

Fact and Opinion

by Stephan MacLEOD

FACT: The majority of industrialized countries do not impose tuition fees on higher education.

OPINION: I wouldn't mind paying for higher education if I could at least get some Air Miles or Club Z points out of it.

FACT: In May 1976, Canada signed the United Nations' International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Part III of Article 13, Right to Education Section 2 (C) reads: "Higher Education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education."

OPINION: But if the Canadian government actually followed any of the agreements it signed, it would actually have to do stuff. Wouldn't you rather watch curling and drink beer, instead of actually doing stuff? It's the Canadian way.

FACT: In Newfoundland, no user fees were imposed on post-secondary education until the 1960s.

OPINION: Coincidentally, the first Newfie jokes appeared around the time they gave up free higher learning.

FACT: The first five Quebec community colleges of general and professional training (CéGEP) opened in 1967. As part of the major reforms to education in Quebec during the Quiet Revolution, CéGEPs were conceived as free, public institutions. CéGEPs continue to provide programs of study without tuition fees.

OPINION: French people must be crazy to have free programs of study! No wonder they eat rubbery cheese



curd and fat-drenched gravy slopped on top of french fries.

FACT: As an incentive to joining, the Department of National Defense offers to pay the tuition fees of certain civilian candidates who enroll in the armed forces. DND also provides for the costs of higher education for selected ranking members of the armed forces.

OPINION: I'd be willing to get hazed for free education. A couple of shaved testicles would beat working at McDonald's any day.

FACT: Currently, children of faculty and support staff at most post-secondary education institutions have a contractual right to free tuition.

OPINION: UPEI does not offer this right to family members of its faculty because the loss in revenue would take away from the money needed to invest in useless programs like Island Studies, Highland Bagpiping, and Business Administration.

FACT: Students in Canada are facing an average tuition fee increase of

7.1% over last year - despite the fact that fees were frozen in British Columbia, Newfoundland and Quebec.

OPINION: Canada sucks. Our weather is too cold to piss in. Our national sport features neanderthals prancing about on skates. Only morons would invent something as stupid as the Avro Arrow. And our shitty tuition increases 7.1 motherfucking percent! Screw this! I'm moving to Afghanistan.

FACT: Since 1990, average tuition fees for undergraduate arts have increased by 126%.

OPINION: I can't think of anything funny to say about that fact. It's way too disturbing to even understand.

FACT: In Alberta, tuition fees have nearly tripled.

OPINION: Alberta's provincial government is threatened by an educated populace because they might be able to realize how batshit crazy their leaders really are.

FACT: Studies show that tuition fees

have the strongest and most negative impact on the accessibility of higher education: a 1995 study showed that a 16% increase in tuition fees would reduce enrollment by 14%.

OPINION: Thank God for call centers.

FACT: Governments themselves know that user fees on social programs restrict access. Fees have been imposed "to make people think twice" before using public services.

OPINION: After all, it's not like the government is there to serve its citizens or anything. If they invested in education, they wouldn't have enough money left over to build their golf courses.

FACT: During the first three years of the freeze on tuition fees in British Columbia, enrollment increased by 6.4% while in the rest of the country's enrollment decreased by 2.7%. BC now ranks second in provincial participation rates.

OPINION: So let's make that clear—a tuition freeze results in increased enrollment while higher tuition results in decreased enrollment. Too bad the people who decide to raise tuition have their heads stuck up their asses. Otherwise we might actually have more people getting educated.

FACT: Today the governments of only four provinces—Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec and Newfoundland—have taken or pledged to take bold action by freezing or reducing tuition fees.

OPINION: Notice that six provinces are missing? I hope everyone reading this seriously considers leaving UPEI to attend school at one of the provinces listed above. No joke.