

Students protesting B.C. debt sentence

By Daily Courier Staff

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Carolyn Cody could be \$72,000 in debt by the time she graduates from UBCO with an arts degree.

"The problem with being in general arts is that you can't do much with that degree," the internal co-ordinator for the UBCO Students' Union Okanagan said Thursday as a Drop Fees campaign was launched at student rallies across the Interior.

"You need to go on to further education like graduate school or law school or other program."

That means her student debt could get even higher. The Drop Fees campaign will try to pressure the provincial government into dropping "the excessive fees that have led to the current epidemic of student debt," organizers of protests at UBCO and Okanagan College said.

Students want the province to reduce tuition, textbook fees, parking charges and ancillary fees for labs and other required extras.

"No previous generation of students in B.C. has been forced this deep into debt just to get a basic diploma or degree," said Phillippe



GARY NYLANDER/The Daily Courier

Grayson Lepp, UBCO Students Union services co-ordinator, holds what is left of a smashed pumpkin on Thursday afternoon.

Bourbeau, chairperson of the Okanagan College Students' Union. "For tens of thousands of students in B.C., education has become a debt sentence."

The province earlier capped annual tuition increases at two per cent, but not ancillary fees, and there are reports the province plans to thaw the freeze on professional programs like engineering and law.