

For Senator's eyes only

By DAVID CAMPBELL

A MOTION PUT FORWARD by the vice-chairman of the Dalhousie Senate during Monday's Senate meeting has raised the eyebrows of the university community.

Dr. Phillip Welch, claiming a breach of confidentiality, charged that some Senate members had supplied information from an in-camera meeting of Senate to *Gazette* writer Lois Corbett.

Corbett, in an article in last week's paper, revealed issues Welch said were for Senate's ears only.

Welch's motion, which was carried with only two dissenting votes, asked that the Senate Steering Committee investigate the possibility of seeking legal recourse on the issue of the *Gazette* article and the unidentified student senator who spoke to the *Gazette*.

The article "Degrees for Sale at Dalhousie" reported several Senate members, both faculty and students, were opposed to the fact

that Muriel Duckworth, a well-known feminist and peace activist, was not nominated for an honorary degree. Welch was angry that this information was made public.

The issue of honorary degrees was tabled at an open meeting of Senate. When discussion on the subject became heated and Muriel Duckworth's name was mentioned, Senate chair Bill Jones asked that further discussion on the topic be conducted in an in-camera session.

Welch complained that the *Gazette* identified Muriel Duckworth's name and used information from a closed Senate meeting provided to them by Senate members.

Corbett says "the information is something that students have a right to know about." She says the fact that some of the information came from a closed meeting of Senate makes no difference. Because discussion on the Duckworth issue began in an open Senate meeting, the source had no qualms about divulging infor-

mation to the press.

"The senators should set the rules. If the senators think it is important enough to let the students know, then it must be," says Corbett.

Gazette editor Toby Sanger defended the writer by saying students have a right to know the facts.

The headline of the article, says Sanger, "was meant to be a paraphrase of what a faculty representative said the Senate should do if it doesn't clarify how it chooses honorary degree recipients."

He says this is what is at issue, "not whether information came from an in-camera or open meeting of the Senate."

Welch said it was absurd to suggest Dalhousie would have honorary degrees for sale and felt Corbett blew the Duckworth affair out of proportion. He raised the question of why Duckworth's name was brought up at all and said it would not bode well for any future consideration of her as an honorary degree recipient.

Welch played down this issue and said it was now of "secondary importance." He described the actions of the Senators who made the closed meeting into a public affair as "totally incomprehensible" and put forward the motion that the steering committee move to investigate the possibility of legal recourse.

"If I were chairman, any Senator, be they student or not, would be immediately dismissed from Senate," said Welch.

Professor Marcia Ozier, a member of the Steering Committee, was opposed to seeking legal recourse without looking at all the facts. She said the committee should "consider the matter and return to Senate with recommendations." To the best of her knowledge, said Ozier, "the issue of honorary degrees has always been in camera."

Senator Colin Stuttard stressed his opposition to this process by rejecting the "in camera nature of honors discussions."

Dr. Bill Jones, chair of the Senate and a member with Dr. Welch of the Steering Committee, said only that he would "wait until the committee meets" before saying anything further.

The Steering Committee now has the task of investigating the allegations. Although the next meeting is not scheduled until April 8th, Ozier said there may be one sooner so as to bring the issue to a conclusion.



Two's company. Dalhousie President Andrew Mackay introduces his successor Howard Clark to some of the formidable paper work he will be faced with next year. Dr. Clark spent two days early this week getting acquainted with Dalhousie. Photo by Valerie Berryman, Dal Photo.

Acadia discriminates against gay profs

By ELIZABETH BOSMA AND STEPHEN SHAY

Wolfville(CUP) TWO GAY professors at Acadia University are launching a grievance against the administration because of the Board of Governors' refusal to foot the bill for medical benefits for their lovers.

For Matt Hughes, a music professor at Acadia for over 15 years and Bert Verstrate, a classics professor for 8 years, it is more than bewildering to have to fight for benefits that have already been won.

"Our collective agreement states there shall be no discrimination based on an individual's sexual orientation and/or discrimination of benefits," says Hughes.

"We have fought to have benefits in our collective agreement now we have to fight for them again," he says.

After a year of informal negotiations with the administration Hughes and Verstrate received tuition benefits last November, but medical benefits are not yet resolved.

The benefits package is made up of several parts: pension benefits, which can be willed to another party; tuition benefits, an internal administration matter and; medical benefits, which involves a third party, the insurance company.

The decision to grant medical benefits was delayed because it involves the third party, Maritime Medical Care Inc.

DR. J.M. Tillotson, chair of the Group Insurance Triannual Review Committee, which reviews the university's medical plan, says Maritime Medical Care Inc. has told the committee "both verbally and in writing that it is company policy not to cover the partners of gays."

As a compromise, the committee offered a recommendation that the university could get an insur-

ance company other than Maritime Medical and that the university could split the cost of this insurance 50/50.

Both the BOG and the two gay professors had problems with this suggestion. Hughes and Verstrate see paying a higher insurance rate as discriminatory.

Ron MacDonald, vice president academic, says he will not make a statement until the issue is settled.

He says the BOG has not reached any decision and the recommendation from the review committee was informally suggested.

After the BOG meeting last week, Hughes and Verstrate met with MacDonald, hoping to re-

solve the issue or come to some compromise.

"There as no attempt to resolve this issue. The V.P. academic said his hands were tied and he could not change the BOG position," says Hughes.

Hughes sees this as a violation of the collective agreement because the administration did not offer any steps that might have resolved the issue informally.

Hughes and Verstrate are upset because the BOG knew Maritime Medical Care Inc. did not recognize that gay or lesbian couples were entitled to medical benefits, but they renewed their contract with the company.

Hughes and Verstrate say it is unfair to expect them to pay

higher insurance premiums than other faculty.

Ralph Stewart, Acadia faculty association's president doesn't agree that medical benefits are entirely a human right's issue.

"It is possible the BOG and Maritime Medical Care Inc. have acted out of homophobia, but I'm not sure that is the case," says Stewart.

He says the BOG's lack of enthusiasm for the committee's recommendation was economic.

But Hughes and Verstrate say the extra costs are minimal.

Insurance rates for a single person are eight dollars a month, while the family rate, which covers dependants, is \$20 a month, about \$100 more for each academic year.

Dal Legal Aid fights back

By ELIZABETH BOSMA and LOIS CORBETT

SUPPORTERS OF DALHousie Legal Aid are determined not to let the provincial government off easy for its decision to slash almost \$90,000 from the clinic's operating budget.

The Friends of Dal Legal Aid are circulating a petition in the home ridings of Edmund Morris, the Minister of Social Services, and of Premier John Buchanan, protesting the government's actions.

The petitioners hope to collect 3000 signatures to present to the legislature when it opens in April. Joan Dawkins, executive director of Dal Legal Aid, says over 1500 people have already signed.

"The feedback to the petition has been fabulous. Most of the places we stopped at knew what was going on and most people signed without hesitating," says Dawkins.

Dawkins says the clinic has had regular caseload because of the cutbacks. Workers at Dal Legal

Aid are sending most of its family and criminal cases to the Nova Scotia Legal Aid Commission, but Dawkins says they are trying to meet the demand for legal advice from people with social assistance disputes and complaints against landlords.

"It hasn't been as painful as it might have been. But it is always painful to say no to people on the phone," said Dawkins.

Morris announced the cuts,

Lucky thief makes off with new computer

By GEOFF STONE

A MACINTOSH COMPUTER was stolen from the Dalhousie Computer Center only three weeks after nine new units were installed.

The computer, along with an auxiliary disk drive, was stolen early in the morning of Tuesday, March 18th. A cleaner noticed the door to the computer room open but the theft wasn't spotted until 10:30.

Phil O'Hara, director of teaching services for the computer cen-

ter, said, "It is most likely that someone hid in the building overnight."

O'Hara said the theft could cost Dalhousie up to \$1000.

Dalhousie obtained the nine MacIntosh computers on loan as a promotional deal between Atlantis Microcomputers, Apple Canada and Academic Computer Services. The computers are available to all members of the Dalhousie community and will remain in the basement of the Kilm Library for four months.

Security on the computers is

expected to be increased. Security kits for the computers had been planned before the theft, and will be installed as soon as possible.

The computer center is undaunted by the theft.

After the four month deal, there are plans for the purchase of microcomputers. Randy Barkhouse, director of academic computing, said he expects micros will be purchased this summer. He stated that perhaps 30 MacIntosh and 30 IBM PC units might be purchased.