

EDUCATION

Cost of university education can increase in the coming years

NANCY WIGSTON
CFUW-Georgetown

A crowd of interested club members, parents and educators braved the February cold to hear CFUW Georgetown's speaker of the month, Simon Beck, Editor of Special Reports at *The Globe and Mail*. For five years, Beck and his team have produced the Globe's groundbreaking University Report Card. Until then, only one other publication was ranking Canadian universities—and they weren't asking the students.

The Globe's innovative approach involved tapping into a popular Student Awards website, thereby gaining access to thousands of students, many of whom were eager to share their opinions about issues ranging from teaching standards to cafeteria food. Using several different criteria, the Globe's survey was, nonetheless, the first to ask students about quality of life on their campuses.

That first year, universities were not amused. "Why should we care what students think about cafeterias, etc.?" Five years on, the Report has had a positive effect.

"Universities have started doing their own assessments about how people think about the whole experience," said Beck. In addition,

as universities realize they must compete for the best students, they are learning to sell themselves to their student-consumers.

On the downside, undergrads are taught in enormous classes. Beck's estimate of 700-800 students enrolled in U of T's Psych 101 was adjusted upward to 1,000 by UofT grad and audience member Lisette Logan. Such vast numbers leave students feeling frustrated at the lack of communication with their professors.

In the five years since the first Globe Report appeared, noted Beck, e-mail contact between students and professors—from being non-existent—has become a fact of life that has improved student-faculty interaction.

"If you don't have a chance to ask a question in class, you can e-mail your professor after class," he said.

At the other end of the comfort scale, are medium-to-small universities, where students



Simon Beck is greeted by CFUW club member Barb Baron.

tend to feel most at home. Queen's, Western (recipient of the Report's overall best grade for three years running), St. Francis Xavier, Waterloo, Guelph and Wilfred Laurier all score highly with students for quality of teaching and for good interaction between faculty and students—and among students themselves.

"For the universities," said Beck, "the number one issue is funding." Universities really want to deregulate tuition fees, which average between \$4,000 and \$5,000 per year across the country—with the exception of Quebec, where provincial residents pay only \$1,500.

"There is no evidence that these fixed fees increase access for lower-income families," he continued, predicting that in five to 10 years the campaign by an Ivy League style G-10 group (consisting of Canada's top institutions) for more independence in setting fees will come to pass.

"It'll be interesting to see what effect this has on universities," he said. Endowments on the American scale (at a high of \$40,000 per student) simply don't exist in Canada. Currently, many institutions have been devoting considerable energy to fundraising.

Another trend that the Globe has highlighted is the outnumbering of men by women among today's undergrads. Ratios of 60/40 (women to men) are average in every field of study, with only two exceptions: mathematics and engineering.

"This amazing demographic shift," said Beck, is also apparent in Britain and America. Partly the result of the movement for women's equality, it's also due to the simple fact that girls do better in high school. Having more ambition, they receive better grades. He predicted "interesting social effects," giving as an example the drive in the 1970s and 1980s to recruit more female law students, which drew women "with social consciences" to the study of law, which in turn had an effect on Canadian laws.

The evening ended with a lively Q&A session, during which Beck, an Oxford graduate, admitted to already wondering, as a parent, about which university would best suit his own four-year-old.

SERVICES DIRECTORY

AIR DUCTS
Nobody Gets Your Air Ducts Cleaner Than Steamatic

- Removal of up to 92% of Airborne Pollutants
- Commercial and Residential
- Allergy Relief
- Custom Electrostatic Air Filters
- Carpet, Furniture & Drapery Cleaning

24 Hour Fire, Smoke & Water Service

STEAMATIC
the total cleaning service.
Free Estimate
Call Mike Remes (905) 877-2320

APPLIANCES

BULLDOG APPLIANCES

We Sell NEW and USED APPLIANCES Plus PARTS & SERVICE

Showroom located at 55 Sinclair Ave., Unit 2 Georgetown

Call 905-702-1182

BASEMENT/WATERPROOF

CROWNSEAL INC.
BASEMENT WATERPROOFING

INDOOR OR OUTDOOR BASEMENT WATERPROOFING APPLICATIONS

10 & 20 Year Warranty

TEL: (905) 564-3575

NORVAL, ONTARIO

BUILDER

Freestone Design Builders Inc.

Custom Homes Additions & Renovations Kitchens & Baths Basement Apartments

Tel: 905-873-4490

CARPET CLEANING

CKC

Complete Karpet Care Carpet & Upholstery Specialist

TRUCK MOUNT STEAM CLEANING

- FREE DEODORIZING & DISINFECTING
- 2 man crew with 20 years experience

Call The Professionals 905-873-1671

CARPENTRY

STOYLES CARPENTRY

RENOVATIONS KITCHENS DRYWALL

SUN DECKS BASEMENTS BATHROOMS

QUALITY WORKMANSHIP 877-3950

CERAMIC TILES

Dave LoDuca

Ceramic Tile Installation Back Splashes • Counter Tops Bathroom Renovations

416-989-7809 905-877-1936 FREE ESTIMATES

CONSTRUCTION

SERVICE INNOVATIONS General Contracting 905-702-7341

- ▶ Basement Finishing
- ▶ Bathroom Remodelling
- ▶ General Renovations

Call MIKE 905-702-7341

Member of BBB

CONSTRUCTION

PETER SCHMUKI CONSTRUCTION

Residential and Commercial General Contracting

519-853-4468

CONTRACTING

Sun Valley

- Drywall
- Bathrooms
- Plastering
- Kitchens
- Basements
- Flooring
- Siding
- Decks

Call Steve for a FREE ESTIMATE Cell: 416-554-6277 (locally owned)

CONTRACTING

Mr. Handyman Halton Maintenance • Repair Carpentry • Odd Jobs

FULLY INSURED & BONDED ALL WORK 100% GUARANTEED

519-853-2944 905-843-1975 mrhandymanheadwaters@bellnet.ca

CONTRACTING

BALLYMARTIN CONTRACTING

- Additions
- Renovations
- Excavating (Confined Areas)
- Basement Waterproofing
- Masonry
- Concrete Work

George 905-873-8979

CONTRACTING

PROFESSIONAL DRYWALL TAPER

Serving Georgetown for the past 10 years! All Jobs Welcome!!

905-866-9271 905-874-9638

CORPORATE APPAREL

HALTON HILLS, ONTARIO

global promotional apparel

888.522.2875 www.globalpa.ca

Affordable Name Brand, Custom Embroidered & Screen Printed Apparel & Promotional Products

DOORS

RENAISSANCE Windows & Siding Ltd.

REDUCE YOUR HEATING/COOLING COSTS & BEAUTIFY YOUR HOME BY INSTALLING:

HIGH-EFFICIENCY WINDOWS & DOORS SIDING, SOFFIT, FASCIA & EAVES PORCH ENCLOSURES

NOW IS THE BEST TIME TO INVEST IN YOUR HOME! CALL AND ASK ABOUT OUR SEASONAL SPECIALS.

1-888-220-4522