

# Student activist group declares war on UBC administration

BRANDON ADAMS  
The Ubysey  
(University of British Columbia)

VANCOUVER (CUP)—A group referring to itself as the “Wreath Underground” has declared war on the University of British Columbia administration and vandalized several university buildings.

The group sent an email to the Ubysey, the student-run newspaper at UBC, on 20 December, in which they claimed responsibility for several acts of vandalism on campus.

“We, the warriors of the Wreath Underground claim responsibility for the recent targeted acts of vandalism on campus,” reads the email.

“The first of these attacks hit at the Old Administration Building where the Board of Governors and higher administration have their offices [...]. Our second target was the central building in the Ponderosa complex where the Board had its last significant meeting.”

Following the vandalism, the Old Administration Building had several boarded-up windows. Windows at the rear of the Ponderosa complex were also peppered with over a dozen

golf-ball-sized holes.

The group pointed to a lack of student consultation about campus development projects as one of its primary motivations.

“We signed petitions. They were trashed. We laid grass and built ourselves a paradise. It was paved over and SUVs stand on Trek [Park’s] grave,” the email reads.

“Trek Park” is an independent green-space project established by students at UBC to protest a nearby underground extension of the bus loop.

“We put on a festival and invited President Fuckler but he never showed. And we tried to play their game. We let them suck us into their process. We went to their consultation sessions. We sat and we waited [for] our turn to speak. It never came.”

The email’s authors further demand that the administration “refinance,” “reconsult,” and “rezone.”

The notice closes by saying: “we will push these fuckers until they concede every inch. This is our declaration of war, declared here in public.”

Trek Park organizers Stefanie Ratjen, Jasmine Ramze-Rezaee, and Nathan Crompton said that they didn’t know

who was involved in the vandalism, but they agreed with the group’s demands, if not their methods.

“The ‘refinance’, ‘reconsult’, and ‘rezone’ is something that the Trek Park protesters have been advocating for for some time. The rhetoric used is a bit stronger,” Ratjen said.

Crompton said that the attacks should be taken in context, arguing that the University was the first aggressor when it demolished the student-built Trek Park.

“The University, in its own way, has kind of launched into a type of war against the park in destroying [it],” Crompton said. “I hope that if this is at all depicted as a form of violence or something, that it’s done in the context of the University’s own aggressive bulldozing of the park.”

Staff Sergeant Kevin Kenna of the UBC RCMP detachment said that the incidents were currently being investigated.

“We’re investigating this, and we intend to follow up as far as we can,” Kenna said. “Currently, we don’t have any suspects; however, if anybody out there in the general public has any information, we’d appreciate hearing from them.”

# Students want gay-blood ban lifted

Canadian Blood Services says donor criteria based on science, not prejudice

KATIE HYSLOP  
The Muse  
(Memorial University of Newfoundland)

ST JOHN’S (CUP)—The Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) has spoken out against Canadian Blood Services’ (CBS) Men Who Have Sex With Men (MSM) policy, which bans men who have engaged in sexual intercourse with other men since 1977 from donating blood.

“This is a very discriminatory policy, and we are obviously not in favour of it,” said Stella Magalios, director of campaigns for Memorial University of Newfoundland’s Students’ Union.

“The fact is it’s unfair to discriminate based on someone’s personal life choice when it doesn’t necessarily indicate whether they have AIDS or not,” she said, noting that while homosexuality isn’t a choice, having sex is.

However, CBS maintains that their MSM policy isn’t meant to be discriminatory, and is simply an extra precaution to ensure clean blood.

“The basic premise for the deferral criteria that [CBS] has for men who have had sex with other men is that the prevalence and the incidence of HIV is much higher in males who have had sex with other males than in individuals who are having exclusively heterosexual sex,” said Paul McGrath, the Newfoundland and Labrador media representative for CBS.

McGrath references a study released by the Public Health Agency in December 2006 that found 39.6 per cent of positive HIV tests fall under the MSM category—the highest percentage of any group, with intravenous drug users following at 19.3 per cent of HIV infections.

Even though all donated blood is tested for HIV/AIDS, McGrath said that it is dangerous to rely on those tests alone.

“The existing test that we have for

HIV, while it is world-class ... no test can be 100-per-cent guaranteed,” he said.

But according to Michelle Boutcher, executive director of the AIDS Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador, while anal sex is considered a high-risk activity, men who have anal sex with men aren’t at a higher risk of contracting HIV from anal sex than women who have anal sex with men.

**“Straight couples still engage in anal sex, still engage in oral sex, still use sex toys, and infections can be transmitted any of those ways because that would be what they consider high-risk behaviour.”**

BETHANY BARRETT  
DIRECTOR OF INTERNAL ISSUES  
LBGT STUDENTS MEMORIAL

“Straight couples still engage in anal sex, still engage in oral sex, still use sex toys, and infections can be transmitted any of those ways because that would be what they consider high-risk behaviour,” said Bethany Barrett, director of internal issues for Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, and Transgendered Students at Memorial.

“And unfortunately, that behaviour is typically associated with gay men and lesbian women.”

Canada isn’t the only country with a lifetime-ban MSM policy: The US, the UK, France, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Iceland, and Hong Kong also have a lifetime ban.

Some countries, meanwhile, including Hungary, New Zealand, and

Argentina, have shortened their ban lengths to five or ten years.

Italy is the only known country whose MSM policy is based on the riskier behaviour, such as promiscuity and unprotected sex. It’s this kind of policy that St John’s Pride Committee Chair Mark Hanlon would like to see implemented in Canada.

“I think [a policy] that’s actually more universal ... would ask any individual what is their sexual behaviour, whether they’ve had unprotected sexual intercourse with anybody, whether it’s a man or a woman, then that individual should be flagged as a high-risk individual,” Hanlon said.

Blood drives have been banned from the student centre at McGill University, and Barrett hasn’t ruled out such an action from LBGT-MUN.

“As of this point, I don’t know if we have any plans to protest it, and I’m not sure if we will because I have to talk to my volunteers first and just see what they feel about the subject,” Hanlon said. She also added that she doesn’t donate blood herself, partly for medical reasons and partly out of protest.

But Magalios doesn’t think that’s the best course of action for students to follow.

“Obviously donating blood is a very good thing to do, and in fact, the largest group of people that are donating right now are students,” she said.

CBS’s policies are controlled by Health Canada, which also recently announced the banning of organ donation from men who have had sex with men in the past five years.

McGrath says that though Health Canada is in talks with both the CFS and Egale Canada (an activist group for lesbians, gays, and transgendered Canadians) to review the policy, change will not be swift.

“This is something that is not going away today; it’s not going away tomorrow; it’s something that’s going to be on our radar screen for quite a long time.”

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