

New School answer to high enrolment

Dawson 'humanizes' courses

By JAY NEWQUIST
of The Gazette

In an effort to head off a dizzy rise in student enrolment predicted for this fall, Dawson College plans to introduce a new, more humanistic "umbrella" course concept.

The Montreal CEGEP college's novel experiment will be called the New School of Montreal, and will offer one main subject per semester instead of six random courses.

New School students interested, for instance, in Canadian Literature will study the subject from its different aspects — prose, poetry, history, influences and major traditions.

Or Fine Arts and Drama, which would involve study of actor training, staging plays, lighting, makeup, directing and related crafts.

MAP SUBJECT

The structural unit of the School is the "band" — 30 students and three teachers who map the subject and work together for one semester.

Six "bands" will be offered this September to 180 Arts Students, who receive six CEGEP credits to be applied to a pre-University CEGEP diploma from Dawson.

Geoffrey Chambers, a spokesman for the New

School, said that more than 100 students and 600 teachers had applied to study and teach at the school.

"That's 600 applications for 13 teaching jobs," he said.

Chambers said the humanistic approach was popular because standardized CEGEP courses left much to be desired.

He said while more students were likely to enrol this fall there was also a high dropout rate because of mushrooming size and an administrative structure students couldn't relate to.

Many students "get lost" in the shuffle and become bored, the Dawson graduate said.

The experimental school, however, makes academic sense "because the courses are related" and also meet "human needs."

"One group of students will stay together for a semester," he said, thus eradicating the "anonymity" that leads to dropping out.

"If a student doesn't show up, at least someone will know it," Chambers said.

Applications to the New School are available at a special storefront information centre at 1229 Crescent St.

The New School is one of two facilities at Dawson needed to head off a 20 per cent rise in English-language

CEGEP enrolments predicted this fall. The other is a 1,800-student campus to be located near Lafontaine Park.

The exact sites of the two new Dawson campuses will be chosen by mid-May, according to Chambers.