

HEARINGS OPEN TODAY

Brunswickan

Monday, February 7, 1966

Students and Policy-Making

We hear a lot today, particularly from student groups, about the necessity for student involvement in policy decision-making. Since, according to supporters of this position, universities exist to serve their students, those students ought to play a part in determining university policy. They contribute a substantial portion of the operating revenue and as clients their opinion of the services they receive should be sought. If a university is a community of administrators, faculty, and students, all levels ought to contribute to the formulation of

policy.

Now we ought to establish very clearly that universities do not exist simply to serve their students. The function of a university is to transmit and extend knowledge. In so doing the university serves the local society, the whole of civilization, its students, and itself. In gauging the effectiveness of the transmission and extension of knowledge those most expert in that task are the faculty. Obviously they ought to play a large part in determining university policy. And this does not mean simply academic policy. As

practically every aspect of a university is related to academic objectives, any distinction between academic and administrative policy becomes meaningless.

Opposition to student participation in policy decision-making chiefly centres on the problem of continuity. Students are not, as individuals, present at the university for

very long. They are comparatively ill-informed about the complexities of university problems and in most instances too immature to handle them effectively. Rarely would a given student be on a policy committee for more than one year. Thus there could be scarcely more than a constant re-explanation of policy reasons.

There remain, however, two compelling reasons for student membership on certain policy committees. The first is that there are many areas of university life where student needs are inadequately identified. Decision-makers would profit from a steady exposure to student attitudes and reactions to proposals. They would probably see, too, that there were many areas of university life that were simply ignored through the lack of exposure to student ideas. This is particularly true in a university where even the faculty plays a very limited role in decision-making.

Secondly, there is the question of morale. A student body confronted by decisions without much knowledge of the reasons behind them can become alienated from faculty and administration. This is increasingly a problem in an expanding university. There must be channels of communication which guarantee the students sufficient knowledge about policy reasons so that students will not become restively opposed to the other levels of the university.

Student participation on policy committees should simply not be viewed as a sharing of the decision-making power. They should be there to ensure that the actual decision-makers are aware of student reactions and needs. They should be there to ensure a ready communication between all levels of the university. A limited membership on policy committees in selected areas would not in any way turn over decision-making to the students. It would, however, be a constructive approach to fundamental problems that exist in any university.

What is the Education Committee?

The Education Committee is an essentially new development at UNB. It existed in name before this year, but its purpose then was not very clear. It consisted of two members who were to be UNB's representatives at discussions of the Association of Atlantic Students. That organization has been relatively inactive since the fee increase protest marches last spring. Consequently, the Education Committee seemed to have lost its function.

The SRC was asked to present a report this year to the Commission on the Future of the University. Chaired by Dr. A. G. Bailey, Vice-President (Academic), the Commission is a Faculty board of inquiry appointed by the President. At a meeting in the first term, the SRC decided to reconstitute the Education Committee and give it the responsibility of drawing up the student report. Later they appointed Roger Harley, a post-graduate student in History, as Education Chairman. Two SRC members, Lawson Hunter (Third year Science and now President-elect of the SRC) and Ross Eddy (Fourth year Physical Education) agreed to work on the committee. Then two Second year Arts students, Madelaine Long and Wayne Beach joined to complete its membership.

The Education Committee
(SEE Reverse side)

Hearings Schedule

No single committee, nor even the SRC, can claim to represent the views of the whole student body. In preparing any report on student opinion, and student goals, the group responsible inevitably faces difficulty in determining what these opinions and goals are. This is the reason behind the Education Committee's open hearings. In order to make their report as comprehensive and as representative as possible, they need as much student discussion as possible.

Every student has a stake in the future of this university. Our degrees will be affected, not only by the past graduates and ourselves, but by those of the future. We should want to see this university become the best that it can in its circumstances.

We all have our own views on the strengths and weaknesses of UNB. Intelligent presentation of these views could certainly be of use to those planning for UNB's future development. It would assuredly make more representative the Education Committee's ideas. Take the time out to attend the hearings, especially on the night that your faculty is being discussed. It won't be that time-consuming, you'd finally be doing something constructive for one of the few times in your university career, and you might even learn something about UNB.

Participation Necessary

Tartan Room — Student Centre — 7:30 p.m.
Monday, February 7

Engineering
Forestry
Law

Wednesday, February 9

Science
Nursing
Education
Phys. Ed.
(Arts)

Monday, February 14

WUSC, International Students
CUS
Men's Residences
Women's Residences

(Although no Arts brief will be presented on the 9th, Arts students are urged to attend and discuss their views.)