

Faculty of Science

STUDENTS:

Nominations are invited for the 2007/2008
Faculty of Science Award for Excellent Teaching

Some previous winners:

2006/2007 - Dr. Dragos Hrimiuc, Department of Mathematical and Statistical Science

2006/2007 - Dr. Dennis Hall, Department of Chemistry

2005/2006 - Dr. Chien-Ping Paul Lu, Department of Computing Science

2004/2005 - Dr. Alkiviathes Meldrum, Physics

2004/2005 - Dr. Gerda deVries, Mathematical and Statistical Science

2003/2004 - Dr. Ted Lewis, Mathematical and Statistical Sciences

2003/2004 - Dr. Edward Lozowski, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences

Nomination Procedures: A letter of nomination signed by at least 10 undergraduate students plus any supporting material, which is thought to be appropriate, should be submitted to the Chair of the Award for Excellent Teaching Committee for each nominee. The appropriate science department will ensure that all nominations are fully documented before submission to this Committee.

Eligibility: Nominees for the Faculty of Science Award for Excellent Teaching must have held a full time Faculty appointment in the Faculty of Science at this University for at least five years prior to nomination. Previous Winner(s) of the award are excluded from further competition.

Students can also nominate Professors from a Faculty other than Science to receive a Certificate for Excellent Teaching (details are available from CW223 Biological Sciences Building).

Contact the Chair of the Faculty of Science Award for Excellent Teaching Committee:

**Dr. Brenda Leskiw, Associate Dean
Faculty of Science
CW223 Biological Sciences Building
brenda.leskiw@ualberta.ca**

**DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS:
JANUARY 18, 2008**

Potential drop-off looming for postsecondary enrollment

Non-traditional applicants are the key to survival after 2013—StatsCan report

KSENIYA PRINTS
CUP Central Bureau Chief
NICK TAYLOR-VAISEY
CUP Ottawa Bureau Chief

OTTAWA AND WINNIPEG (CUP)—A recent projection of postsecondary enrolment is predicting an acute shortage of students in Canada's colleges and universities.

"We wanted to put forward a series of what-if scenarios," said Patrice de Broucker, one of the authors of the Statistics Canada report.

Statistics Canada teamed up with the Canadian Council for Learning to produce the report, entitled *Post-secondary Enrolment Trends to 2013: Three Scenarios*. It found that enrolment trends in Canada's universities go far beyond simple demographics.

"We can't believe that demographics [alone are] setting the trends; it's more than demographics," de Broucker said.

Three enrolment scenarios were put forward. The first projection, based purely on demographics, assumes that students will continue enrolling in institutions at current rates. It concludes that enrolment will reach its peak in 2012/13, after which a drastic decline will occur and continue for another 13 years.

The second scenario studied long-term trends in postsecondary enrolment from 1990–2006. This projection established a rise in the number of students aged 17–29 until 2017, compensating for a drop in other age groups. But this group too will run out of youth in 2013, leading to another steep decline.

The third and final scenario hypothesizes that male students, who are currently under-represented in universities, will begin enrolling at the same rate as female students. This prognosis is the most optimistic, as it predicts steadily rising numbers in many provinces and age groups well into the future.

Saul Schwartz, a public policy expert at Carleton University who specializes in postsecondary education, said he doubts the usefulness of studying increased male participation rates.

"Male participation rates, I think,

are a function of the economy," he said. "Raising them would be difficult in the current economic context, just because there are so many jobs out there that males seem to be attracted to that don't involve postsecondary education."

The report comes to a conclusion realized long ago at many universities: the need to attract students from all across Canada, and the world, and from all socio-economic levels.

"I know a lot of universities [are] worrying about what happens after the baby[-boom] echo moves through the system. One of the things almost all of them are focusing on right now is the international marketplace," said David Robinson, associate executive director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers.

"It's not just a matter of offering more money or, in my opinion, more information. Those who want to go are going, those who don't want to go aren't going, and we can't do much to change that."

SAUL SCHWARTZ
CARLETON UNIVERSITY
PUBLIC POLICY EXPERT

Robinson, however, believes that these institutions should first look inside the country for under-represented groups.

"We know there's a huge cohort here in Canada," he said.

Peter Mason, 34, was drawn to Winnipeg's Red River College because of the lack of training opportunities on his reserve at St Theresa Point, 400km northeast of Winnipeg.

"There are not so many options in the field you want to study in; that's why people like me come to colleges and universities [in the city]—to further my education in a different field where no one has ever achieved yet," Mason said.

Mason has since enrolled in the Aboriginal Self-Governance program at the University of Winnipeg, a degree meant, according to the program's website, to advance "original and creative solutions" to aboriginal issues.

"Education is important for me so I can be a role model in the community once I'm done, and inspire other upcoming students ... to do better," he said.

But Mason is far from the norm in aboriginal communities, and Robinson thinks universities should focus more on changing that.

"We have a terribly low participation rate amongst Canada's aboriginal population, and yet that's one of the fastest-growing components of our population—particularly young, urban aboriginals who arguably are in dire need of more education."

Schwartz, however, doesn't believe that postsecondary participation can be increased substantially.

"I think most people who want to go are currently going. Aboriginal students are an exception, I think," he said.

"It's not just a matter of offering more money or, in my opinion, more information. Those who want to go are going, those who don't want to go aren't going, and we can't do much to change that."

Schwartz added, however, that if boosting participation rates is the goal, aboriginal students would be "high on [his] list" along with first-generation students, a conclusion also reached in the Millennium Scholarship Foundation's 2007 report entitled *The Price of Knowledge*.

Mature students—those who have already entered the work force but who return to continue their education later in life—were also identified as important to the future of Canada's universities.

De Broucker believes that the Statistics Canada study will help postsecondary policy-makers direct future efforts.

"In the institutions, you either accept the decline and adjust your programs, or you may go after out-of-province students [and] try to sell yourself," he said.

Profs attack laptops in the classroom

CODY CRAWFORD
The *Charlatan* (Carleton University)

OTTAWA (CUP)—Plenty of students bring laptops to classrooms, but using them for an academic purpose isn't always their intention—now professors across the country are asking students to unplug.

Jean Boivin, an economics professor at École des Hautes Études Commerciales (HEC) Montreal, said that it wasn't until he found out that one of his students had lost thousands of dollars day-trading during his classes that he decided to try and do something about it.

"Students wrote a complaint about their colleague misusing computers in class, which was disrupting them," Boivin said.

He said he was receiving complaints about students doing things like trading, gaming, or chatting in class. Taking a chance, Boivin, along with a number of other professors at

Columbia University in New York, declared their classrooms laptop-free.

"I tried it and found it made a huge difference," explained Boivin, who said he was pleased with the change it made. Now other professors are also experimenting with banning laptops.

"Banning the computers has the benefit of pressuring the faculty into delivering a better course."

JEAN BOIVIN
HEC-MONTREAL ECONOMICS PROFESSOR

Terence Day, who teaches geography at Okanagan College, is one such professor.

"I ask students at the beginning of the semester what they want to do

about laptops in the classroom. I lay out the issues in terms of the potential impacts of laptops on learning and the need for students to take responsibility for their own learning."

Owen Roberts, the director of research communication at the University of Guelph, recently wrote to *University Affairs Magazine* with another proposal, which he calls an electronic countdown.

"I started giving the students five minutes at the start of class to IM, check e-mail, call someone, or do whatever they need to do electronically. Once that grace period ends, cell phones are off and IM and Internet is disengaged," Roberts said.

Boivin said he thinks the issue should be dealt with on an individual basis and not by university administration.

"Banning the computers has the benefit of pressuring the faculty into delivering a better course," Boivin said. "I think people should do whatever they are comfortable with."

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