

Smith and Campbell agree:

Students' Council not effective

by Dorothy Wigmore

The Student Council is not effective or relevant to many Dal students, say Student Union President, Brian Smith, and treasurer, Ian Campbell.

The big difficulty seems to be keeping council informed and on top of everything the executive is doing. Both executive members find it impossible to let councillors know everything they are doing.

"This is why I think the executive and Council are always at odds with one another," said Campbell. The executive makes recommendations to council, based on all the background information they have, and council, as a governing body, has to decide whether to accept or reject it, he explained.

"They don't know enough to really make a good decision," Campbell added.

One part of the problem is that Council takes office at the same time in March as the executive does, explained Smith. After one or two meetings, they relinquish their power for the summer to either the executive or the Union executive. When they come back in September, they are out of touch with what has happened during the summer.

"There are a few different types of systems," Smith said, "that are in operation at some universities, where the executive takes office there's an overlap of executives, and when the executives change, there's an overlap of councils. There's another system which invests the authority and power of the Union in the Executive, period, and having the Council as more of an advisory board than a governing board."

The Student Union budget

provides one example of how the executive is more informed



Brian Smith, Student Union President.

than the Council, said Campbell. Usually many uninformed questions are asked of each budget before the whole budget

is passed. One solution may be tabling the budget for one week. This would give councillors a chance to question the organizations involved, as well as the treasurer, he explained.

Course unions were suggested as alternatives to make council more effective. "I'm in favour of course unions," said Smith.

"If there's something we can do to become involved in formation or assistance in formation of them, then we'll do it. We have enough councillors who are interested in the course unions. I don't know how informative it would be as a two-way communication thing though."

Campbell agreed with Smith. He was involved in an economics course union in his

second year, but discovered that they could not achieve much because of apathy. "That apathy runs rampant throughout the entire community," commented Smith. He tries to combat this though.

"I have a policy of having people who work with me that I send out as feelers to areas of concern and try to find out what effect a policy will have."

"That's really going back down the ladder to get the lower rung involved with the upper rung," he continued. "There should be some kind of meeting of the middle rung."

This might be achieved if more students and councillors came out to Council meetings, he felt. The meetings are open to all Dalhousie students. They

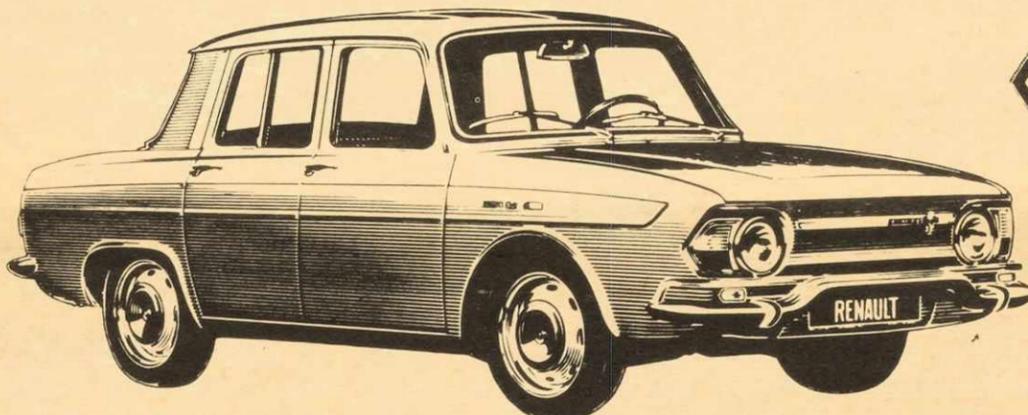


Ian Campbell, Student Union treasurer. (Photo by Dorothy Wigmore)

can come and speak, "provided they maintain some semblance of order," he added. "That's the

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