



# The Brief

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## UNB students protest tuition hike

By JARED DURELLE



UNB students quickly organized a presence at the university’s Senate meeting on March 27 to show their opposition to planned tuition hikes. Photo by Jared Durelle.

About 100 students attended the University of New Brunswick’s Senate meeting in Fredericton on March 27 to show their opposition to a proposed tuition hike.

Students say this is not about themselves but future students who will be affected by the tuition hikes.

“We’re doing this for future students. The tuition hike won’t come into effect until 2019-2020, which is when we’re graduating. It’s absurd that they’ll be paying almost twice as much as we paid. I feel that the way it’s been handled is unfair,” said Kathleen Adams, a law student.

“I started #KeepTheDoorOpenUNB so people from different socioeconomic backgrounds can gain access to education. We are asking for a delay so this can be discussed and a more acceptable offer be put on the table instead of pushing it through,” stated Adams.

UNB is proposing a differential tuition hike in order to balance its 2020-2021 budget. They are proposing different tuition increases for each program based on demand in each faculty and program.

UNB President Eddy Campbell has said that he will delay the decision until the Board of Governors’ meeting in May. However, students are not happy that this decision could be made while most students are away. They want the decision delayed until October.

Today, general tuition is \$6,626/year, excluding fees. With fees included, most of which are mandatory, annual tuition is above \$7,536. The proposed hikes are based on the Tuition Review Task Force’s findings on demand for programs. According to UNB documents, the task force was “made up of faculty, staff, and students from both campuses.”

### Opposition to differential tuition fees

Law students are among those organizing against the tuition hike.

Jill Pilgrim, law representative on the UNB Student Union, explained the tuition increase: “They’re switching to a differential fee model based on faculty. Current students will be grandfathered in while new [Law] students will have to pay the 50% increase for the same education. This sets up new students to be hit with much more debt than those before them.”

Serena Smith, also a law student, said, “If they’re comparing us to Dalhousie [University] in cost then they should be providing the same benefit to [the Law] faculty. The increase is making an elite program even more elite. I came here to help others and benefit my community after saving and working two to three jobs to stay here. If they were closer in cost, I would pick Dalhousie for the same cost and higher benefits just because there’s transparency with the funding.”

UNB is proposing to increase tuition for law students from \$6,626 to \$10,000 with a program fee taking total tuition to \$13,950, bringing the total cost of a three-year law degree to \$41,850.

Students are not happy with UNB belittling their concerns by suggesting that they just “graduate on time” as was suggested by Eddy Campbell at the Senate meeting.

Before going to the UNB Senate meeting, students made signs in the presence of Fredericton South MLA and Green Party of New Brunswick Leader, David Coon, and Conservative Oromocto-Lincoln-Fredericton MLA, Jody Carr, who both voiced their support for the students.

“Students are already overburdened with debt. They’re drowning in debt. After the MOU was signed with the province I thought that was the end of the story,” said Coon.

“I’m primarily concerned with the burden that’s been put on students. Our party’s objective is that university tuition be removed,” stated Coon.

“The engagement of the students is impressive because they are fighting for the viability of their program in the future,” said Carr, “When you have a 50% increase in one shot, that’s quite alarming especially after the university signed an agreement to keep stable tuition and now they’ve announced massive increases that don’t follow that agreement.”

The students only found out about the tuition hike framework a week ago from UNB’s VP Academic George MacLean, the chair of the Tuition Review Task Force.

During the Senate meeting, students stood silent in the back as the meeting proceeded. UNB President Campbell barred cameras and microphones from recording the meeting. Students had to wait for a number of items to be addressed by the Senate before MacLean’s presentation

## Not one more deportation

By AMY DARWISH and GWENDOLYN MUIR

**Editorial note: On April 13, 2018, the Trudeau government deported Lucy Granados to Guatemala. Lucy’s supporters hope she will be able to return.**

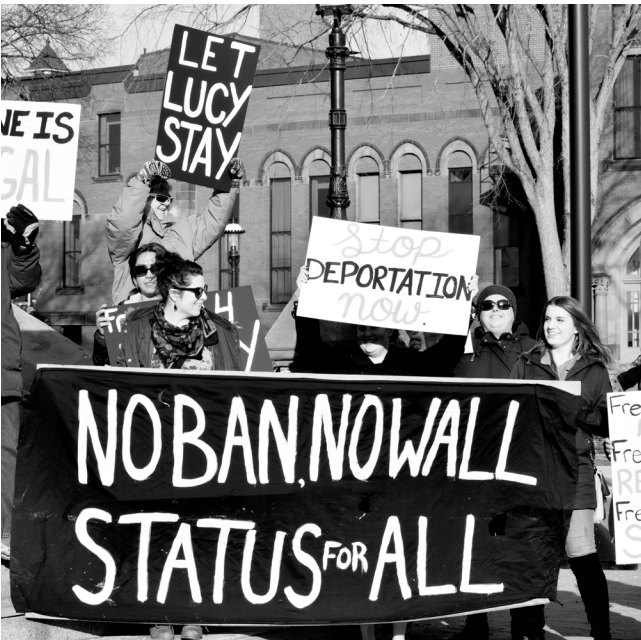
At 6 a.m. on Tuesday, March 20, Lucy Francineth Granados had just finished folding her laundry and was about to leave for work when she was caught off guard by a loud knocking at the door. Before she knew it, she was surrounded by four Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) officers who brutally forced her to the ground, injuring her arm in the process. Lucy was brought to the Laval Detention Centre, and is now due to be deported to Guatemala on March 27th.

Lucy is one of the over 500,000 people living without status in Canada. A core member of the Non-Status Women’s Collective and the Temporary Agency Worker Association, she has become a fixture in her Montreal community over the last nine years, as an outspoken migrant justice advocate and a source of support for other non-status people. She is the sole source of financial support for her mother and her three children, who live in Guatemala and depend entirely on the remittances that Lucy sends for food, housing, and school fees.

Like many others, Lucy arrived in Canada seeking stability and economic security for herself and her family. After her refugee claim was refused, and all other legal channels for permanent status had been exhausted, she made the difficult decision to remain in Canada, living under constant threat of deportation.

For a non-status resident like Lucy, there is only one available avenue to regularization: a humanitarian and compassionate grounds application. Humanitarian and compassionate (H&C) grounds can apply in “exceptional cases,” and the decision is made on a case-by-case basis. But the application is costly – Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) administrative costs for a H&C application are \$550 per adult, not including legal fees, which average around \$2,000 per application. And even if a non-status person can gather the money, the process of applying can put them at risk of arrest.

Decisions on humanitarian and compassionate grounds applications are left in the hands of a single immigration officer who studies the file to determine whether the candidate meets Immigration Canada’s assessment criteria. To have a strong application, an applicant must typically provide extensive documentation about their personal life, including their address, work, family, friends, networks, and community in Canada. The immigration officer has the discretion to share the applicant’s information with the CBSA, which they often do; border



Lights for Lucy vigil held at Fredericton City Hall on April 10, 2018. Photo by Jared Durelle.

# N.B. government fights climate change cautiously

By NORM KNIGHT



“To get things greener,” says UNB economist Herb Emery, “we’ve got to get Canadians out of their cars, but that’s very politically unpopular.” Photo by Norm Knight.

Under federal pressure, the government of New Brunswick has introduced climate change legislation. It calls for a threefold reduction in greenhouse gas emission from the province by 2050, but critics say the legislation lacks measures to achieve the greenhouse gas reduction goal.

Lois Corbett, Executive Director of the Conservation Council of New Brunswick, calls the Climate Change Act “uninspiring” and says: “There are no new incentives, financial or otherwise, to innovate, reduce pollution, or change behaviour.”

Bill 39, the Climate Change Act, is New Brunswick’s climate change legislation. It was introduced in December and has two main provisions: it sets greenhouse gas reduction targets, and it establishes a Climate Change Fund to help fight global warming.

The Act is part of Canada’s effort to fulfill the climate commitments it made in Paris, France in December 2015.

Ten months after the Paris accord, Ottawa told provinces they must tax greenhouse gas emissions at no less than \$10 a tonne in 2018, rising \$10 yearly to \$50 a tonne in 2022. Alternatively, Ottawa will accept cap-and-trade schemes if they would result in a 30 per cent reduction from 2005 emission levels by 2030.

Two local experts regard the \$50 carbon tax as inadequate.

Louise Comeau, director of UNB’s Environmental and Sustainable Development Research Centre, says \$50 a tonne is less than the “social cost” of greenhouse gas emissions.

Herb Emery, Chair of Regional Economics at UNB, states \$50 a tonne won’t deter people from using fossil fuels: “To get any reduction in emissions you have to go to \$200 a tonne or something like that.”

Speaking of the federal carbon price schedule, Emery says: “Figure it this way: When it’s all through, let’s say it adds 20 cents a litre to gasoline. We were paying that

anyway at the pump about five years ago in most parts of Canada. So, the price of gas came down and now they’re going to put a tax on it to put it where it was but it’s not going to change anyone’s behaviour.”

A tax on carbon dioxide can be implemented by taxing the fuel that creates it. A tax of \$10 a tonne on CO2 equates to two and a half cents a litre on gasoline.

Bill 39 sets up a “hybrid system” in which the N.B. government will apply the carbon levy on small businesses and consumers, while leaving it up to the federal government to tackle the province’s large industrial polluters: those over 50,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas per year. They are the Irving oil refinery, NB Power, and the pulp mills. But, Emery predicts that they will be exempted on grounds of economic hardship or other reasons and that the federal government will go after consumers in New Brunswick, not the large emitters.

“The federal backstop is really going to be more about taxes on consumers,” Emery says.

The Climate Change Fund, which is the concrete measure in Bill 39, will consist of monies transferred from the already existing provincial tax on gasoline and diesel fuel.

Gasoline will continue to be taxed at 15.5 cents a litre but starting this year 2.3 cents of that will go into the Climate Change Fund instead of into general revenue.

The amount is notionally in line with the federal price schedule, but represents no additional cost to fuel users and therefore no new disincentive to fuel use.

Corbett and Comeau say Ottawa will reject the New Brunswick plan for that reason but provincial Environment Minister Serge Rousselle says Ottawa will accept it.

Read part 2 of this story online at nbmediacoop.org.

Norm Knight covers stories on the environment and labour for the NB Media Co-op.

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## Not one more deportation

agents routinely show up at applicants’ homes within days of their H&C applications being received by IRCC.

Lucy hoped that submitting a H&C application would allow her to finally attain the security she had been seeking after so many years of living in precarity, working piecemeal childcare and cleaning jobs for placement agencies at less than minimum wage. She spent months gathering the necessary money and paperwork, and finally submitted the application with the help of a lawyer in September 2017.

In January of this year, however, a CBSA officer informed her lawyer that Lucy’s file would not be studied unless she turned herself in to face deportation. Under Canadian immigration law, this is illegal: section 25 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act states that the Minister must study all humanitarian applications filed inside Canada – barring some exceptions that don’t apply to Lucy. The actions of this agent have nonetheless been carried out with impunity: neither Immigration Canada nor the CBSA have responded to Lucy’s lawyer’s request to clarify the situation, despite calls from activists to investigate the CBSA officer and bring charges if warranted.

On the surface, Lucy’s case looks like it might exemplify the misconduct of a rogue officer – but it also highlights the dangerous arbitrariness of the case-by-case system. In order to protect themselves against future deportation, applicants must first deliberately put themselves at risk of deportation – the system itself is almost sadistic in its demand for vulnerability. An applicant’s freedom and status rest in the hands of one agent, who can make it impossible for someone to access the single legal channel available to regularize their status in Canada.

Rather than achieving the stability that she had hoped for, her H&C application led to Lucy’s worst nightmare: being violently apprehended and detained by the CBSA, only to face imminent deportation.

There is very little that is “humanitarian” or “compassionate” about the current case-by-case system. It is unacceptable that the only path to possible regularization puts those with precarious status at mercy of the authority of the Canada Border Services Agency – an agency with no oversight body and a history of clear acts of abuse.

The very least the Canadian government can do is ensure that Lucy’s application is processed and that she receives a full decision before being uprooted from the community that she has spent so many years building. Her violent arrest only reinforces the message that non-status members of our community must remain in the shadows, isolated and in fear.

But Lucy’s story also reminds us that processing an application before deporting someone is not enough. We must continue to fight against the injustices of the immigration system, to move beyond a case-by-case structure and implement a comprehensive regularization program that guarantees the safety and dignity of all non-status people who live here.

For more information, visit the Solidarity Across Borders website.

Amy Darwish is a member of Solidarity Across Borders, a migrant justice network based in Montréal/Tiohtià:ke on unceded Kanien’kehá:ka territories.

Gwendolyn Muir is an organizer based in Montréal/Tiohtià:ke on unceded Kanien’kehá:ka territories. She grew up in the farming region of Montérégie, on Wabanahkik lands split by the US – Canada border.

This story was first published by Briarpatch.

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## UNB students protest tuition hike

on the university’s plan to increase tuition.

MacLean presented data that his task force had found on the revenue that could be brought in based on demand for a degree. MacLean pointed out that UNB has the third lowest tuition in the Maritimes and the sixth lowest for targeted markets and that holds no benefit to UNB going forward.

MacLean then presented the demand for each degree. Arts and Forestry were all marked as low-demand programs. Their proposed new tuition rates are \$7,096 (7% increase) and \$7,434 (12% increase) respectively. High demand faculties like Law, Nursing and Business have proposed increased tuition rates of 50.92% (to \$10,000), and 22.4% (to \$8,110) for the last two.

MacLean argued that the goal was not to make a degree a commodity but to still profit from it in a competitive market as a way to fix the university’s structural deficit. Regarding cuts on the university’s side Maclean claimed, “We’ve already cut \$2 million from administrative costs.”

Chris McGinn, VP Internal of the UNB Student Union, who holds a senate seat then tabled a motion to push the Board

of Governors’ decision on the tuition hikes from April to October. After President Campbell, MacLean and few other senators contested the wording of the motion, it was tabled. The motion passed with 25 in favour, 1 abstention and 10 against. MacLean suggested that the secretary make sure that everyone who voted was a Senator and requested a recount, which was not granted.

The tuition hike will be on the agenda of the UNB Board of Governors’ meeting on April 19 at 9:30 am in the Chancellor’s Room of the WU Conference Centre. The next UNB Senate meeting is on May 18.

Students have created a ‘UNB protest memes’ Facebook page where they continue to point out how UNB is spending large amounts on bloated salaries of administration and travel expenses.

McAdams said, “Students will be sending letters to targeted members of the Board of Governors hoping that their voices are heard.”

Jared Durelle is a journalism student at St. Thomas University.

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