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7.6 per cent Proposed tuition hike attacked as too high

BY GINA STACK

Dalhousie students will most likely face a tuition increase of 7.6 per cent across the board this September.

The increase was recommended to the senate by the president's Budget Advisory Committee in its eleventh financial report (BAC XI). BAC XI is a proposed university budget for the 1997-98 school year. Also suggested in the report are a 0.9 per cent decrease to the operating budgets of all programs at Dalhousie and a pay increase of 2 per cent (not including progression increases) for faculty and staff.

"The problem is the situation that we face," BAC chair Gil Winham said at Monday's senate meeting.

"If we had given lower tuition increases we would have had to cut the budget to departments more," said Winham. "We (the BAC committee) recognize there's pain and that there's some risk to the university, but we were between a rock and a hard place."

Student representative Chris Adams told senators that a tuition increase of 7.6 per cent was unacceptable.

Adams argued that he does not have a problem with tuition increases, but increases must be matched with more job opportunities and awards offered by the school. Adams said that he did not see any attempts at balancing tuition increases with opportunities for students to earn/receive more

money in the BAC XI report.

Student representative Dan Clark echoed Adams' discontentment with BAC XI's recommendation of a large tuition increase. Clark is from Ontario and says that Dal is running the risk of losing a large number of out of province students if tuition increases continue.

"I look at the Maclean's rank and see a ninth-rated university with some of the highest tuition in the country," Clark said.

"If students don't come out to Dal then Dal is going to have to do a lot more cutting."

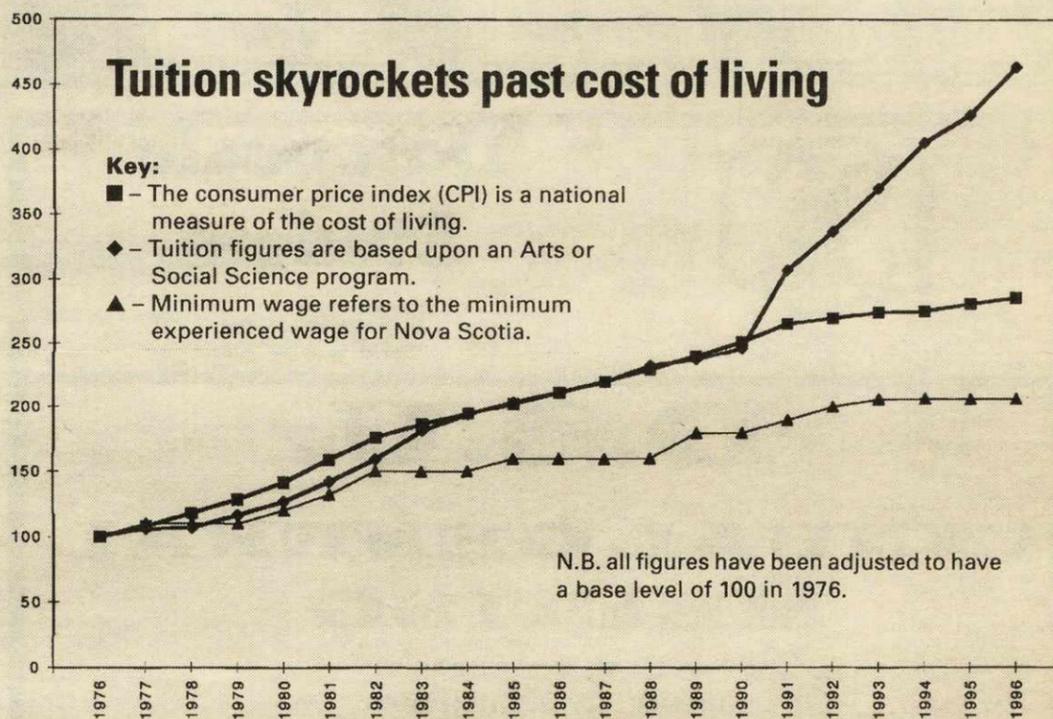
The deans of medicine and law also expressed alarm at the thought of facing a 7.6 per cent tuition increase in their departments.

Dean of Law Dawn Russell said that the department received 16.3 per cent fewer applicants to the law school this year. Russell said the law school has no problem filling its spaces, but is losing a lot of the best students to schools with lower tuition.

This year tuition at Dalhousie's law school was \$4,740. A 7.6 per cent increase would bring that number to \$5,100. Dalhousie is already the most expensive law school in the country, but this increase would make Dal's tuition \$1,000 more than the school with the second highest tuition.

"We have reached that threshold; tuition is already over the edge," Russell said.

"The quality of the first year class is still good, but we are losing some of the top students. We



have the best scholarships for first year students in the country and people are still not coming because the tuition is still too high."

Dean of Medicine John Ruedy expressed similar concerns.

"Increases in tuition should not be larger than the cost of living increase," Ruedy said.

"Although most of our undergraduates come from the Maritimes, we draw a large number of graduates from outside [the Maritimes] and we are losing our ability to recruit."

Ruedy said that Dal's tuition is no longer competitive with other medical schools. Medical students pay \$5,515 tuition and should an increase of 7.6 per cent go through, tuition would reach close to \$6,000 per year.

The dean added that presuming other schools are also raising tuition is wrong. He suggested that rising tuition fees is affecting the types of applicants to the medical school. Ruedy said that

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See also "Loan levels", p.3

Smith House gets burned: Police called in to investigate

BY MONICA GILLIS

The Halifax Regional Police have been called in to investigate a fire that occurred in Howe Hall's Smith House residence on January 24.

At approximately 6:30 p.m. last Friday night, the residence door of Kyle Murphy and Michael Arbuckle was set on fire by an unknown person. Someone is believed to have flicked the message board on their door with a lighter.

"I heard the alarm as I was changing my CD and getting ready to write a paper," said Tim Kaizer, who lives down the hall from where the fire happened. After going down the hall to make sure that everyone was out, he turned to see Murphy and Arbuckle's door on fire.

Kaizer said that he thought, "Holy shit, there is a fire," and that he froze for a moment. He then proceeded to put the fire out with his jacket.

"Five swipes and it was out," said Kaizer.

The fire department arrived only a few minutes after the commotion. As a result of the nature of the fire, it has been ruled an arson.

The police are conducting a full investigation of the incident, but have no suspects at this time. A meeting on Monday was held to discuss who set the fire and what discipli-

nary measures will be taken. One idea was a house fine of \$25 dollars per person — this notion was met with a great deal of resentment from residents. Taking away special house functions was another idea.

The director of Dal's Safety Office, Dr. William Louch, said at the meeting that he would be willing to help the arsonist with community service aimed towards fire prevention.

Residents said they feel that the fire department has come down hard on the residence. The department has announced that the posters in the halls are a fire violation and may not be permitted in the future. This would mean no election posters during the Howe Hall and Dalhousie Student Union elections.

The residence coordinators stressed that they want to help the arsonist and do not want kick them out of residence unless they have a long disciplinary history. They have also asked for anyone with information, or the guilty person, to come forward. If the culprit doesn't come forward, the penalty will be harsher when they are eventually caught.

Kaizer's jacket will be replaced, according to his residence coordinators. It has not yet been determined who will foot the bill for the new jacket.



International Development Week comes to campus from February 3-6. Check out the Gazette's IDW supplement on pages 10 and 11.