

## Canadian University Tuition Fee Increases Slow to a Crawl: Smallest Increase in 25 Years Largely Overshadowed by Huge Increase Since 1990-91

By Erika Meere

*The McGill Daily (McGill University)*

MONTREAL (CUP) — As Canadian university students head back to class this week, a new Statistics Canada study has found that undergraduates will face the lowest average fee increase in more than 25 years.

The study, released Sept. 1, found that the tuition fees will rise by an average of 1.8 per cent in the 2005-06 academic year. Undergraduates can now expect to pay an average of \$4,214 in tuition fees, up from \$4,140 last year.

Although this is the smallest increase since the 1978-79 academic year, when fees rose only 1.5 per cent, or an average of \$627, student groups point out that the average tuition fee has more than tripled since 1990-1991, meaning serious consequences for the accessibility of post-secondary education for students from low and middle-income families.

"A small percentage increase is still a significant dollar increase to students when tuition is already so high," said Phillippe Ouellette, National Director of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations.

The modest increase is attributed to tuition freezes in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and Newfoundland and Labrador. In addition, British Columbia has capped its tuition fee increases to the rate of inflation, while in Nova Scotia, increases are restricted to 4 per cent a year.

Ontario, which has long been at or near the top in highest cost of education, has dropped to fifth in average tuition.

"Two years without tuition fee hikes in Ontario has improved Ontario's affordability standing relative to other provinces," said Jesse Greener, Ontario

Chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students. "But we need to be clear, it's not that affordability in Ontario has improved, it's just that other provinces have become so much worse."

Despite the cap on fee increases, students in Nova Scotia will again pay the highest tuition fees in the country. Acadia University student Noah Gataveckas said it's a challenge finding enough money to cover tuition and living expenses, even with a full time summer job and substantial support from his parents.

Gataveckas, an arts editor at the student newspaper, said that while he would love his education to be as cheap as possible, a tuition freeze is not necessarily the answer.

"The university needs to cover its costs somehow," he said.

In Saskatchewan, universities have granted students a tuition freeze without making any significant cutbacks to programs or services. That's because last spring, the provincial government announced \$6.4 million in additional funding to prop up the universities' tuition freeze.

However, Barbara Pollock, VP External at the University of Saskatchewan, said the freeze could not be maintained without additional funds from the provincial government.

"Everyone is looking for a way to keep education accessible for students, but we have to keep up with modern needs," she said.

Ian Boyko, Campaigns and Government Relations director for the Canadian Federation of Students, called on the federal government to help the provinces offset the loss of revenue from tuition fee freezes.

## Nova Scotia Wind Farm to Offer Student Employment: Environmentalists Question Location, All Electricity Produced Will Power Nova Scotia

By William Wolfe-Wylie

*The Argosy (Mount Allison University)*

SACKVILLE, N.B. (CUP) — Students interested in environmental studies will have a new summer job opportunity in 2007 when the Amherst Wind Energy Project comes online.

The deal, signed between New Brunswick-based Wind Dynamics Inc., Spanish company EHL, and Nova Scotia Power, will see the construction of 19 windmills along the border between the two provinces alongside the Trans-Canada highway.

"Students with an interest in the environment would be ideal employees for this facility," said Tom Vihvelin, president of Wind Dynamics Inc.

When complete, the station will include nineteen 1.6MW turbines worth approximately \$3.1 million each, a renewable energy interpretive center and the possibilities of a boardwalk with explanatory signs and binocular stations have also been explored with the goal of boosting tourism in the area. The estimated cost of the project is \$60 million.

The turbines will be located outside of the town of Amherst, N.S. on the border with New Brunswick. All of the power generated from the farm, approximately 100 GW/hours annually, enough to supply approximately 10,000 homes, will be sold to Nova Scotia Power. A ten-year agreement has been signed

between Nova Scotia power and the wind farm's owners.

Wind Dynamics Inc. expects to hire between 30 and 50 employees for the construction phase and more specialized employees will be required upon its completion.

Environmentalists have voiced concerns, however, about the farm's location on the migratory path of a number of endangered species of birds. According to Keith McAloney of the Canadian Wildlife Service Atlantic Region, the site is a waterfowl and shorebird corridor for those birds traveling from the Bay of Fundy, up the Planche River, to the Northumberland Strait.

But McAloney praised the project coordinators for their "forward thinking" and noted that "as wind farms go, this one is as sound as can be."

In the early stages of the project, said McAloney, Nova Scotia Power hired a biologist to survey the bird populations in the area, noting what species were in the area, at what height they flew, and at what time of day. McAloney said that towers such as these are particularly dangerous to night-flying birds.

The results of this research mean that the towers will be moved further back from the banks of Planche River to accommodate shore birds and a long-term monitoring center will be established to ensure that excessive damage is not being done to the local ecology.