

Science students absorb government cuts

Lab user fees instated

BY RANDY MCDONALD & SARAH MURPHY

For the first time in recent memory, students in the Faculty of Science are being charged laboratory user fees.

The lab fees, \$7 per course involving the use of a laboratory, affect all students taking science courses.

Students majoring in the natural sciences -- such as Biology and Chemistry -- have a greater lab component than do students in programs such as Engineering, and will be affected by this user fee most severely.

These students can expect to pay more than \$100 in fees over the course of a four year program.

UPEI administration decided to charge additional fees in the interest of equality, or charging students taking the same courses the same fees.

"It came down to a question of conflicting principles," said Vice-President External John Crossley with respect to the fees.

Crossley said, it had been university policy to assure that students in all faculties received equal treatment, including the same fee structure, but government cutbacks forced the university to change its policy.

As a result of these cutbacks -- nearly ten percent over the past two years -- each faculty was required to submit reports detailing their plans for decreasing expenditures.

For the Faculty of Science, this included laying off two sessional lecturers and making a \$10,000 cut in the faculty's discretionary budget, which is used to replace old and broken equipment.

According to Dean of Science Roger Gordon, the high prices of buying even basic scientific equipment have forced professors to demand that the discretionary budget be maintained at its fiscal 1997 level of a quarter-million dollars or more.

Instead of a general tuition hike, the Faculty of Science decided to institute a fee for each course that involved the use of a laboratory.

This fee is funnelled directly into the Faculty of Science's discretionary budget, and is expected to provide \$24,000 to absorb some costs of inflation.

Gordon said that the biology lab fee might be raised, depending on how much prices

for lab equipment increase.

So far, students are generally accepting of the changes.

"If you're taking a course that involves the use of a lab, you need to pay for good equipment," said one science major.

Christiain Lacroix, chair of the UPEI biology department, agrees.

"The price of consumables has skyrocketed," he said. "The department has been working with the same budget for three or four years now."

While students have accepted this increase, they caution that they will not be as understanding about future hikes.

"Seven dollars isn't very much," said Beth Nason, second year biology student, "I just think that we should have been warned before this came into effect."

The statement of one student in the lobby of the K.C. Irving building sums up student reaction.

"It all costs too much anyway."

Tobacco sponsorship of arts and sports to be banned in five years

BY ERIN FAGAN

This week : favourable reactions towards the elimination of tobacco sponsorship

By the year 2003, tobacco companies will be prohibited from sponsoring arts and sports events in Canada, according to amendments to the Tobacco Act made by Federal Health Minister Allan Rock on June 3, 1998.

These amendments were made to a bill first ratified in the House of Commons on April 25, 1997.

This original bill would have been effective as of October 1 of this year to limit all tobacco sponsorship-related advertising restricted to mail-outs, publicity oriented towards adults, taverns and bars, and during the events themselves.

The extension of the bill's time frame was motivated to give organizations that require corporate sponsorships time enough to find replacement funding.

"We are trying to give groups that count on tobacco money some time to find alternative sources of financing," Rock stated.

According to the press release, there will be no changes in tobacco sponsorships for the next one and a half years.

But as of the year 2000, tobacco will only be able to advertise on the sites of events as they occur.

The last phase of the bill will occur in 2003, and will prohibit all advertisement of tobacco on and off event sites.

The Canadian Medical Association is in strong opposition to the extension.

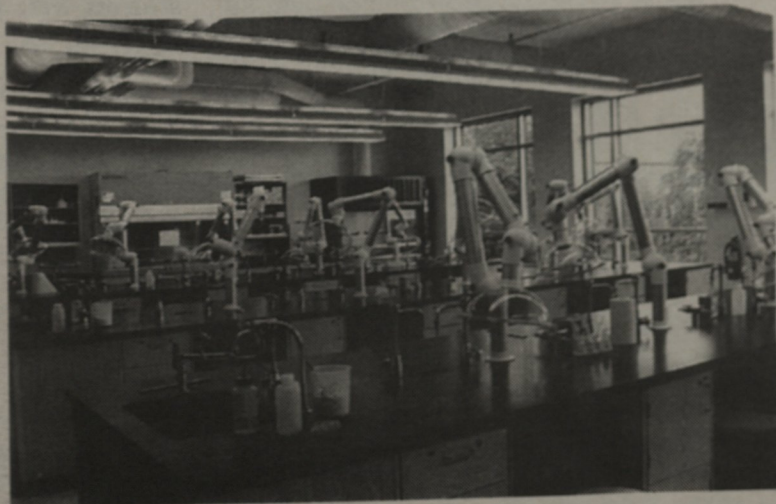
"In the extra years given to tobacco sponsorship, 500,000 Canadians will start smoking and 125,000 will die," a spokesperson warned a day after the announcement of the amendment.

Health Canada has listed its motives as being out of concern for the rise in youth smoking throughout Canada.

According to its statistics, 85 percent of all new smokers are under the age of 16, translating to about 250,000 new underage smokers per year.

Another statistic places 29 percent of all Canadians between the ages of 15 and 19 as being smokers, and 14 percent of all youth between the ages of 10 and 14.

(continued on page 5)



Tobacco sponsorship will slowly decrease over the next five years.

-photo by Richard Haines