

Administration may not pay for ventilation after all

By Derrick Webber

THE SMOKING referendum to be held during the upcoming elections for VPC may not be so clear cut after all. A release from the UPEI Student Council President Steven Wynne that if students decide to keep the Robertson Library Lounge (The Pit) a smoking area, the UPEI administration will only look into installing a ventilation system. The system would be needed to make the air quality of a smoking-area Pit healthy for non-smokers.

As well, a room for smokers only, which could be built in the space now occupied by the UPEI Information Office, is not guaranteed by the administration either.

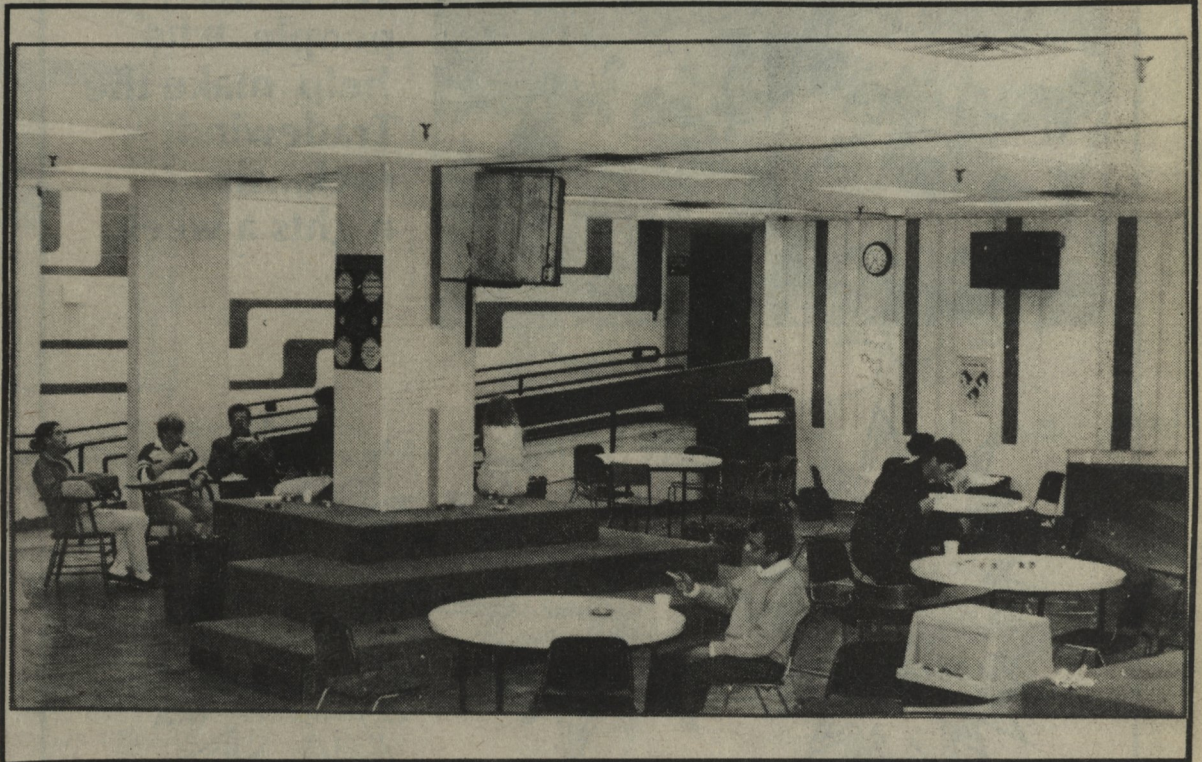
The release states "It should be noted that no matter how the vote goes, the renovations that will occur in either the pit or the Information Office are only possibilities."

This contradicts previous statements by Wynne

who, at the last general meeting of the students, assured students either a ventilation system would be installed if The Pit remained a smoking area or that a separate room for smokers would be provided. No matter what students decide at the April 6th and 7th referendum and elections, the UPEI Board of Governors will only consider it as a possible course of action.

To install the proper ventilation system in the Lounge, it is estimated it will cost between \$40,000-\$50,000. Renovating the area now occupied by the Information Office may cost a fifth of that, according to the release.

The referendum on The Pit is being held as a result of a plan by UPEI to make most buildings on campus smoke free except for designated smoking areas. Up to now the administration has decided which areas should be smoking and which should be smoke-free, but has let the UPEI Student Council



make a recommendation for The Pit.

Council brought the choice to students at the general meeting March 8th where it was decided to hold a referendum to allow all students to voice their opinion. The referendum will be

held concurrently with the elections for Vice-President Communications April 6th and 7th.

If students vote to bar smokers from The Pit, a smoking area may be set up elsewhere in the Robertson Building. However, there

is also the possibility that smokers will have no space at all. Should the vote be to leave the pit a smoking area, there may or may not be a ventilation system installed to make the air safe for non-smokers. ■

Fancy forum's flash is fading – where is that blueprint?

TORONTO (CUP) – Five months after a much-touted National Forum on Post-Secondary Education, the federal and provincial governments have decided to act: the Department of the Secretary of State of Canada recently issued a press release announcing that more meetings will be held.

Six hundred delegates representing universities, business and government travelled to Saskatchewan last October to take part in the three-day \$2.4 million conference, called to help formulate a national blueprint for the future of the country's post-secondary system.

Students and forum participants had anxiously awaited the February meeting of the Council of Ministers of Education Canada,

expecting more concrete policies on post-secondary education to be announced.

But according to a February 26 communique, the "new commitment" consists of an announcement by CMEC president Roland Penner that the the council had formed a committee of the ministers responsible for post-secondary education.

"My biggest disappointment in all of this was the meeting between Crombie and the CMEC," said Tony Macerollo, chair of the Canadian Federation of Students. "They only met with the secretary of state for a couple of hours."

"That's not enough. Six hundred people spent three days thrashing through some pretty profound issues. Now we can't let them (federal and provincial government

officials) skirt the issue."

A unanimous call from the forum was for more provincial and federal cooperation on post secondary education funding.

Opposition critic Bill Rompkey introduced a bill to provide for a Canadian Post-Secondary Education Council, but withdrew it when the government would not support the bill but agreed to have a standing committee study the concept.

"At that time it was the Secretary of State Committee's intention to travel across the country to hear interested parties," said Rompkey. "Unfortunately, we recently learned of the Government's decision to deny the committee permission to travel.

"I think this is most regrettable as it will mean

that some individuals and groups will not have the opportunity to air their views before us," said Rompkey.

Macerollo said there have been some positive government initiatives since the forum. He listed the formation of a national advisory group on student aid, the recent loosening of work restrictions for foreign students, and increased funding

to research and development as concrete outcomes of the forum.

He added that the forum succeeded in raising the profile of post-secondary education.

"More people are talking about it. Our one goal had to be to make post-secondary education a kitchen table topic after dinner." ■

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