

So, are we in or are we out?

Dalhousie defers CFS membership question

by Robert Putnam

Last year Dalhousie students voted by referendum to join the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS). Now after only one year's membership in CFS, Dal's student council is debating whether or not to hold a "pull-out" referendum to withdraw its membership. A referendum on the pull-out question was initially scheduled to run with the Student Council elections this February. However, at last Sunday's council meeting, the referendum was postponed until Mid-March, after a CFS National-Provincial meeting.

Dal's representatives to CFS have amassed a list of complaints about the national organization, summarized in a 22 page report presented to council by V-P External Tim Hill.

One major complaint is a CFS regulation requiring congruent membership for all provincial organizations. This means if Student Union of Nova Scotia (SUNS) were to become a provincial component with CFS it would have to expel its non-CFS members.

Of the nine member institutions in SUNS only three, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Saint Mary's and Dalhousie are members of CFS.

Both SUNS Executive Officer Peter Kavanaugh and Hill agree SUNS is not about to drop the majority of its members to be recognized as a CFS member.

The Ontario Federation of Students (OFS) experienced a similar problem but its CFS members created a new provincial body, CFS-Ontario, while maintaining their membership in OFS.

SUNS has received high marks from Hill and Caroline Zayid, Nova Scotia's representative on the CFS Central Committee (CC). Zayid attributes SUNS recent accomplishments to Kavanaugh's efforts but cautions she "has seen too many people come and go from SUNS" to be completely confident in its future.

Another problem Hill sees is that CFS lacks democratic principles of accountability normally found in Canadian student politics. He points to a decision by the CFS general meeting in

Charlottetown to hire a translator which was overturned when the Central Committee hired a researcher instead.

At the following meeting in Victoria the Atlantic Caucus proposed a motion of censure which stated "the CC staff had no authority to overturn a decision of the plenary . . . and that the action of those responsible was a violation of the democratic principles supposed to be governing the CFS." The motion was defeated.

Hill's report also includes a copy of the CFS financial report presented at the Victoria meeting. It had been presented late in the conference, and the treasurer had gone before discussion on it had begun. When Hill attempted to get informed comments on the report, he was told the information provided was inadequate.

The Central Committee, which recently held its meeting here in Halifax, wrote council in early February responding to the criticisms in Hill's report. The CC indicated general meetings such as the one in Victoria "are not the proper setting for



A member of the CFS national staff, Bruce Tate

Childerhose/Dal Photo

raising and discussing these concerns."

"National Provincial Meetings (NPM) where CFS member's meet on a provincial level are designed to deal with restructuring because conferences could not provide ample opportunity for discussion of major structural debates" the CC letter states further.

The next NPM will be held in Ottawa in late February as the CC acknowledges, "it is clear

the need has arisen."

Zayid agrees, "CFS has been alerted to the problems and most people know the criticisms are real," she says.

Student council has decided to wait for results from the NPM meeting before deciding whether or not to hold the referendum.

Decisions coming from that meeting must be ratified by the next general meeting scheduled for May in Saskatoon.

Affirmative action, the administration and the DFA

Affirmative Action planned

by Geoff Martin

Discrimination against women is a perennial problem on North American campuses, and Dalhousie is no exception. However, the Senate has taken action to correct this problem. While some applaud the action, other question its ultimate effectiveness.

In January 1979, the "Committee on the Status of Women at Dalhousie" issued a study on the extent of wage discrimination against women in the faculty. The committee, chaired by Sociology professor Virginia Miller, concluded that even when differing experience and education were taken into account, women were making less money than men with the same qualifications and experience. Using "regression analysis," the study determined that salaries were not dependent solely on academic functions. For

example, married men on average received more money than single men while married women on average received less money than single women, other things being equal.

Since the report was published four years ago, there have been important developments. The creation of the Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA) has served to undermine the arbitrary differences in faculty salaries. In addition, The Dalhousie Women's Faculty Organization (DWFO), and the "President's Committee on the Employment of Women, Handicapped Persons and Members of Minority Groups" have been actively working in this area.

Professor Judith Fingard, History Department chair and DWFO Vice President said while conditions have improved for women in the faculty, especially in terms of salary, there is still a need for hiring more women. "There are now more women in teaching and administrative positions and relative salaries have improved," she said. She suggested the DFA has been helpful to women academics at Dalhousie because career evaluations under the first collective agreement standardized salaries for both men and women. To remedy the imbalance of men and women in the faculty affirmative action has been suggested.

Report watered down?

Despite suggestions that affirmative action has been watered down, Dr. Horrocks said he felt the university administration had handled the issue fairly. He said he believes that the Deans and hiring officers have become sensitized to this issue. "There is no evidence of systematic discrimination in the hiring process, but there is systematic or institutionalized discrimination which is inherent. An example is the fact that women often leave the profession during childbearing years, and this lessens their chances of being hired later," he said.

Dr. Horrocks said he has received assurances from the administration that the report's recommendations would lead to an excessive amount of work that is not necessary to accomplish the goal. "We accept the idea that the President will make an annual report on the state of hiring in the faculty."

Horrocks also said he believes the Senate will take further action in the future if these problems continue. "Besides, President MacKay chairs the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, and he does care very much about this issue," he concluded.

Dr. Horrocks' optimism about the effectiveness of the Senate

motion was not fully shared by all the members of his committee. Professor Clare Beckton of the Dalhousie Law School, representative for Senate on the committee, appreciated the adoption of the affirmative action principle, but termed the suggested method of enforcement as "A laugh, because the Dean is sometimes part of the hiring committee." Therefore, the administration is in essence asking the Deans to police themselves.

Professor Fingard, another member of the committee, was critical of the Administration because of its refusal to appoint an Employment Officer. "The officer did not have to be someone new," she said.

As for the future of the President's Advisory Committee Dr. Horrocks said the second report dealing with the hiring of handicapped people and members of other minority groups has just been delivered to the President. The report will reach the Senate later on this year. The third report which the committee is occupied with deals with the employment of women in non-academic areas in the University. "We are starting with the idea that there should be equal pay for work of equal value," said Horrocks.

Nextweek: Part 2 — sexual harassment, women faculty and the DFA.

600 new students will soon drop out of Dalhousie

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the drop out rate among undergraduates. Whatever the solutions to the various problems are, the administration must endeavor to implement them, if they are to be final."

But whether or not the administration will be willing to accept the responsibility Russell sees them as having is an open question. Russell presented his document to the council of student services last term. After the initial enthusiasm died down it became clear top administrative officials wanted to forget the whole matter. The reason for their loss of interest in the matter is as cryptic today as it was five months ago. The

administration is currently unavailable for comment.

So, as it stands, things look bleak for students like Ruth. The resources available at Dalhousie cannot possibly accommodate people with problems like dyslexia. It doesn't look as if the administration will in the near future be looking into the state of student services on this campus. But until something is done to help students with problems, John Russell says the administration should expect to lose 30 per cent of the freshman class every year.

Says Russell: "If you want to talk about revenue shortfalls, that's a million bucks a year."