

Ontario Students face skyrocketing tuition fees

(continued from page 5)

profitable programs will thrive while the less lucrative areas of academia suffer also has some administrators worried.

"It's a legitimate concern and I wish I could counter it, but I can't," says Sheridan College president Sheldon Levy, who oversaw this year's 480 per cent fee hike for the computer animation program at his college. "It's a problem."

Still, not all schools will be affected by the deregulation policy. Although the government gave the green light to all Ontario universities and colleges to hike fees in certain programs, only a few took the bait.

The U of T, Queen's University and the University of Western Ontario—which

were at the forefront of the deregulation lobby—are the schools that are raising fees the most.

It's a phenomenon that Harden refers to as the 'Harvardization' of southern Ontario. "It's creating a two tiered education system in Ontario," he says. "Everyone's budgets were cut, everyone's looking for new money. The U of T, Queen's and Western will benefit while others remain under-funded."

Meanwhile, schools that chose not raise fees are patting themselves on the back for being a friend of students.

"Our trademark is concern for students needs and we wanted to protect that," says Claude Lajeunesse, president of Ryerson University.

"We didn't hike fees [to the levels we could have] because we wanted to show our commitment to accessibility to our students."

The absence of adequate student aid funding was a major factor in keeping Ryerson from hiking fees more than 10 percent, he said.

Schools that did increase fees say they've pumped enough cash into their respective student aid pools to keep deregulated programs accessible.

"We have the student aid base, that's what's enabled us to make this move," says McCammond, adding he's confident no student will be unable to complete a program because of deregulation.

According to Karel

Swift, the University Registrar, this confidence comes from an agreement between the U of T and the Bank of Nova Scotia allowing students who need to borrow more than the Ontario Student Assistance Program offers to access a line of credit.

In addition, Swift says, the U of T is planning to announce further programs to deal with student debt problems in this month.

As well, the government has mandated that one third of any increases in tuition fees must be set aside for student aid.

But students say this isn't good enough. "There's a lot of talk about loan forgiveness, but results are a different matter," says Zbogor. "I'm still

waiting."

Former students of professional disciplines are also critical of the new deregulated fee structure.

Barb Zelek, who recently graduated from the University of Ottawa's medical program, accrued \$50,000 in debt under the old regulated fee system. If she were starting her program today, Zelek says she might not have chosen to become a doctor.

"I would definitely have second thoughts [if I were considering going to medical school under the current fee formula]," she says. "Thinking about the overall amount of loans I would have to pay back would be very overwhelming."

Quick facts on Ontario's tuition fee hikes

By Rachel Furey

Here's a sample of the tuition fee increases students are facing at universities and colleges across the province of Ontario:

University of Toronto:

Medicine: \$7800 (61 per cent increase in one year; 127 percent increase over next three years)

Law: \$5904 (55 per cent increase in one year; 110 per cent increase over next three years)

Pharmacy: \$5808 (53 per cent increase in one year; 83 percent increase over next two years)

Queen's:

Medicine: \$6159 (50 per cent increase in one year; 124 percent increase over next two years)

Law: \$5808 (20 per cent increase in one year; 44 percent increase over next two years)

Western:

Medicine: \$10,000 (106 per cent increase in one year)

Dentistry: \$14,000 (58 per cent increase in one year)

Business: \$8000 (110 per cent increase in one year)

Sheridan College:

Computer Animation: \$8000 (approximately 450 per cent increase in one year)

