

Conflict-of-interest situation divides SU executive

by Bill Doskoch

Should SU student employees who are members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) local 1368 be allowed to sit as members of Students Council?

"Yes, we should allow our student employees to participate in any political activity except in situations where there is a direct conflict of interest," says Christine Ens, VP Finance.

"No. Having employees on council creates the potential for conflict of interest situations," says Paul Alpern, VP External.

The problem dates back to the summer when on Aug. 8, the Discipline, Interpretation and Enforcement (DIE) board ruled that students who held part-time jobs (and were members of CUPE) with the

SU and who sat on council were in violation of the conflict-of-interest guidelines (Article XVI, section 2) of the SU constitution.

There is also a conflict-of-interest clause (Clause 3.a) in the SU-CUPE contract that states: "... it is agreed that employees shall not become involved in student politics."

At the Feb. 5 council meeting, Ens introduced an amending motion, written by Science rep. Ken Bosman, that differentiated between student and non-student members of CUPE for the purpose of changing the contract.

The amendment said the CUPE contract should be changed to allow student employees the right to participate in all SU activities; however, the students could not sit on any boards or committees that

negotiated with CUPE, or vote on any issues that affect the area they were employed in.

Alpern, who along with VP Internal Gord Stamp and President Floyd Hodgins, was the object of an impeachment campaign led by students, (some of whom were either SU or ex-SU employees), pointed out that City of Edmonton employees must resign if they are elected to provincial or federal office.

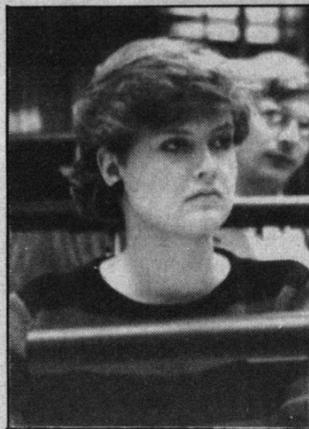
Stamp said his concern was the effects such an amendment might have on area managers' ability to do their jobs when they had council members working for them.

"Managers are not political. They should not be nervous about (the potential political power of) their employees," said Stamp.

In any case, both Stamp and Alpern felt the constitution should be amended before negotiating with CUPE.

"Since contract negotiations are coming up on March 1 with CUPE, we should deal with that right now because the negotiations are a bigger hurdle than amending the constitution," was Ens's response.

With regards to the concerns of political interference affecting area managers: "Area Managers must



VP Finance Christine Ens and VP External Paul Alpern hold very different views on the conflict of interest situation for CUPE student employees on campus.

be aware those are some of the risks," said SU Business Manager Tom Wright.

Wright wrote a memo to Stamp on July 27 stating that one of his managers' concerns was: "They fear reprimanding or dismissing a council member as this may result in their own dismissal at a later date."

However, Wright's feeling on the issue have changed.

"We won't solve the problem (of

political interference) by restricting the rights of students who want to work part-time (as CUPE members) and who want to be politically active.

"We must balance the concerns of our managers with those rights," said Wright.

Ens felt that either council as a whole or the speaker would be vigilant enough to prevent council members from placing themselves in a conflict-of-interest position.

Universities in debt

MONTREAL (CUP) —Montreal's four universities, their government funding stagnating, are borrowing heavily from the bank to try to maintain some semblance of quality programming.

By the end of the year, McGill University will have an accumulated \$18 million deficit. L'Université de Montreal will owe a total of \$16 million to the bank. Concordia University will be \$11 million in debt. All of this debt has accumulated in the past three years.

The provincial grant for all four universities has decreased in real dollars for the past three years, while enrollment has increased steadily.

L'Université de Montreal administrators said last month the institution has made all the "significant" cuts in services it is prepared to make. Jacques Menard, the school's executive vice-rector, said any further cuts would be "irreparable compromising the quality of education we give our students."

Both Concordia and McGill are still hacking at their programs, while desperately trying to solicit money from the private sector. McGill has been quite successful, raising \$46 million in private funds over the past eighteen months. Concordia, with less wealthy alumni has raised \$10.8 million in two years.

Both institutions have been forced

to find places to cut quickly after the Quebec government repeatedly scaled down its contribution for the 1984-85 year.

McGill has begun limiting access to management and engineering programs among other programs, even though provincial funding for these programs has increased, as a means of ensuring quality.

L'Université du Quebec a Montreal has less than \$1 million bank debt but owes money to the Université du Quebec system.

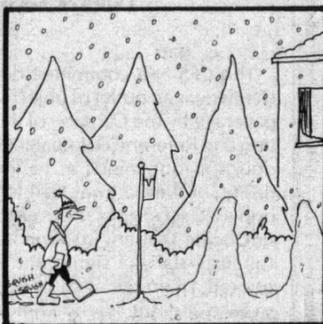
While UQAM is not stacking up a big deficit, the 156-year old university has been able to replace lecturers, who teach half of the courses at the school along with full-time professors. The lecturers are cheaper but contribute much less to the university.

"The level of subsidies doesn't let us catch up with the older universities," Louis Chaplain, UQAM's associate director for the financial services, said.

UQAM's student council has been pressuring the university to hire more full-time professors because the lecturers spend much less time with students than full-time professors do.

Menard summed up the situation at all four universities when he said last month: "the pedagogical quality necessarily is going down."

Yard Apes



by Hans Beckers



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