

# the Gazette

Volume 125 Number 6

Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia

October 22, 1992

## Anti-discrimination policy draft unveiled

by Ryan Stanley

After months of meetings, consultations and revisions, the latest draft of a proposed Policy on Discriminatory Harassment has been released on the Dalhousie campus, and students are being urged to find out about it.

The proposed policy is the work of the ad hoc Committee to Develop a Policy on Racism and Sexism, but its provisions attempt to address discrimination affecting a wide range of groups: those who have historically been "oppressed or marginalized on the basis of... sex, race, colour, age, disability, class or socio-economic condition, religion, sexual orientation, or national or ethnic origin". It aims "to ensure that members of such groups... are not discouraged from full participation in the university."

Nina Butlin, the DSU representative on the six-member drafting committee, feels it is important that students inform themselves about the proposal. "It will have a lot to say about what kind of place we all go to school and live in," she said.

A key component of the draft policy is the creation of a Committee on Discriminatory Harassment, which would deal with alleged violations of the policy involving members of the Dalhousie community and would oversee efforts to educate people on campus about the issues related to discriminatory harassment.

Butlin calls this committee "quite progressive", citing the heavy representation that is proposed for members of "underrepresented groups that are most affected" by discriminatory harassment. On the committee would be single members chosen by the Aboriginal Students' Association, the Black Canadian Students, the Dalhousie Women's Collective, the Women's Faculty Association, the Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Association of Dalhousie (B-Glad!) and the International Students Association. Other members would represent faculty, staff, the DSU, graduate students and the university administration.

An earlier version of the policy was reviewed by the university Senate last April. "A fair amount of criticism was received" through the Senate review and from concerned groups on campus, said Eric McKee, Vice-President (Student Services) and chair of the drafting committee. "As a result the committee was asked to redraft the policy."

A major change between past versions and the present one is the considerably expanded membership which is proposed for the Committee on Discriminatory Harassment. "It is vital," says Peter Edwards, B-glad! representative on DSU Council, "that the policy reflect the committee's recognition of the necessity of involving all these groups." While not expressing complete satisfaction,

### Statement on Discriminatory Harassment (Proposed)

Freedom of inquiry and of expression are essential freedoms in a university and conflicting ideas are a vital feature of university life. These freedoms must not, however, be exercised in ways which simultaneously deny similar freedom to others or make their exercise more difficult by creating a hostile environment for work, study or participation in campus life. For the university to achieve its educational purposes, it is vital that all individuals feel free to express responsibly their views and opinions. It is especially important to ensure that members of groups that have historically been oppressed or marginalized on the basis of such characteristics as sex, race, colour, age, disability, class or socio-economic condition, religion, sexual orientation, or national or ethnic origin, are not discouraged from full participation in the university.

Dalhousie University as an institution recognizes its responsibility to contribute to the creation of a campus environment which is free from discrimination and harassment. Towards that end, we adopt a five part programme: an articulation of the rights and responsibilities of members of the University, a definition of discriminatory harassment and the limits of protected free expression, a commitment to an education programme, the establishment of an ongoing committee to oversee the implementation of this policy, and a procedure for handling alleged violations of the policy.

he said, "It's a better starting point than what was proposed last summer [in an earlier draft]."

Significant changes were also made in the recommended procedures for dealing with incidents of alleged harassment. McKee said that one of the main criticisms of the proposal in its earlier form was that the process was an informal one. The new document gives considerable detail on the proposed measures for

receiving complaints and acting on them, measures which range from informal mediation to formal investigation.

It also makes clear that the Committee on Discriminatory Harassment is not designed to supplant other processes for lodging complaints, such as the sexual harassment procedure, the academic appeals process and the Employment Equity Office.

The text of the proposed policy can be found in the October 21 issue of the *Dalhousie News*. As well, students can find out more and air their views at a public forum, to be held Wednesday, November 4 at 12:00 noon in the Green Room of the Student Union Building. The forum will feature presentations from groups affected by discriminatory harassment, a panel and general discussion.

## Convocation: new and improved

by Nina Butlin

Four months of struggle by students and their representative body, the DSU, paid off on Saturday, October 17 when students being recognized at Convocation were able to receive their diplomas without harassment from anyone officiating at the ceremony. Some members of the Dalhousie Faculty Association had supported the students in their efforts to clean up graduation.

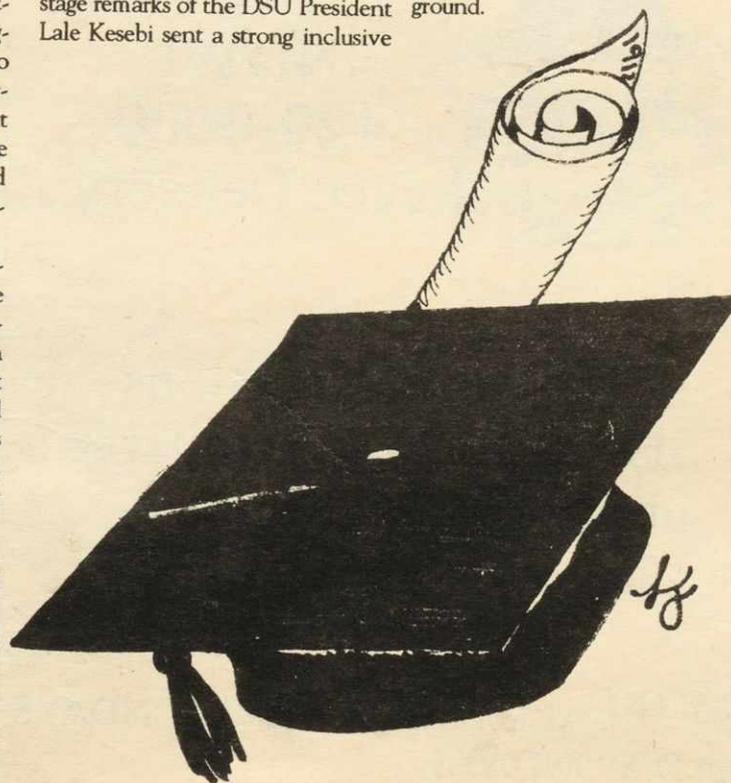
As reported in the Gazette, September 17, DSU had raised the issue of sexual harassment at Convocation in a motion passed in Council in June. This motion protested what were felt to be inappropriate and insulting comments made to students by the Chancellor of the University, H. Reuben Cohen, during the May 1992 Convocation.

The Chancellor, who had communicated to DSU that he would not be "muzzled" at Convocation, played a strictly ceremonial role at the October 17th event. He occupied a chair at centre stage throughout the ceremony, maintaining silence except for the brief utterance of the prescribed phrases which were

in keeping with his role of office.

In line with other DSU initiatives toward an harassment-free and diversity-positive Convocation, the on-stage remarks of the DSU President Lale Kesebi sent a strong inclusive

message to the Dalhousie community, an expression of pride at its diversity with regard to gender, sexual orientation, race and cultural background.



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