

"We [at CFRB] are made to rethink and refocus what we do. When an intern asks, 'why do you do that?' we think, 'that's a good question,'" says Trafford. The people at the station are always refreshing their view of events, and they have to really think about why it is they complete tasks in the manner they do, continues Trafford.

However, many intern positions, while important learning experiences, remain generally unpaid, resulting in the need for extra

"It's an altruistic feeling. Many in the office began as interns and we want to help them out. We do as much as we can..."

income sources. Those entering the workforce for the first time are forced to ask themselves what salary is reasonable for their level of education and for the work that they will be doing.

"Most of us aren't even sure what we should be asking for as a starting salary...so even if the pay is way under what it should be, half of us wouldn't know that we're getting ripped off," says Jablonski.

It may seem that a lot of students take advantage of internship opportunities, but for every student that does, two do not. Students and recent grads should not have to work for free to gain experience, but experience is necessary for most post-university jobs.

Along with internships and job training courses, universities and colleges must consider including opportunities for students to gain skills in applying the knowledge learned in the classroom to an office setting.

As more and more universities and students see the benefit of internships, these opportunities may become the most practical way to secure experience, if not a job, in

Research in Motion (RIM), a Waterloo-based mobile communications company, offers 150 positions to students each term. Benefits: regular pay cheque, pizza luncheons and one Blackberry.

Research in Motion (RIM), a mobile communications company, prides itself on both hiring interns during school and keeping them once they graduate. "Internships allow new grads to quickly transition to full-time employment," says Elizabeth Rode Pfeifer, Vice-President of Organizational Develop-

ment. Similar to smaller companies which host interns, Kraft views these extra minds and hands as a highly valued source of entry level talent, says Pernu.

Internships are the best possible way to gain experience and determine if the chosen career is the right one for a recent graduate to

such a tumultuous economy, solving the catch-22 that many young graduates face when entering the workforce.

For the time being, Jablonski will keep her options open. "Hopefully when things pick up at the end of the summer and in the fall, they'll remember me and call me up!" ■



DR. NICHOLAS BARR

PAYING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRESSIVE REPAYMENT LINKED TO INCOME

The current turbulent debate about financing higher education is largely unnecessary. There is a solution that is simple, workable and with a large upside for all concerned.

Everyone agrees on the core problems. Universities are underfunded, many students are poor, and the proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds is a major cause for concern. Higher education finance therefore matters: getting it wrong puts national economic performance at risk and sells the poor down the river.

There is also considerable agreement in most countries about two core objectives: strengthening the quality of higher education and improving access.

The policy to achieve those objectives has three elements.

The first is variable fees, highly controversial in Europe but taken for granted in countries like the USA. Fees give universities more resources to improve quality and, through competition, improve the efficiency with which those resources are used. That is not an argument for law-of-the-jungle competition, but for regulated markets.

Paradoxically, variable fees not only improve the efficiency of universities but are also fairer than financing them mainly from taxation. Since the majority of university students are from better-off backgrounds, undue reliance on taxation means that the taxes of the truck driver pay for the degrees of people from better-off backgrounds, degrees that will further increase their economic advantage.

Thinking on fees can be muddled. Many would agree that higher education is a right, but it does not follow that it must always be free. Food, equally, is a right, yet nobody demonstrates outside shops or restaurants. Another confusion is between social elitism, which is abhorrent, and intellectual elitism, which is both necessary and desirable. There is nothing inequitable about intellectually elite institutions. The access imperative is a system in which the brightest students are able to study at the most intellectually demanding institutions irrespective of their socioeconomic background.

The obvious argument against higher fees is that they will deter students from poorer backgrounds. That is true of upfront fees, but not true if students go to university free and make a contribution to their fees only after they have graduated. This brings us to the second element in the strategy – well-designed student loans.

Student loans should have two core characteristics. They should not be organised like a mortgage or bank overdraft, but have in-

come-contingent repayments – that is, repayments calculated as a percentage of a graduate's income and collected alongside his or her income tax. Second, the loan should be large enough to cover tuition fees and realistic living costs.

Such a package has profound implications. It eliminates up-front fees (the student loans administration sends the fee payment directly to the university), making higher education free at the point of use. It ends student poverty, unimpaling students from forced reliance on expensive credit card debt and allowing them to choose how much part-time work they do, or not do. And it is simple for students and their parents to understand.

Even more fundamentally, the package is

Thinking on fees can be muddled. Many would agree that higher education is a right, but it does not follow that it must always be free.

equivalent to free higher education. All students are entitled to the full support package, hence no one is forced to pay anything at the time they go to university. And income-contingent repayments differ from tax in only two ways: they are paid only by people who have been to university and benefited financially from their degree; and they do not go on forever.

This is not a cheap intellectual stunt – adequate and universal income-contingent loans are logically equivalent to free higher education financed by an income-related graduate contribution. Herein the essential core of the solution.

The first two elements in the strategy free the resources to pay for the third – active measures to promote access. There are two causes of exclusion: financial poverty and information poverty. Any strategy for access needs to address both.

Measures to address financial poverty include:

1. Targeted financial assistance for children above the minimum school leaving age to encourage them to complete school.

2. Scholarships to cover some or all costs at university. There are advantages in offering full scholarships to first-year students from poor backgrounds, who may not be well-informed about whether they are well-suited to university. By the end of their first year they are no longer badly-informed and, if doing well, are more prepared to finance the rest of their degree, at least in part, through a loan.

3. Both policies could be supported by financial incentives to universities to widen participation, and by extra resources to provide additional intellectual support at university for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

A second set of money measures supports access by offering assistance for people with low incomes after graduation.

1. Targeted interest subsidies could freeze the real value of debt of people with low earnings, including people who are unemployed.

2. People with low lifetime earnings could be protected by writing off any loan not repaid after (say) 25 years.

3. The loans of workers in the public sector could be progressively written off (in Britain, 10 per cent of the loan of new teachers in shortage subjects is written off for each year in the state system).

4. People caring for young children or elderly dependants could be granted loan remission, for example 10 per cent of outstanding debt for each year caring for a pre-school child.

Information poverty, the second strategic impediment to access, is inadequately emphasised. Action to inform school children and raise their aspirations is therefore critical. The saddest impediment to access is someone who has never even thought of going to university.

Finally, problems of university access cannot be solved entirely within the higher education sector. More resources are needed earlier in the system, not least because of the growing evidence that the roots of exclusion lie in early childhood.

The three elements are a genuine strategy, in the sense that each of the elements reinforces the others. Specifically, it is the first two elements that make possible the access measures, which would otherwise be crowded out by subsidies mainly benefiting the better-off.

The resulting strategy simultaneously enhances quality and increases fairness. It is educationally, fiscally and administratively sound. It should form the core of any reform proposals.

INCOME CONTINGENT LOAN REPAYMENT PLANS

THE SIREN SONG OF STUDENT ASSISTANCE



DR. MARK ROSENFELD

The student financial assistance system for those pursuing higher education in Ontario, and in Canada generally, is clearly in need of a major renovation. While in recent years, there have been efforts to harmonize the provincial and federal government assistance plans, as well as encourage universities to provide institutionally-based aid, the system remains fragmented and increasingly unable to respond to students' actual financial needs. Moreover, student assistance and government measures to encourage family savings for post-secondary education have proven to be inequitable, especially for students from lower and middle-income families.

Recent research studies provide a sobering picture of student assistance in the country. In conjunction with the increased cost of attending university, loan-based assistance – the underpinning of both the Ontario and federal governments' main student assistance programs – has resulted in mounting debt loads for many students. Statistics Canada's 2002 National Graduates Survey concerning Student Debt found that 45 per cent of university BA graduates from the class of 2000 were in debt after graduation, mostly in the form of government student loans. On average, these graduates owed approximately \$20,000 to all sources. One in seven BA graduates owed \$25,000 or more in government student loans after graduation.

For some, the solution to the very real problems of mounting student debt load, increased education costs, inequities in family and student savings and an inadequate student aid system is the creation of a student assistance program based on the principle of income-contingent repayment. Accordingly, students repay their education loans only upon graduation and only when their income reaches a certain threshold. Administered through the income tax system, repayment is also designed to be income sensitive – the more one earns, the larger the repayment. Those earning more pay off their loans more quickly than those with smaller incomes. On the surface, such a system appears equitable and attractive. In reality, an income-contingent loan repayment system is much more problematic than it would appear, particularly in a Canadian context.

It is perhaps significant that no Canadian provincial or federal government has yet created an income-contingent loan repayment system for student assistance. Governments of various political persuasions have considered such programs but in the end they were rejected. In Ontario, the previous NDP and Conservative governments

undertook extensive policy and program planning to create an income-contingent system. These plans were eventually abandoned. The estimated start-up costs proved too great, the administrative requirements too complex, the banks as partners too uncooperative, and federal government support too uncertain.

The cost of the program depends on its design. If income-contingent loans only cover tuition fees, the costs are less than if they cover all education costs, including living expenses. If all students are eligible for income-contingent loans rather than just those whose family income is below a certain threshold, then costs also increase. The threshold of repayment affects costs as well.

In a Canadian context, an income-contingent repayment system would require a degree of close coordination and cooperation between the federal and provincial governments that has not to date characterized federal-provincial relations in the area of student assistance. If the Ontario government opted to make the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) income-contingent, would the federal government also choose to make Canada Student Loans income-contingent for Ontario students? Changes would need to be made at the federal level. If not, the efficacy of the program would be limited. Of course, the challenges presented by such concerns are not insurmountable but also not inconsiderable.


For advocates of income-contingent loans, Australia is cited as an example of what can be achieved. It also offers a cautionary tale of what is highly problematic about income-contingent loans – something that the British government, which recently embraced this form of student assistance, would not appear to acknowledge. The Australian income-contingent loan system, known as the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS), was introduced in 1989. It provides government loans for higher education tuition fees to all students, not just those from lower and middle-income families, who are accepted in a government-subsidized post-secondary program. Under HECS, students can defer repayment of their loan until after graduation and then begin repaying their loan once their income reaches a government-determined threshold.

In practice, the HECS system has been used by the Australian government, particularly the current conservative federal government, to dramatically increase the funding provided students for higher education and reduce its own contribution. A recent analysis by the association representing Australian academic and general staff found that between

1996 and 2003, there was a 94 per cent increase (or A\$2,137 per year in constant dollars) in the cost that the average student was paying for a government subsidized university place. For a four-year degree, this represented an increase of over A\$8,500. At the same time, the government reduced its level of funding to universities. In 2003, universities received A\$1,740 (or 13 per cent) less per student in real terms than in 1996.

A reliance on an ever-increasing student contribution has been further incorporated in recent government changes to Australian post-secondary education. Under these changes, universities will be allowed to charge fees up to 25 per cent in excess of the HECS rate established by the government. While the income threshold for repayment of student debts will also increase, after being reduced previously, the debt load of Australian students will continue to increase substantially. This increased debt may appear acceptable to some students and government because of what economists describe as a 'money illusion.' Since the debt students incur is income-contingent and they are not paying up front, they do not fully recognize the true monetary value of their debt – until they have to start paying it back. But like the current system of student assistance in Canada, debt accumulation is very real under an income-contingent system, as is the inclination of governments to shift funding costs onto students. The latest student data released by the Australian Department of Education, Science and Technology reveal that there are now fewer school leavers choosing to enter university. It may be argued that the increasing cost of a degree is deterring many potential students from entering higher education, despite the existence of an income-contingent loan system.

The pertinent public policy issues for any reform of student assistance should focus on facilitating opportunities for higher education and addressing equity concerns; minimizing financial barriers, including student debt and its consequences; and determining the appropriate levels of personal and public financing of a student's education. A debate on student assistance which embraces income-contingent financial assistance as 'the answer' simply shifts concerns from these important public policy issues to a consideration of repayment mechanisms while at the same time purporting to be concerned about issues of equity. As Ontario prepares to review its student assistance system, alluring 'solutions' need to be handled with caution. *Caveat emptor.*


ERIKA SHAKER

TARGETING THE DEBT DEMOGRAPHIC GETTING STUDENTS ON CAMPUS 'PUMPED'?

It's a new year for university and college students and a new year for sponsors to target this crop of influential decision-makers and present and future consumers.

This is hardly news to those familiar with the spectre of Welcome Week on campuses across the country, where companies line up to hand out credit card applications, t-shirts and bags of freebies. But the contrast between cash-starved higher education institutions and debt-ridden students and the splashy consumer-based marketing campaigns on university and college campuses is growing more striking.

Currently the tuition fees for Ontario students are among the highest in the country, at \$4,960 (2004-2005), with additional compulsory fees of close to \$700. Average unmet need for Ontario students (i.e. expenses not covered by maximum loan amounts) varies from \$2,878 for a student living at home to nearly \$10,000 for students living independently.

Students who complete a four-year program will have accumulated, on average, \$25,000 in debt, an increase of 300 per cent since 1990 — note that this in no way reflects the debt that families may incur as a result of sending a child to university or college — parents taking out loans, for example, or perhaps a second mortgage to foot the bill.

This has resulted in enormous pressure, financial and otherwise, on students and their families. The Canadian Federation of Students estimates that over 100,000 potential students are being shut out of higher education each year as a result of financial barriers.

Ontario has the highest number of university food banks (18 of Canada's 46), and of those who responded to a national survey (conducted by the Canadian Association of Food Banks and the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations) nearly 90 per cent cited the associated costs of pursuing higher education as the reason a food bank opened on their campus.

But given the financial constraints under which students must exist, isn't it nice to know that help is on the way — indeed, that legions of benefactors are literally lining up to be part of the rush to provide students with the emotional and financial support they need during their most vulnerable moments.

Turns out students are a hot commodity, not just as the future of the 'knowledge economy' our politicians like to boast about, but for somewhat less aesthetic reasons. The Campus Network is quite direct: "Students have purchasing power. They have money and the time to spend it, and for the first

time in their lives, they have to make independent financial decisions. This is the time when students establish purchasing habits and brand loyalties."

It's not just print ads and other traditional marketing media that are being explored as a means to reach this highly lucrative target market. Pumped.ca ("a high energy marketing services firm") prides themselves on their deep connections with campuses across the country, and highlights a number of "successful" co-operative ventures where they've helped corporate clients get their message out to the target audience — in this case, university and college students.

A couple of my favourites: one for Quaker, designed to increase awareness about Mini Crisps among students who are "not yet conscious about salt intake, but body-image conscious" during Welcome Week. And another for Wrigley Canada Inc., where Pumped was instrumental in solving (wait for it) a potential stale date problem.

Seems Wrigley had 350,000 samples of Excel Cherry Chill that were fast approaching a "best before date." Can anyone else smell synergy? In Pumped's own words:

"We exploded out of the starting blocks. We utilized our connections and co-op intuition and executed an extremely cost efficient program to distribute the 350,000 samples to university and college students. We had every single sample in the hands and mouths of Wrigley's prime target group well before the product expiry date."

Lest readers think it's all about sodium and stale gum, Pumped is also deeply involved in helping students manage their swiftly depleting finances through CreditWizard.ca — "Canada's Friendly Credit Card Site" — dedicated to helping university and college students and other deserving adults apply for and acquire the credit cards that they need and will use in a responsible fashion."

Never mind that private debt, including credit card debt, is on the increase for virtually all Canadians. This is a lucrative opportunity for BMO (CreditWizard's most prominent partner — in fact, the site launched BMO's Mosaic MasterCard) to get up close and personal with new users wrapped up in the language of fiscal responsibility. According to CreditWizard, this is an opportunity to build brand loyalty with customers who have proven themselves to be valuable to future business.

Student debt has proven itself to be an effective marketing tool. Uthink.ca facilitates a website promoting Strategic Scholarship Programs.

This site offers corporate sponsors the opportunity to tap into the growing demand for scholarships as a result of inadequate education funding, and assures sponsors that they can achieve a number of marketing objectives including:

- a. Generating goodwill amongst a notoriously difficult-to-reach demographic;
- b. Increasing brand recognition;
- c. Generating response to marketing initiatives; and
- d. Creating loyal customers.

In this case, the 'hook' for students is the information provided about bursaries and other forms of financial assistance. But the online discussion forum is the part of specific interest to sponsors because it provides insight into the students who are "enthusiastic about sharing their views and receiving useful, targeted information from our site sponsors."

Certainly there are more blatant, shall we say, examples of corporations using the student market to sell products. Perhaps one strip club in Windsor came a bit too close for comfort last year when it ran a full page ad on the back of the first issue of the University of Windsor's student newspaper: "We pay your tuition! Join our team."

As former NDP Ontario Premier Bob Rae embarks on his Advisory Panel to determine future directions for higher education in the province, students, parents, faculty, education workers and the public must wade through a raft of his current musings.

These include his assertion that we must find "creative" ways to fund higher education, his announcement that low tuition fees are tantamount to a "flat tax," and a recently floated suggestion that Ontario students must be prepared to face the end of the fee freeze.

Given the fiscal pressure under which students and their families find themselves each day, it's little wonder that corporate freebies of the "here, try this" or "we'll pay your tuition" variety have particular resonance on campuses, especially when everything associated with school seems to have an unexpected price tag.

But rest assured it'll take more than semi-stale chewing gum to address the societal, economic and educational fallout of a looming student debt crisis.

It's not called "strategic philanthropy" or "cause-related marketing" for nothing.

CORPORATE CAMPUS: THIS LECTURE IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY...

BY ADAM SPENCE & CLIFF VANDERLINDEN

Inadequate provincial government support has forced universities to put up "FOR SALE" signs all over campuses in Ontario. Everything must go, from building naming rights to exclusivity over captive campus markets, and research labs to vacant wall spaces. Literally millions of dollars per year flow from these non-student, non-public sources. In fact, according to the Council of Finance Officers of the Universities of Ontario, approximately 18 per cent of total revenue for universities, or \$1.2 billion per year, comes from these sources in order to support faculty and staff salaries, as well as the construction and maintenance of buildings and classrooms across campus. Take a quick tour of the new corporate campuses to find out who your lecture is sponsored by...

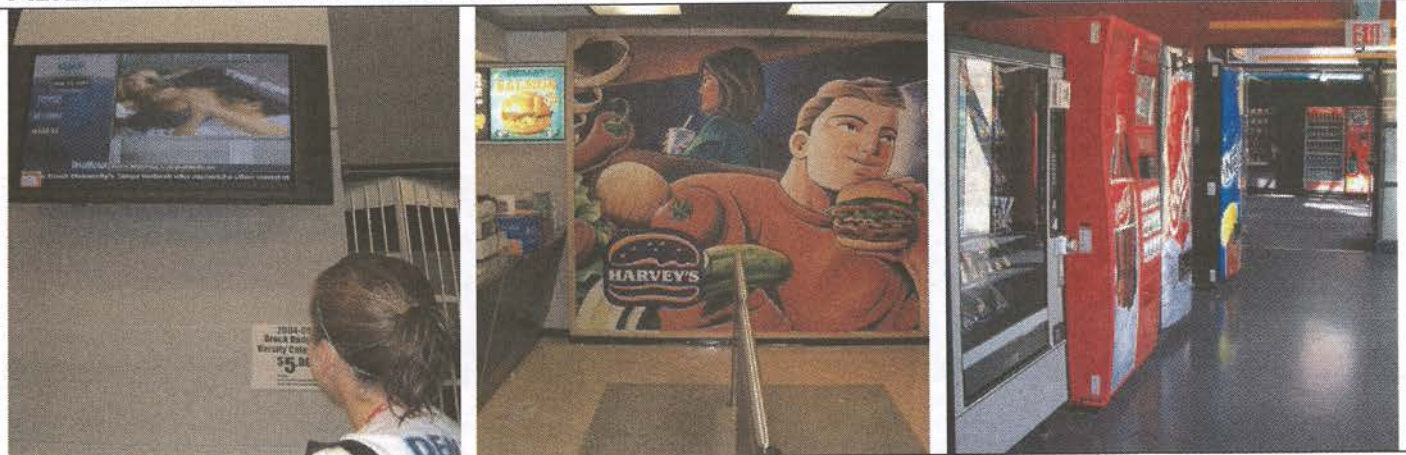
ADVERTISING DOLLARS



(Pictured from left to right: a student looks at an advertisement in the Fred Nichols Centre at Wilfrid Laurier University; an inconspicuous ad in the men's washroom of University Hall at McMaster University; and a student walks by a credit card ad in the Thistle Complex at Brock University.)

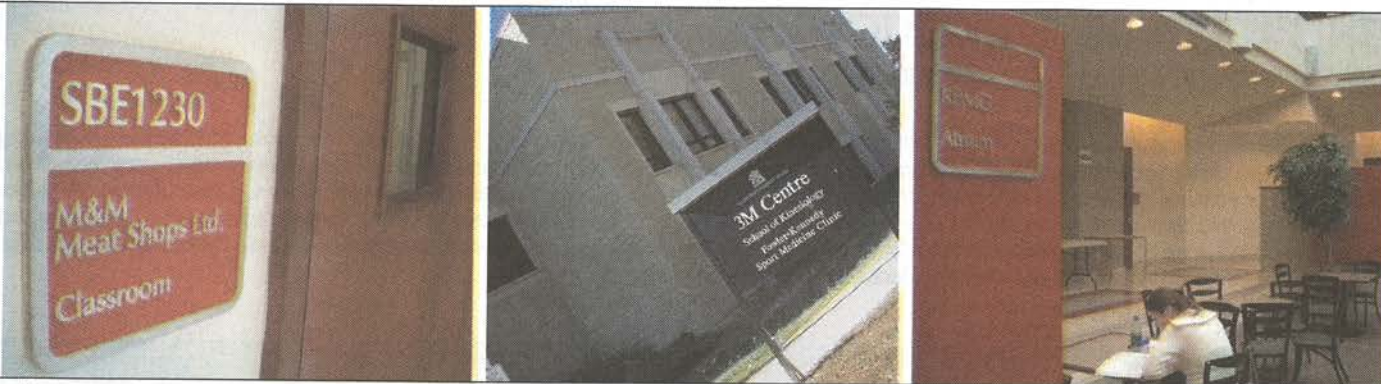
A small portion of funding for universities is derived from various ads on campus, which can be found in the most unusual places. Fortunately, advertisers haven't yet cracked into the lecture halls themselves, and professors haven't been forced to integrate product placements before, during or after class.

ALTERNATIVE REVENUE GENERATORS



(Pictured from left to right: a student watches one of the campus media TVs in the Walker Athletic Complex at Brock University; Harvey's art in the Fred Nichols Campus Centre; and vending machines in the William Davis Centre at the University of Waterloo.) Millions of dollars are provided every year to universities through so-called "alternative revenue generators." Some institutions sign contracts with fast food restaurants, soft drink suppliers and media firms for big, big dollars. In return, these companies get exclusive reign over the campus to sell their wares.

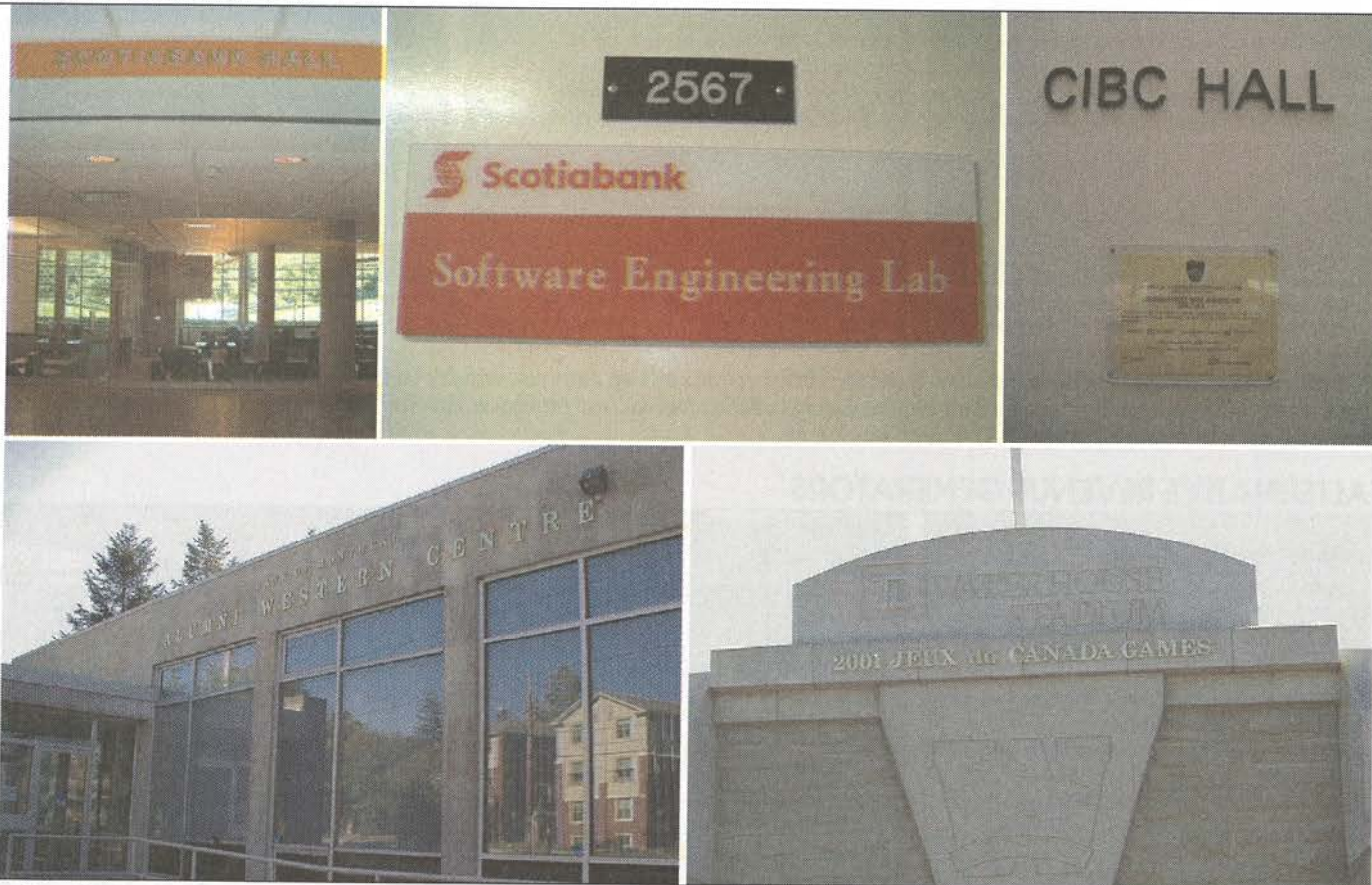
CORPORATE CANADA



(Pictured from left to right: A classroom in the School of Business and Economics Building at Wilfrid Laurier University; the 3M Centre at the University of Western Ontario; and the Atrium in the School of Business and Economics Building at Wilfrid Laurier University.)

One classroom: \$25,000. One foyer and a hallway: \$500,000. One building: \$3 million. Nothing is priceless. Universities have rushed to put price tags on the naming rights for anything and everything on campus that can possibly be labelled. In the past, institutions named buildings after individuals who dedicated their energy and skills to help the university grow. Nowadays, contributions are measured in dollars and cents, not by leadership or vision.

THE BIG SIX: BANKS



(Top photos pictured from left to right: Scotiabank Hall at Brock University; the Scotiabank Software Engineering Lab in the William Davis Centre at the University of Waterloo; and CIBC Hall in the McMaster University Student Centre. Bottom photos pictured from left to right: Bank of Montreal Western Alumni Centre at the University of Western Ontario (UWO); and TD Waterhouse Stadium at UWO.)

Canadian banks have been more than happy to dole out a small portion of their billion dollar profits to needy higher education institutions. They are arguably among the most significant donors to universities across Ontario, providing millions for labs, lecture halls and lovely buildings. One might say they've been downright generous to universities in the lean years. One might even venture to say that there's a little of us in those kindly donations.

ANNUAL REPORT

ONTARIO UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT ALLIANCE

educated solutions **OUSA**
ontario undergraduate student alliance



Mr. Jeff La Porte, President
Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance 2003/04
Vice-President University Affairs,
University of Windsor Students' Alliance

This past year was full of accomplishments too numerous and extensive to mention all at once. By no means were these successes a 'fluke' or 'stroke of luck.' OUSA's success is due in large part to its people-power.

Kathe Rogers, OUSA's Director of Communications and Member Relations, is the reason OUSA enjoyed unparalleled media coverage, including over 22 million national newspaper impressions, and over 40 minutes of television and radio news coverage. Ms. Rogers' accomplishments this past year were extraordinary.

Well-researched and in-depth policy papers have always been a strong point for OUSA. Graeme Stewart, OUSA's Director of Research and Policy Analysis, can be credited for raising the bar even higher with research papers such as *student financial aid in Ontario: fixing a system in need*, as well as our response to the tuition freeze in Ontario. Mr. Stewart's

dedication and mentorship throughout the policy development process were also invaluable.

OUSA's home office wouldn't be complete without the Executive Director, Adam Spence. His leadership and dedication to OUSA has been impressive. Mr. Spence ensured that we were able to effectively carry out many of our new communications, advocacy and research initiatives. His uncanny ability to produce real results for students is one of the major reasons for OUSA's recent achievements.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank last year's Steering Committee for their dedication — Liam McHugh-Russell, Michael Miller, David Ford, Meighan Doherty and Matt Lannan. They showed unwavering perseverance as they guided the organization through one of the most fulfilling and productive years in our history. Students were very fortunate to have such an enthusiastic and devoted group of student leaders that continually improved as the year progressed.

Thank you to OUSA's home office staff, the Steering Committee and students for such an enjoyable year as President. It was a great year!

All the best to this year's Steering Committee and to the organization in the future.

by the numbers: the year in review

In 2003/04, the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA):

- garnered **over 23,150,048 media impressions**;
- met with **43 members of provincial parliament (MPPs)**;
- received **over 400,000 hits** on the main OUSA website;
- met with **29 high-ranking media, stakeholder and government representatives**;
- delivered **presentations at five government panels or committees**;
- organized **two major campaigns**; and
- approved **six policies** and **three policy and response papers**.

lobbying, meetings & conferences

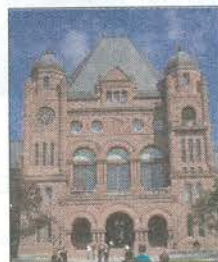
In order to effect positive change reflecting the interests of undergraduate students in Ontario, OUSA lobbies government representatives, organizes numerous conferences and delivers presentations across the province. We met with numerous MPPs and government officials including:

- a. Hon. Mary Anne Chambers, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities
- b. Hon. Gerrard Kennedy, Minister of Education
- c. Hon. Dwight Duncan, Minister of Energy
- d. Hon. Chris Bentley, Minister of Labour
- e. Hon. Jim Bradley, Minister of Tourism and Recreation
- f. Hon. David Caplan, Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal
- g. Ms. Kathleen Wynne, Parliamentary Assistant for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities
- h. Mr. Rosario Marchese, NDP Critic for Training, Colleges and Universities
- i. Ms. Laurie Scott, PC Critic for Training, Colleges and Universities
- j. Dr. Bob Christie, Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
- k. Ms. Jessica Hill, Assistant Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

OUSA also organized the following conferences in 2003/04:

- a. Transition Conference 2003
- b. Student Financial Aid Summit 2003
- c. Summer Strategic Planning Conference 2003

- d. Fall General Assembly 2003
- e. Fall Lobby Conference 2003
- f. Spring General Assembly 2004
- g. Spring Strategic Planning Conference 2004
- h. Partners in Higher Education Breakfast 2004



OUSA met with 43 MPPs in the past year and made presentations or submissions to five government panels or committees.

OUSA delivered presentations at the following government panels or committees:

- a. Federal Liberal Caucus Retreat: Post-Secondary Caucus;
- b. Ministry of Finance Budget Consultations;
- c. Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal Expert Advisory Panel;
- d. Ontario Advisory Committee on Student Financial Aid; and
- e. Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

communications & campaigns

The past year presented many opportunities for communications and campaign activities, especially with a provincial election, as well as a new government and its first budget. Consequently, our communications and campaign efforts centred around student engagement in the provincial election, as well as our stated priority for the year — reforms to student financial aid in Ontario. OUSA organized the following campaigns in 2003/04:

a. make an educated choice campaign

This campaign was the organization's major initiative to inform students during the provincial election campaign. The campaign included a website at www.educatedchoice.ca, as well as campus visits and various promotional materials.

ANNUAL REPORT: OUSA 2003/04

b invest in access: fix a student financial aid system in need campaign

This campaign was the organization's main campaign and advocacy tool throughout the year targeting student financial aid reform. The campaign included a website at www.investinaccess.ca, as well as campus visits, media mailouts, a postcard campaign and other promotional materials.

As an organization, OUSA produced the following publications in 2003/04:

- a back to school: a system under stress
- b ousa news: fall 2003
- c ousa news: winter 2003/04
- d ousa news: spring 2004

We received the following coverage in 2003/04:

- a national and regional newspaper impressions: 22,041,948
- b campus newspaper impressions: 654,100
- c magazine/trade publication impressions: 457,000
- d radio coverage: at least 13 stories and 32 mins. coverage
- e television coverage: at least 10 stories and 18 mins. coverage
- f internet coverage: at least 24 stories
- g wire service coverage: at least 10 stories



Our Partners in Higher Education
Breakfast featured CBC Journalist Evan Solomon and Maclean's Guide To Canadian Universities Editor, Ann Dowsett Johnston



policy development & research

One of OUSA's clear strengths is its ability to develop educated solutions for the challenges facing higher education in Ontario. The following policies were approved in 2003/04:

- a supporting all students in Ontario: international students policy
- b meeting tomorrow's needs today?: prepaid tuition policy
- c beyond the breaking point: tuition fee policy
- d going the distance: rural and northern access to university education policy
- e meeting the shortage: faculty renewal policy
- f open doors: university access for disabled students policy

In order to respond directly or encourage systemic change, OUSA develops more substantive research papers. The following policy and response papers were approved in 2003/04:

- a student financial aid in Ontario: fixing a system in need
- b funding the freeze, funding the future: a response to the proposed tuition freeze in Ontario

finances

An overview of OUSA's finances in 2003/04 can be found below:



- c facilitating effective change to improve access and quality: response to the proposed plan to review higher education in Ontario.

successes for students

The combined effect of our integrated advocacy, communications and research efforts resulted in significant successes for students across the province. These successes include:

- a successfully lobbying for a two-year tuition freeze and associated funding;
- b successfully lobbying for student representation on the review of higher education in Ontario; *and*
- c successfully lobbying for \$20.9 million in changes to student financial aid in the 2004 provincial budget including:
 - reducing the parental contribution;
 - updating the definition of "independent" student from five to four years;
 - increasing debt forgiveness for loans in near-default; *and*
 - extending OSAP to accepted refugees.

steering committee & staff: 2003/04

Special thanks to all of the members of the organization's Steering Committee and staff for a successful term in 2003/04:

STEERING COMMITTEE

Mr. Jeff La Porte, President
Vice-President University Affairs, University of Windsor Students' Alliance

Mr. Matt Lannan, Treasurer
Vice-President Education, McMaster Students Union

Ms. Meghan Doherty, Secretary
Vice-President University Affairs, Wilfrid Laurier University Students' Union

Mr. David Ford
Vice-President Education, University Students' Council at the University of Western Ontario

Mr. Liam McHugh-Russell
Vice-President Education, Federation of Students at the University of Waterloo

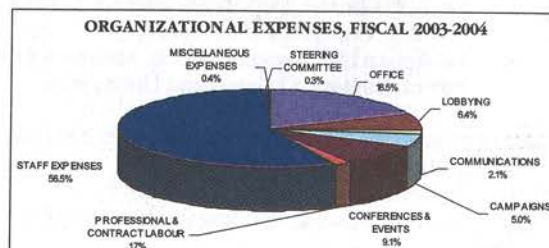
Mr. Michael Miller
Vice-President University Affairs, Brock University Students' Union

STAFF

Ms. Leslie Church, Executive Director (until August 2003)
Ms. Sara Lyons, Research and Policy Analyst (until July 2003)
Ms. Kathe Rogers, Director of Communications and Member Relations

Mr. Adam Spence, Executive Director

Mr. Graeme Stewart, Director of Research and Policy Analysis



03.

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THE DAILY PLANET • MONDAY, OCT

ANNOUNCEMENT

AUTO **INSURANCE**
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flight, cars, motorcycles, RVs,
hoverbikes, and more. Call A1 In-
surance now for a quote. Toll free 1-
800-555-1354.

CHUG-A-LUG HOUSE fraternity in-
formation meeting Wed. 21, 4 p.m.,
Johnson Rm. For info call:
555-1546.

HELP WANTED

INTERESTED WRITERS for a bi-an-
nual publication targeting university
students known as *the undercurrent*.
Submit opinion pieces, feature arti-
cles or student profiles that will be
published province-wide.
Call 416-341-9948 or e-mail
info@ousa.on.ca to find out
how to get involved.

LIGHT ASSEMBLY work in a small
factory on the outskirts of Metropo-
lis. Must be able to handle krypton-

HELP WANTED

IMMEDIATE JOBS with flex. hours/
shifts for clerical, acctg, mktg/cust.
service talent. Call Lexcorp Staff at
1-800-GOO-DJOB.

MYSTERY SHOPPERS needed for
multinational business conglomer-
ate. Must be willing to perform addi-
tional duties as determined by em-
ployer. Duties may include minor
intimidation work. Call Mr. Luther
at 555-7898, x.22 for more informa-
tion.

dark·ness \dark"ness\ n. [<dark + ness]
1. absence of light or illumination 2. lacking enlightenment, knowledge or culture 3. the outcome of underfunded universities, out-of-control tuition, inadequate financial assistance and crippling student debt.

ARE YOU AFRAID OF THE DARK?

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HIGHER
EDUCATION



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