



Executive Vice President

Chris
HOPPER

What is your experience in student politics and how has it prepared you for this position?

My involvement in student politics really started last year when I sat on the elections committee. I got very interested and I got on the Board of Governors for this year's council where I've sat on many committees dealing with faculty and curriculum. That sort of led me into my involvement with the Students' Union of Nova Scotia(SUNS) where I now hold an executive position as campaign coordinator.

I've also been involved in the winter carnival and helping run the second-hand bookstore. I'm also the Vice President of the Off Campus Freshmen's Society which we've been setting up this year, trying to get the information that we require set out for next year's orientation so we can get the freshmen involved from the start. It's our feeling that freshmen come in, they get orientated and feel really keen and a part of things and then they're cut loose by the union. You get into residence, you get involved through your res council, but the off-campus freshmen are sort of left out there in the sea to make their own friends, to try to figure out their classes and stuff like that. So, we figure a society in that manner would really help.

I'm also part of the society that's trying to get Dal spirit up. We're looking at a number of ways to get societies involved in things that they aren't involved with now.

How do you think the proposed renovations will benefit students?

I think that the SUB renovations are a very positive thing because we're going to start consolidating a lot of the different services we do offer. Office services is in the basement, the Right Type is on the second floor, the Grawood is on the third and the pinball and pool room is in the basement. Right now it's very cut up. By moving the Grawood to the basement we have access to the basement entrance so we can shut the building down and just use that at night.

I think it's important to consolidate services for the students because they don't want to have to run all over the building. I think the renovations to the building will benefit students, will help students by making everything a lot more accessible and easier to find.

What changes would you make so the Grawood could start turning a profit?

A lot of the problem with the Grawood is that the programming in it has decreased somewhat over the years and people are used to the same old format. It's like: there's the Grawood. Go there and have a beer if you want. I think it's very important to have very progressive programming put into the Grawood.

We have a stage now that is usable for bands. The capacity of the Grawood is going to be around 400 to 450. We're going to have a dance floor where we can have videos and disc jockey music. So, I think by programming and getting in small local bands on a Friday afternoon, having good dance music, even pursuing the option of getting a draft license because a lot of people prefer draft - it's cheaper.

I also think advertising is essential. I think the Grawood has to have an image. It has to

have something that people can identify with. Have a little mascot, put T-shirts out or something, something that people can be proud of.

I think that if you really go out and plug the Grawood on campus and go to people and show them that they can go there and have a lot of fun and that it's an alternative to going downtown. I don't think that we'll ever be able to compete fully with downtown but I think that it's a very viable option. I think that's the skew that we have to take instead of going to the Grawood, drinking a lot of beer and getting drunk. Go there to have fun. That's the message in advertising that I'd like to get across.

What is the role of societies on campus?

The A and B societies on campus should, I feel, play a very vital role on campus. They are more or less a primary tool of talking to their constituents because, obviously, the Dalhousie Association of Biology Students(DABS) are biology students who take classes with biology students so they can get in touch with them and pass on information or receive information on a day to day basis, something the DSS isn't able to do.

Also, a lot of students can get involved in intermural sports and through the DSS or other societies they also provide a means of getting involved with student politics at a relatively low level that doesn't take too much time and they can feel their way out and they can say, "Well, if I really want to get involved, how much time will it take and how much will I enjoy it?"

So, I think the societies play a vital role both in communicating their thoughts to the students union and out thoughts to their constituents. It reinforces everything.

Do you think it's a problem that so few students are interested in running as constituent reps?

I think it's unfortunate that so few students are trying for these positions and, in that way, I think, yes, it's a problem. But the students that do get involved seem to be relatively committed and I think that is positive. I would love to see a lot more students getting out there and saying, "Hey, I can do something. It's not just a clique" because it's not. We're all just Jo Average student who happened to get involved through one way or another and found out that we can make a difference and that we have something to offer.

So, it's a problem because I think they're missing out on a large section of their education and it's a problem for us because I think it's sort of a brain drain. We're getting the good people but a lot of good people are not getting involved and as a result we cannot offer the level of services or advocate on behalf of students as strongly as if we had a very broad section of students getting involved and being very adamant about their positions and letting everybody know what it is.

Do you think the DSU is too service oriented?

No, I don't. I think the DSU is providing services that students want. On the other hand, the more political aspect which Scott, if elected, will be in charge of, is very active. I myself know because I sit on the many committees and our student voice is very loud. We are able to represent students to faculty, to the province through SUNS and to the federal government through CFS and SUNS in a very effective manner.

The services we do provide, students are using, for the most part. We've seen a decrease in the use of the Grawood, I think we'll see an increase in the future. The services, for the most part, that we provide are good services. I believe that they're the ones that students want and would feel somewhat lacking if they were taken away.

What would you like to see come out of the President's Symposium on Undergraduate Education?

I would like to see some firm commitments come out of the Undergraduate Symposium. I'm afraid it could turn into just another bout of rhetoric. The symposium so far has been more philosophies about what education is about as opposed to what the basic problems are with education at Dalhousie.

We see a lot of the same teaching materials and equipment that we have at Dalhousie are being used at Columbia, at Harvard, at Princeton, Yale and Stanford. But, what is the difference in the level of education or teaching between here and there? There's a big discrepancy. We see students coming to Dalhousie in their first year and then after one year saying, "No, this isn't for me. I'm going to Harvard, or I'm going to Princeton, or I'm going to Stanford or Duke. Why? We obviously have the quality of student, if they can get into universities like that. So, the problem has to be not in the equipment but more in the 'getting across' of what professors are trying to get across.

I think that a stronger course evaluation on behalf of the student union could really help in that aspect of getting teachers who can really teach and impart their knowledge and offer to the students in a way they can accept. Get those professors tenured positions and really lobby for that. Professors with tenured positions who can't teach worth beans and who are just interested in doing research and don't want to talk to students - lobby to get them out because I don't believe that that's the professor that any student wants. I believe that we want somebody that we can talk to, somebody that is real to us, somebody that is able to get across the knowledge they want.



Senate

The recent Symposium on Undergraduate Education clarified that these exciting times are evident at Dalhousie. It is with these times that emphasis must be placed on effective student representation.

The position of student senator ensures our union a voice on Dalhousie's academically centered Senate. It is with this I wanted to become a member of our union council.

Since arriving three years ago from Riverview, N.B., to pursue a Commerce degree, I have taken a special extracurricular interest in Dalhousie. The past two years at Howe Hall I have been involved in intramurals, the house committee level, and the executive, as treasurer. Presently I hold the position of resident assistant.

My accumulated experience at Dalhousie ensures I will be an involved and enthusiastic student senator. I encourage everyone to exercise their right to vote, and get involved on March 14, 15, 16.

Brian
BESSE

Never before has the future looked so promising for the student at a Canadian university. All focus on this notion can best be described as the growing trend towards the "student generation".