

Petition

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"We are still in the education process," he said.

CASA is one of two national student organizations. The group formed less than three years ago to provide an alternative to the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS). Both groups support student interests, but while the CFS is more protest orientated, CASA believes lobbying government will provide better results. Dalhousie is a member of CASA.

"[The CASA petition] is not a criticism of the [student loan] program, but offers solutions that need to be put in place," Lacey said.

According to Lacey there has been tremendous student support for CASA's plan. Despite the claims of strong support, Lacey started an information blitz about the petition on Monday that will continue until October 31. He says this final effort will give Dalhousie students another opportunity to sign the petition and to learn more about CASA.

Dalhousie's tuition petition is one of many being circulated by CASA across the country. All petitions will be delivered to the House of Commons early next year.

BGLAD returns

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In the coming weeks and months, movie nights, a potluck, and a party for the holiday season are all in the works.

BGLAD is also working to offer a form of counselling service. The group's office in the SUB will soon post hours during which people will be able to sit down and talk with someone, examine the group's resource library, or just study. BGLAD also offers a confidential support line, a website, and an e-mail address.

On October 10, BGLAD promoted awareness of National Coming Out Day in the SUB. In the gay community "everybody's been there at one point in time," Greaves said.

"Despite a sudden improvement in the society's prognosis, complications still exist.

"The discrimination of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals is a pervasive one. Despite the significant strides taken by the gay, lesbian, and bisexual community in recent years, formidable obstacles remain," Delaurentis said.

This may explain why the group is fighting hard to ensure it never enters the coma into which it had fallen.

"We are providing a necessary service," Greaves said.

Grad House

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would address both financial and functional needs of DAGS, rent for the facility is still an issue.

A fourth but unlikely option is one where a third party would be brought in to run the Grad House. However, the committee determined from its research that the obstacles would be too substantial for this option to be seriously considered.

It is likely that this issue will stir great debate among Grad House users, who are mainly unaware of the problems facing DAGS.

"There is a sentimental attachment to the Grad House on campus; many have expressed their fondness for the House and like the idea of a central meeting place for graduate students," states the report, adding, "but times are changing... Change is imminent and necessary.

"DAGS must meet the needs of students in new ways. It is not for DAGS to be in business — they are government and as such should not be in the position to spend student money on a bar frequented by only a portion of those who support it."

Student union on the brink of extinction

BY KAVERI GUPTA

Due to political differences amongst its members, the Student Union of Nova Scotia is heading towards dissolution.

At a general meeting on October 4, St. Mary's University (SMU) student association president John Francis made the motion for the Student Union of Nova Scotia (SUNS) to dissolve. The motion was seconded by University College of Cape Breton (UCCB) student union president Sheldon Gillis.

The motion was made after a heated debate regarding a proposal (which was subsequently defeated), but Acadia Student Union president Paul Black said the dispute was only fuel for a larger fire.

"The motion to dissolve was not solely because the proposal was defeated," Black said.

"SUNS has not been an adequate representative of provincial issues for a while... the motion was made after serious frustration on the part of those who were interested in making changes."

The proposal consisted of a completely new constitution to replace SUNS' existing one. It was put forth by SUNS' three larger member schools: SMU, UCCB, and St. Francis Xavier (St.F.X.).

SUNS president Rhonda Coleman had concerns regarding the proposed constitution.

"SUNS was not looking for a new constitution... I don't feel that the proposed constitution was solid enough to replace the existing one," Coleman said.

Black said that himself, Francis, Gillis, and St. F.X. student union president Ian MacIntyre were dissatisfied with the SUNS meeting held in May and decided to sit down and formulate some real changes to be presented at the October 4 meeting.

On October 4 though, no agreement was reached by members and the motion was made to dissolve the union. Despite the fact that three fourths of the members voted in favour of dissolution (the required amount to pass the motion), SUNS is still a legal entity since the procedure with which the motion was passed is not considered legal under the Societies Act.

"To dissolve, a motion must be

made six weeks prior to a general meeting, and after the general meeting a special resolution has to be passed within 30 days. After that another meeting must be held to tie up loose ends," Coleman said.

Black said that until student representatives can shed national affiliations and focus on provincial issues, improvements will not be possible.

Coleman admits that SUNS dissolving in the near future seems inevitable, though she said that SUNS has adequately served the needs of students in Nova Scotia for the duration of its existence.

SUNS would have been celebrating its 20th anniversary this coming January. It represents

ten universities in Nova Scotia.

Student teachers fight for change

BY STEVE PETRIE

Negotiations amongst teaching assistants, part-time professors and Dalhousie University have been broken up by the union, according to Michael Roughneen of Dalhousie Personnel Services.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 3912 represents teaching assistants (TAs) and part-time instructors at Dalhousie. As a result of the breakdown, the union is now in a legal position to strike. According to union officials, a strike is only one possibility.

Mike Earle, Secretary Treasurer for CUPE 3912, says that the union has made no definite decision, and needs to organize its members before any decision is made.

In the early 1990s, steps were taken to form a union to improve working conditions, wages, and benefits for all part-time lecturers and TAs at Dalhousie. After long delays, contract negotiations began about one year ago. Agreement was reached on general contract language and proposals (including seniority rehiring), but the two groups have come to a stalemate over wage settlements.

The recent upsurge in union activity is not limited to Dalhousie. There has been a surge in the organization of TAs across the United States as well. Last year, there was a strike at Yale University when the school's administration refused to negotiate with the union because it would not recognize students' legal right to organize.

Similar strikes took place at University of California's campuses and other universities across the U.S.

Back across the boarder, Dalhousie TAs fair poorly in

relation to other Universities. At McMaster University in Ontario, TAs make \$7,722 per year and part-timers make \$7,529 per year. At York University, TAs make \$9,429 per year and part-timers make \$10,603 per year. Dalhousie part-timers presently make about \$5,000 per year.

The university administration has tabled its "final offer" — a deal that would see the part-timers pay rise to \$5,500 in their third year.

With regards to TA's, Dalhousie wants to standardize their pay. Currently, wages for TAs differ from department to department. The University calculated that the average pay is about \$2,350 per year. Factoring in annual pay increases, all TAs would make about \$2,450 per year by the end of a three year period — a process that would see many TAs take substantial pay cuts.

According to Kelly Murray, CUPE 3912 spokesperson, the university seems unwilling to make a better offer, and the TAs and part-timers are not satisfied with the standing offer. As a result, talks have broken off completely and there has been no movement on either side.

The administration says that it is willing to settle if reasonable proposals are offered by CUPE.

A strike vote is being planned by the union, but no date has been finalized.

Should the TAs and part-timers decide to strike, they will have the support of the Dalhousie Faculty Association which represents full-time faculty. This means that the full-time staff will not do the work of the TAs and part-timers, leaving papers ungraded, and some tutorials, labs and even some classes with no instructor.

NEWS-IN-BRIEF

STUDENT HOT-SPOTS HIT BY FIRE

A small fire Tuesday night shut down popular student venues on Spring Garden Road for the evening.

Mexicali Rosa's, Your Father's Moustache, The Great Taste and the Tickle Trunk were all affected by the small blaze.

Owner of Mexicali Rosa's, David Turk, said the fire was confined to a small unused storage room between his restaurant and Your Father's Moustache.

The room can only be accessed via a small alleyway, so no one in the building came in direct contact with the fire.

Turk says that no serious damage was sustained by any of the businesses, but all experienced smoke in the building.

Officials with the fire department could not be reached for comment on the cause of the fire. However, a firefighter on the scene said that it was an electrical fire.

ATLANTIC REGION TOPS FOR INVESTMENT

Forget the rest of Canada and the United States, Atlantic Canada is the number one place to do business according to an internationally known consulting firm.

The Atlantic Canada Advantage, commissioned by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency examined business costs in 42 cities in Atlantic Canada, Canada, the United States and five European countries. Of 42 cities in seven countries examined in the study, the top four cities in order of ranking are St. John's, Halifax, Charlottetown and Moncton.

"We suspected that the Atlantic region would rank highly, but in fact, the region fared even better — Atlantic Canada comes first," says Minister Mifflin.

"We think it will be of particular interest to European countries looking for a beachhead to the NAFTA market. It tells investors Atlantic Canada is the place to be."

MONEY TO EDUCATION NOT SHOWING RESULTS

Canadian students are not getting the education they need, despite being one of the world's biggest spenders on education.

According to the Conference Board of Canada, Canadian drop out rates remain high and our literacy levels are not putting us ahead of the global class.

The board is an independent think-tank. It links Canada's high standard of living to the productivity of its people. And among the many ways of increasing productivity is through better education.

Canada spent \$56-billion or 7.6 per cent of its gross domestic product on education in 1993. According to the Chronicle Herald, that level of spending is likely to fall as government cuts are implemented. Canada continues to spend more per capita than the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom.

STUDENT CARTOON DEPICTS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

University of Alberta students and staff are in an uproar over a cartoon on a Web site that shows women being shot at a Take Back the Night march.

"I was shocked. I was upset. I was amazed that someone would draw such a misogynist, hateful cartoon," associate professor Linda Trimble is reported as saying by The Globe and Mail.

The cartoon was meant to be part of cartoonist Adam Thrasher's weekly strip for the school paper, The Gateway. However, the cartoon was turned down by The Gateway. Instead, the paper printed the website address where readers could see the instalment.

How much satisfaction has your GPA given you lately?

Try focussing on something else.

Write for the Gazette.

Meetings every Monday at 4:30pm room 312, SUB.