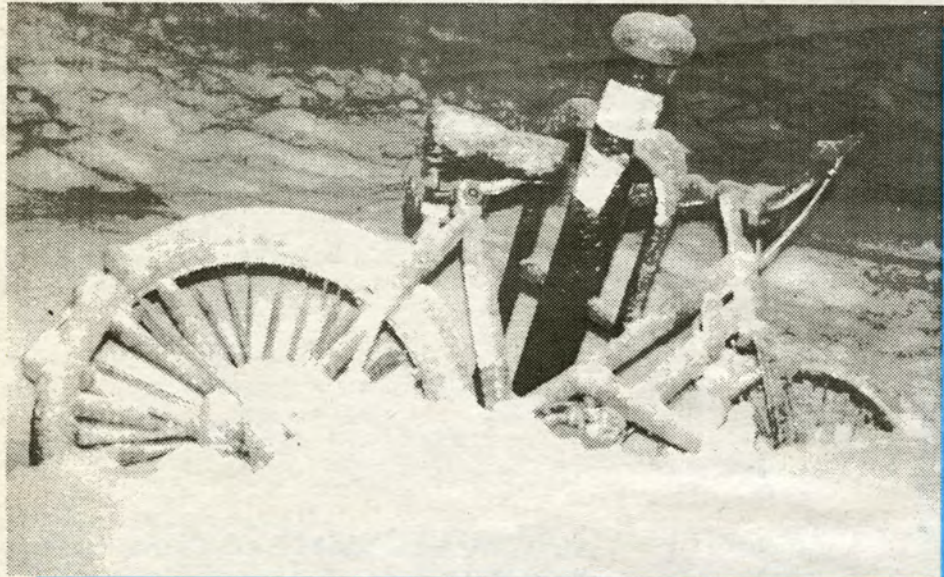


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## Ice Storm '98 conquers Spring Break '98

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# Spring break canceled

## Administration claims hands are tied

by Amanda Jelowicki

The cancellation of the coveted spring-break at the end of February in the wake of last week's ice storm is causing controversy on the Concordia campus, and is resulting in fierce condemnation of the administration by the student body.

Administrators are standing by their decision to scrap the so called "reading week", between February 23 and 28, defending themselves with arguments that the university had no other choice at hand in order to meet the required 13 weeks of classes.

The ice storm during the first week of classes forced Loyola to close with no power on Tuesday, January 6, only the second day of students returning after the Christmas holidays. Loyola did not re-open until yesterday. Classes were canceled at the Sir George campus after 4pm on Thursday January 8th, and were not resumed until yesterday. But Office of the Registrar representative Lynne Prendergast argued, in a phone interview yesterday, that effectively most classes were canceled at the downtown campus during the first week of classes. Thus students have effectively missed two weeks of classes.

"A large number of professors canceled their classes for one reason or another. The emergency council decided it was prudent to estimate the first two weeks of classes were lost."

Prendergast continued to explain that at Concordia, classes are held from Monday through Saturday, thus Sunday is the only free day when classes could be re-scheduled. "The use of Fridays and Saturdays for (make-up classes) could lead to chaos and conflict," Prendergast said. "The cancellation of mid-term break was the only solution. We couldn't do anything else to make up class, for us this was the most reasonable option."

Deans of the four faculties, the vice-rectors and the Dean of Students held meetings last week to discuss the academic crisis. Vice-rector Services Charles Emond affirmed that students had been consulted during the discussion process of canceling spring break. The university administration chose to use Concordia Student Union VP Academic Affairs Christine Cogger and VP Administration James Edwards as their student consultants. Emond defended only asking two students into the consultation process, arguing that "Did you expect 1,000 students?"

"During the storm we gathered as many people as we could, people who ought to be involved in the options."

He continued to explain some of the options considered, including compressing the academic year by increasing class time length, extending the school year by one week or more, and using Sundays

**NOTICE: REVISED DATES**

**UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS**

The University has adjusted the 1997-98 Undergraduate and Graduate Academic Calendars for the Winter Term. The Mid-Term break, originally scheduled from Monday, February 23 to Saturday, February 28 inclusive, has been cancelled (including Rector's Monday).

Approx. 100 undergraduate and graduate Winter 98 credit hours will have lost two weeks of class due to the closure of the University from January 6 to 18 inclusive.

The January 12 to 17 week of class cancellations will be made up during February 23 to 28 inclusive. Classes will be held according to the regular weekly class schedule.

Extra class cancellations must also be re-scheduled. As Sundays are the only day of the week on which classes are not normally held, that make-up classes will normally be held on Sundays according to the following schedule:

Classes held on Monday will be held on	February 8
Classes held on Tuesday will be held on	February 15
Classes held on Wednesday will be held on	February 22
Classes held on Thursday will be held on	March 1
Classes held on Friday will be held on	March 8
Classes held on Saturday will be held on	March 15

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Undergraduate Programs  
Office of the Registrar  
688-2668

School of Graduate Studies  
688-3900

**GRADUATE PROGRAMS**

The University has adjusted the 1997-98 Graduate Academic Calendar for the Winter Term. The Mid-Term break, originally scheduled from Monday, February 23 to Saturday, February 28 inclusive, has been cancelled (including Rector's Monday).

Approx. 100 graduate Winter 98 credit hours will have lost two weeks of class due to the closure of the University from January 6 to 18 inclusive.

The January 12 to 17 week of class cancellations will be made up during February 23 to 28 inclusive. Classes will be held according to the regular weekly class schedule.

Extra class cancellations must also be re-scheduled. As Sundays are the only day of the week on which classes are not normally held, that make-up classes will normally be held on Sundays according to the following schedule:

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**Concordia UNIVERSITY**

DAMIAN GARONE

as a make-up day.

"The concept of extending the year was seen as less desirable. It wasn't entertained by the deans," said Emond. "Concordia has a legal and professional responsibility to provide the number of courses that people have paid for." He added that the only way this could be done was to cancel the spring break, and by holding Sunday classes for those classes missed during the first week of school.

Edwards, who attended the administrative meetings, says that he understands the decision in that the university had no other option. He said that students have jobs and leases that expire May 1, and therefore it was an improbable solution to even contemplate extending this academic year. It would have also, he added, disrupt the September schedule.

"There was no other way to make time up," said Edwards, who added he was still concerned about the possible negative psychological influences a full semester without a break could have on students.

Cogger said she had to support the scrapping of the break, as she saw no working alternative.

"It was a question of choosing the lesser of two evils. It sucks that we had to cancel spring break. It makes it hard on students."

Cogger also added, however, that the last day of spring break is the rector's

holiday, and there was some discussion as to giving students that Friday off. However, the administration decided against it, fearing that students would take the entire week off if they knew they had no Friday classes.

The administration's decision is final and binding. Prendergast added that if individual professors feel they do not want to hold classes that week, it is their prerogative.

### Students angered

Psychology student Jennifer Bhandari is one of many students who are angered by the administration's decision, arguing that students did nothing wrong, the storm was a natural disaster, and that the term course work could be severely affected as a result of students working consistently until April exams.

"I had no plans, but it really sucks. I mean, it makes things so much easier to have that extra time to study (in February)," she said.

The 22-year-old Bhandari also, however, acknowledged that she saw no other foreseeable options to make up for lost class time.

Twenty-one-year-old Shiraz Gheyara did have plans for February break: she had intended to travel to New York city to visit friends she does not see very

continued on page 11

# In *BRIEF*

## **Loans for everyone**

Financial Aid and Awards have instituted an emergency loan policy, that will enable any Concordia student to borrow up to \$200 in emergency funding, according to Jackie Brathwaite, director of financial aid and awards.

Brathwaite explained the university understands many students have been severely affected by the storm, and that some have depleted their resources until next month. She said food had to be replaced because of the city's loss of power, and that this was a costly venture.

Brathwaite continued to explain that the loan would be immediately credited to the student's account, and would have to be repayable by the end of the semester.

Financial Aid has asked the Capital Campaign for additional funds to support the newly-implemented emergency loan procedure, and Brathwaite added the department is willing to over-extend itself financially to meet the immediate needs of students.

Financial Aids is located in the basement of the library building at the Sir George Williams campus.

## **Storm delays CFS Day of Action**

A national day of action to highlight the state of higher education in Canada, initiated by the Canadian Federation of Students, was scheduled for January 28.

But, at a meeting held last night at Concordia, the Montreal organizing committee decided to postpone the day until February 11. The decision was made because of the recent ice storms in Quebec, said David Smaller, Concordia Student Union VP external affairs.

The storms and the ensuing university closure have prevented Quebec universities from properly rallying students to support the day.

National demands for January 28 include a tuition freeze from the Canadian government, ending cuts to post-secondary education, establishing a needs-based national grants program, and an end to income-contingency loan repayment programs (which, according to Smaller, are being introduced as a pre-cursor to massive tuition increases).

Smaller added that while the Canadian demands are strictly limited to the educational sphere, the Quebec demands extend to broader social issues, like protecting all public institutions.

Smaller explained that the day is being nationally organized by the CFS, with individual universities expected to rally for local support.

# "Spring break canceled"

*continued from page 3*

often. She said she will likely cancel her travel plans.

"I feel that we need that break to unwind."

Raffi Ortchanian, a first year political science student, feels that days should have been added at the end of the semester. He said he worried about his courses and how they could suffer because of the compressed semester. When informed that McGill had not canceled their break, the 21-year-old Ortchanian said, "I think I am going to apply to McGill."

## Plans refundable

Cogger said that the administration had discussed the possibility that students had already purchased non-refundable holidays for spring break. Cogger said she is in the process of forming a committee in conjunction with the administration to help students lobby airlines and travel agencies to refund their otherwise non-refundable holiday packages. She also said because of the extenuating circumstances with the storm, she believed most agencies and airlines would be lenient with their otherwise stringent travel packages. ●

# Mother nature no sports fan

The recent ice storm has wreaked havoc with Concordia's winter semester sports schedule.

Four basketball games, three men's hockey games, one women's hockey game and a University of Montreal volleyball tournament were iced out.

That means the schedules you received in your orientation package are no longer accurate, but *The Link* will continue to include the correct game times for all upcoming Concordia sporting events.

Until this week, the hockey teams both practiced at other facilities, one of which being the new Sportplex arena in Pierrefonds. The women's basketball team was the only squad to attempt to practice at Loyola. They tried once, but the darkness and cold kept them from returning until this week.

Despite the unexpected lull in post-holiday action, a number of Concordia coaches were being kept busy by the storm. Many shared their homes with players lacking electricity; women's hockey coach Les Lawton probably set a new CIAU record by providing overnight shelter for up to eight of his players at once. ●