

Book Review

Book on universities gives students a look at campuses

By REGINALD STUART

Canadian universities are constantly seeking to extract the most education from their understrength budgets. Despite being better off financially than their counterparts a decade ago, so are the students. Both can use all the help they can get from any quarter.

Domenico Angelicchio provides both basic information and sound advice for our nearly 700,000 students in the third edition of *Succeeding in Canadian Universities* (Copp Clark Pitman, 192 pages, \$12.95, paperback). He assumes that the decision to attend university has been made and writes for three groups - first-time, continuing, and prospective post-graduate students.

The author urges all to adopt and practice the habits of mind that universities try to teach. Intellectual skills serve for a lifetime, however swiftly specific skills might become obsolete. Whatever educators and students do, for example, we must identify and analyse problems, evidence and testimony, ponder data and reach a conclusion.

The best informational chapters in this book discuss admissions at

all levels, finances and testing. The list of universities by province provides only skeletal annotation, but readers can at least form initial impressions and see where to write. Several appendices offer data on such topics as entrance requirements, fees, university terminology and types and lengths of programs.

Having studied, taught and advised students in five Canadian universities from B.C. to Nova Scotia for the past 30 years, I can commend Angelicchio's compressed advice as thoughtful, well founded and valuable. Yes, plan - plan what courses to take; plan the budget; plan daily and weekly schedules down to hours for sleep. Managing time effectively is crucial.

ACTIVE LEARNER

Most important, be an active learner. Good teaching nurtures, but does not guarantee education, which comes from personal motivation. Students are not, to recall that marvellous Dickensian image, empty bottles waiting to be filled up and stoppered. Read those calendars and course outlines. Talk to professors, students, deans and other advisors. Read as widely as possible and annotate class

notes. Review the same day. After 24 hours, we forget 80 per cent of what we have read or heard.

Angelicchio suggests we must "inquire and persist." Students should be as careful about their education as about their money or chosen careers. Indeed, they should be downright zealous because so much is at stake.

Universities have limited salvage capacities, but can help serious students prepare for the worlds of work and life. Angelicchio rightly denies that a university education is a ticket to idleness. Unemployment levels diminish as formal education rises. Graduates are twice as likely to find jobs than lesser educated members of society are.

The author also wants students to be whole people. Universities are not ivory towers. Students should pursue recreation, leisure interests and volunteer work. Here, Angelicchio betrays an unintended bias. He writes as though most students are ages 18 to 24, fresh from high school, in full-time studies - despite statistical evidence to the contrary in his own appendices.

More than one-third of Canada's

university students are part-time and have other responsibilities. Women (who make up more than 50 per cent of today's university students) account for much of the past decade's increased enrolment. Many of them are single parents. Increasing numbers of mature people are attending universities.

OUTSIDE CLASSROOMS

Furthermore, innovative instructional technology suggests that many future students will work outside classrooms. Athabasca University's programs, British Columbia's Open University, Open College and Knowledge Network and traditional distance education courses across the country already serve thousands who may never walk a traditional campus. Few of these students will savor all universities can offer.

Although Angelicchio often directs readers with references, he could have provided a brief list of works on higher education in Canada. Such controversial appraisals as *The Great Brain Robbery* are also useful. Books by Richard Bolles and Geoffrey Lalonde, both excellent on this subject, will enhance the otherwise

good section on job seeking. But, such shortcomings and other minor mistakes notwithstanding, this slim volume will find a handy place on student bookshelves. For all students, full- or part-time, male, female, young or otherwise, Angelicchio's advice for student success and remaining motivated is solid. The modest price will return many times in higher marks and an enhanced education.

—Reginald C. Studart is Dean of Humanities and Sciences at Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, N.S.



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