

Tobin's cash injection means tuition freeze for Memorial University

By JEFF POWER

ST. JOHN'S (CUP) -- The Newfoundland government dished out almost \$12 million for post-secondary education last week, paving the way for a two-year tuition freeze for students at the province's only university.

Memorial University will get an extra \$7 million for its operating grant while the remaining \$4.9 million will go to the College of the North Atlantic, Newfoundland's public college system.

Newfoundland Premier Brian Tobin announced the

new money at a Jan. 14 news conference, prompting media analysts and opposition leaders to call the move a case of pre-election spending.

"It is time to begin . . . reinvesting in these institutions now that efficiencies have been found," Tobin said.

"They've all played their part in restraint for the first two or three years of this government's plan and now it's time -- prudently -- to re-invest."

Memorial responded to the news Friday by officially

endorsing a tuition-freeze for the next two years.

Currently set at \$99 million, the university's budget is now guaranteed to stay at \$106 million for the next two years.

Since 1994, the provincial government had cut its payments to Memorial by \$19.6 million.

University officials hailed the cash injection as "the best birthday present" Memorial could receive for its 50th anniversary year.

"I'm particularly pleased

for our students," said Memorial president Art May.

"Their fees have been increasing over the past number of years and we were very concerned about the impact that was having on accessibility and student debt loads."

May added the money would allow Memorial to be "the lowest cost (university) in Atlantic Canada . . . (and) that's a place where we want to be."

Students attending the College of the North Atlantic will also no longer have to worry about tuition increases, says Vince Withers, chairman of the college's governing board.

"(The College was) going to have to increase our tuition fees, in the next two years, by between 20 and 30 per cent," he said, but that will no longer happen.

But while government and university officials were pleased with the money, student leaders say more is still needed.

Dale Kirby, chair of the

Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Students, says while he is glad the government is doing something, he doesn't see how the announcement will help relieve high student debt loads.

"The \$12 million the government is reinvesting in post-secondary education falls short of the reinstatement of funding to pre-1994 levels that Newfoundland students have asked for," he said.

Kirby says students need five times the money the government is currently offering to offset the 250 per cent increase in tuition fees over the last decade "(It's) a start, but it's only that," he said. "It's not ground-breaking."

Brett Dawe, a vice-president with Memorial's student union, says he was "generally pleased with the tuition freeze." But he agrees with Kirby that there is nothing new to address student debt.

"In the end, this is a Band-Aid solution to a much larger problem that is there," Dawe said.

Pepsi ups the price of pop at U of M

By JEREMY NELSON

WINNIPEG (CUP) -- Students at the University of Manitoba have been hit with an increase in the price of pop on campus under the school's exclusivity deal with PepsiCo.

When they returned to campus after the winter

break, they found the cost of a 600-millilitre bottle of Pepsi had risen by 25 cents to \$1.50.

The change has some students complaining the cost of quenching their thirst has gone too far.

The price hike came days after a two-year price freeze agreed to by Pepsi and the U of M expired.

Now, the cola giant is free to charge whatever it wants at its vending machines on campus, while university businesses and food providers can choose whether or not to keep pace with the increases.

Debbie McCallum, vice-president of ancillary services with the U of M, says the new price was inevitable because of rising costs.

"Pepsi's costs have been going up so they felt they had no alternative but to raise the price," she said.

She added that the food services operated by U of M followed suit because they

suffered under the price freeze.

Most universities across the country now charge \$1.50 for a bottle of Coke or Pepsi, however many also sell cans at reduced rates.

At the University of Victoria and the University of Regina, cans of pop are sold for \$1.10 -- a price that wasn't an option when U of M signed its deal with Pepsi, said McCallum.

"When we did the contract with Pepsi we tried to maintain the option to sell cans, but at that time they weren't prepared to do the deal with us if we did that," she said.

The University of Manitoba and the student union signed a 10-year agreement with Pepsi in December 1997. The agreement gave Pepsi exclusive distribution rights at the U of M in exchange for an undisclosed sum paid to the university and the student union.

Computers a-okay

Continued from page 3 said.

As for whether or not the changes are temporary, Cunningham explained that another upgrading will take place in February, this time to a level four. "This newer technology will be permanent... the reason that another upgrading has to take place after this is that right now the computers are unable to upgrade past a version three."

Cunningham continued

that the recent improvements in December cost less than \$7,000. This amount covers the cost of the new hardware, as well as the usual membership fees which have to be paid by the university yearly.

Despite all the recent improvements made to the student server, it still is a good idea to have a back-up plan for major assignments. Computer Services advises keeping a copy of assignments on disk as well as on your personal account.

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