

Dal president talks turkey with student reps

JENNIFER LAMONT

Dalhousie president Tom Traves says he wants Dalhousie "to be a personal and a large university".

Traves made these comments amidst discussion at the November 16 Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) council meeting.

Traves, who addressed a variety of student concerns, does not usually attend DSU council meetings, having only been to one within the last year.

On the issue of a tuition cap, Traves said options are limited.

"[With increasing expenses] we can either lower quality or raise tuition, but we can't do both."

He went on to say that from speaking to students he has found that they would prefer the latter.

He also discussed the planned mega-classes in the new Faculty of Arts And Social Sciences Building (FASS), admitting the university was not always sure that lumping huge numbers of students into mega-classes was best for the students.

"A mixture of teaching formats and class size will make resources more effective" he said.

Traves explained that having larger first-year classes will leave more professors available for higher level classes, thus maintaining the university's 'personal' atmosphere.

"A mixture of small and large classes is realistic, whereas all small classes is impossible," he said.

Hugh Pierce, the DSU's Board of Governors representative, disagrees with the move to larger classes, but admits there are few alternatives.

"[Mega-classes] are one of several 'evils' [Dalhousie] will have to decide between in order to save money," he said.

The imminent construction of the

FASS building was another issue of concern. Catherine Craig, an Arts representative, acknowledged that while funding for the new building is a "complex issue", she is not satisfied with Dr. Traves' answers on the topic.

"He did not pinpoint the main concerns of building such an expensive addition to the campus, but rather accepted that it was an issue of concern," Craig said after the meeting.

Another area of concern regarding

the FASS building is food service.

Pierce said that he was especially concerned with food services and the internal environment.

DSU vp executive, Bridgette McCaig, commented on the recent amendment to include food services in the building. But Traves would say very little about it.

"We have made no serious decisions about what services will be offered, where they will be, or who will run

them," Traves said.

While Pierce said he is satisfied to have confirmation that Dr. Traves is mindful of students' perspective and needs, Craig says it will take a while to discover whether Traves' visit to the DSU was sincere.

"[He] stopped by the DSU meeting as an initiative to let the students know he wants our input," she said. "Time will tell if he puts our concerns, as students, to ease."

Bob Dylan a role-model for students

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"If you look at the people who've received honorary degrees in the past, [Dylan] is in the same league, if not above and beyond.

"[Choosing him would be] consistent with the fact that Dalhousie has a Bob Dylan class [in the English department]. I think it is reasonable to assume that he will be chosen."

McGroarty says it is important to demonstrate that students can affect change on campus.

"We've collected hundreds of signatures and we're continuing to circulate petitions and we continue to get more support...Out of every fifty people I've talked to...we've

gotten roughly forty-nine-and-a-half to sign.

"If Bob Dylan does get chosen, it would definitely show that students have a voice on campus."

DSU vice-president executive Bridgette McCaig agrees. McCaig sits on the Alumni Association's Honorary Degree Committee, which makes recommendations to the main Senate Committee, and says it's about time the university started listening to students.

"Students have made substantial commitments to this university in the last year and a half," she said. "I think it's time that the university considers this, and gives some recognition back to us, and listens to us."

McCaig says that while the usual

recipients of honorary degrees are deserving, the university should also consider candidates who have an impact on students.

"Sitting through a two hour ceremony can be tough, but seeing Bob Dylan staring back at you would be amazing.

"I can relate to Bob Dylan." McGroarty admits that there are other more pressing causes on campus, but says participating and getting Bob Dylan a degree is a stepping stone to other issues.

"We have a three-fold mandate: we want to get Bob Dylan an honorary degree; we want to get people involved; and we want to use the momentum of what we are doing to benefit other causes."

McGroarty says that the students

working on the Dylan campaign operate as an informal collective, and many are hoping to stay active in the community pursuing other issues.

Last Saturday, the group hosted a Bob Dylan night in the King's College Wardroom. The event was intended to raise the profile of the of the campaign and, in the group's first spin-off into other issues, raise money for the Dalhousie Women's Centre.

"[The Women's Centre] has been going through some tough times. I couldn't think of a better recipient," said McCaig. "What these students are doing correlates to a lot of Dylan's poetry."

Money woes for recent graduates

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system where the only people who can pursue graduate work are those who can have the lowest debt-loads?"

This is significant, Ivany says, because data from Statistics Canada has consistently shown that the higher the level of education, the higher the average income upon graduation.

These findings come as no surprise, say student leaders in the Maritimes.

"Basically the report confirmed most of our worst fears," said Bob Prince, president of the New Brunswick Student Alliance.

Prince says the way in which low-income families view the possibility of getting a post-secondary education is particularly disturbing.

"Everyone knows what role parents play when students are deciding whether or where to attend university, and if we have 57 per cent of parents who are thinking twice about whether post-secondary education is even a possibility, then that can only have a negative effect on whether the student will attend university or not," he said.

Student groups in P.E.I. and Nova Scotia echoed Prince's concerns, and say the top priority in fixing the

problem needs to be student aid reform.

Amy Cole, chair of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) in Nova Scotia, says governments need to take action to reduce debt-loads.

"If you give high-need students an opportunity to get into the educational system, they're much more likely to finish the degree than if they weren't given the incentive to do so," she said.

There have been indications in

recent weeks that reforms are in the works, as federal government projections show students will be overwhelmed by debt in two years. Canada's educational stakeholders have been pushing for a variety of options, including national grants, tuition freezes and interest relief.

The study was conducted with the help of the student aid offices in the Maritime provinces and the Angus-Reid polling organization.

Latin degree uncertainty

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then this requires the issuing of an English-language parchment [which means] a duplication of work for Dalhousie."

According to Kevin Lacey, Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) vice-president academic, the DSU is requesting that Senate give students a choice between Latin or English parchments.

"For the most part we have supported this idea [of English parchments]," Lacey said. "However, we have also been saying from the beginning that students should be given a choice between Latin or English.

"We understand that Latin is an important part of the tradition of receiving a university degree. It is

important to note that many students within the Health Professions [and also other faculties] have to spend extra money to have their degrees translated. As well, the former Technical University of Nova Scotia (now DalTech) have always granted their degrees in English," Lacey said.

DSU president Chris Adams, has supported a motion that will see all students registered by January, 1998 able to receive their parchments in the language of their choice. That motion is currently being considered.

In the end, it all comes down to one thing for Searle and the students who support his petition.

"Why did I [start the petition]? I did it because I want mine in Latin," he said.

THE GREEK HOUSE

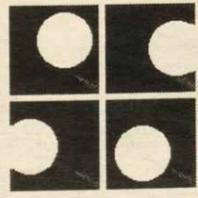
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