

Costs for Int’l students soar

Despite rising tuition fees, foreign students continue to pursue Canadian degrees

KSENIA PRINTS
CUP Central Bureau Chief

WINNIPEG (CUP)—While international students pay up to 180 per cent more than their Canadian counterparts, few are complaining. In fact, the higher the price tag, the more seem willing to pay.

Peter Tan, a third-year Applied Environmental Studies student at the University of Winnipeg, came to Canada from Malaysia in 2005 because of its relative affordability. He chose Winnipeg because of a local five-month Grade 12 completion program, and later enrolled in the University of Manitoba.

“Winnipeg was quite affordable at the time,” Tan said.

When he arrived, the differential between domestic and international students was 100 per cent. This changed in the summer of 2006, when differential fees for all international students increased to 180 per cent over domestic tuition.

“It wasn’t even posted online, but only on signs throughout the university,” Tan said, noting that overseas students only heard the news upon their return to Canada.

“The hike was so ridiculous, my parents thought I was lying,” he said.

Tan quickly transferred to the University of Winnipeg, opting for a similar degree at a 125 per cent differential.

His cousin and a friend had planned to join him until the University of Winnipeg also announced its intent to hike their differential fee to almost 175 per cent the following September. One gave up on the idea entirely, while the other moved to a similarly priced institution in Australia.

“Not many can afford a \$1000, three-credit-hours course,” Tan said.

But despite the high price tag, there’s no shortage of international students arriving every year. In 2006, there were 156 955 students from abroad studying in Canada. International tuition ranges from \$6207.44 for 30 credit-hours in the Faculty of Arts at Brandon University, to \$18 698 for Arts in the University of British Columbia.

These price tags seems to be linked to population, but not in the way that most would expect: despite having the lowest tuition fees for international students, Manitoba hosted only 4815 of international students in 2006. British Columbia, whose schools average the highest international tuition fees in the country, was home to 44 799, a close second to Ontario’s 58 308.

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PETER TAN
U OF W INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

Don Wehrung, executive director of international student recruitment at the University of British Columbia, suggested that low tuition can lead to a lower reputation on the international stage.

“A large number of students attach a price tag with quality,” added Neil Besner, Associate Vice-President International at the U of W.

Tan sees some truth to this, adding that good reviews from peers, as well as international visibility, would help improve first impressions.

That equation worked for the University of British Columbia. When the university opted to remove an international tuition freeze in 1996 in favour of more aggressive overseas recruitment and better services for international students, international tuition jumped from \$5700 to \$13 700 the next semester. Meanwhile, international enrollment also increased by 30 per cent.

“We signaled to the external community [that] we were open and accessible,” Wehrung explained.

Beyond individual universities, the provinces are also desperate to attract international students to create a cultural dynamic.

According to Darcy Rollins, director of the Manitoba International Education Branch, they provide unique academic perspectives and enrich the multicultural student body. They also

help strengthen international ties and add to the labour pool.

Even students who leave Canada after graduation are seen as potential “informal ambassadors,” Rollins said. They can help inform the international community about Canada, thus contributing to future relations and business.

“A university is better if it’s more international,” Besner said.

International tuition is more expensive because provincial subsidies don’t cover non-citizens, explained Rollins. It’s up to individual students to make up the difference.

“[Schools] set their own tuition in the context of their institutional priorities and available services,” Rollins explained.

And international students seem willing to pay the price for a foreign BA.

“I agree [we] should pay more because we’re using someone else’s resources,” Tan said.

Canadian universities are also recognizing that it takes more than the promise of a Canadian diploma to lure international students. Many are working on improving recruitment efforts abroad, along with their local services.

In Manitoba, postsecondary institutions have discussed possible changes to their programs with the provincial government, and several new bursaries and scholarships for international students will become available next year.

The University of Winnipeg will use 90 per cent of the differential fees for different programs and financial awards targeted towards international students. New housing initiatives and improved international advising are already in the works.

Yet for middle-class students like Tan, it’s not the question of improved services or additional peers that matters the most. Amid the flurry of tuition increases, Tan seeks consistency.

“We should aim for an international tuition freeze,” he said.

“If I have a constant number, I can budget [for the year] and know I can support myself.”

Capilano College Students’ Union denies club status to pro-life group

REZA NAGHIBI
The Capilano Courier

VANCOUVER (CUP)—The Capilano College Students’ Union (CSU) has twice denied club status to the Heartbeat group, a campus pro-life organization.

The group, led by President Minerva Macapaga, responded in June with a formal complaint to the BC Human Rights Tribunal for discrimination on the basis of religious belief.

Heartbeat Club’s lawyer, Robert Gunnarsson, told the North Shore News that, “their pro-life views are an aspect of their religious views, so when they are being denied something on the basis of their pro-life views, it is in effect on the basis of their religion.”

Lindsay Clarke, a member of the campus social justice committee, said that the Students’ Union has

several clubs with official status that are religious groups, citing the Chinese Fellowship and Christians’ Club.

“The choice of abortion should be available to women.”

LINDSAY CLARKE
CAPILANO COLLEGE
SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Rather, Clarke described the controversy as a women’s rights issue.

“The choice of abortion should be available to women,” she said.

At a meeting between the Heartbeat Club and the CSU on 29 March, 2006, the CSU argued that “the committee supports freedom of expression, but will not support the club if they harass women who have

had an abortion.”

In response to CSU’s reasoning behind the denial, the Heartbeat group said that they “would never harass women who have had an abortion.”

John Dixon, a Capilano College Philosophy professor, defended Heartbeat’s complaints, stating that there was no justifiable reason to deny the group club status.

“My general comment is that this is a disgrace ... that a club in a place of higher learning, on the basis of a difference of opinion on an ethical matter that remains highly controversial in every part of the world, would [be denied] club status,” Dixon said.

The CSU has until 28 September to file a claim to dismiss this complaint. If that claim is accepted, the case will go into mediation for up to six months.

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