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Dispute opportunity to address causes of university's plight

By SAMANTHA BRENNAN

PEOPLE ARE TALKING about Dalhousie university.

Student union president Alex Gigeroff spends a lot of time on the phone these days. And lately the calls have been coming from far away places—the *Globe and Mail*, the national TV news and CBC radio.

With more media attention than ever focussed on Dalhousie's \$13-15 million deficit, the faculty dispute has become an opportunity to address the underlying causes of the university's financial plight.

Caroline Zayid, DSU vice-president external, says she hopes the recent spree of attention directed at Dalhousie will allow students to bring home issues they've been talking about for years—underfunding of post-secondary education and the way the university is governed.

In this vein Geoff Martin, student representative on Dalhousie's board of governors, says the ultimate responsibility for Dalhousie's problems rests with the provincial government and their decision not to adequately fund post-secondary institutions.

The need to eliminate the university's deficit and fear of monetary penalties has been one of the administration's main arguments for refusing to substantially increase faculty's salaries.

According to the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC), if a university's debt exceeds a set percentage of their operating budget, the university is penalized and the government can withhold the penalty from the coming year's operating grant.

For three years Dalhousie has exceeded the limit set by the MPHEC and faces a threat that the penalties for these years will be taken out of the next operating grant.

At a meeting with the minister of education on Jan. 2, we asked that these penalties be waived, says Gigeroff.

Martin also says that the university has failed in its responsibility to make the public aware of government underfunding. Last year operating grants to the university were increased by only four per cent in face of a recommendation from the MPHEC that the increase be at least twice that, he says.

"The president has decided to pursue a policy of quiet diplomacy that I regard as inappropriate," says Martin. For him the answer lies in restructuring the university as

well as increased funding. He says there is a real imbalance of power at the university and unless that is changed Dalhousie is going to continue to tear itself apart.

Although the student union is talking about issues, they're still convinced that "neutrality" is the only option if they want to help prevent a strike.

Gigeroff says its neither "practical or realistic" to offer support for either side in the dispute. "The student union's prime responsibility is to the students, to see that our interests are protected," says Gigeroff.

He says the student union is investigating taking legal action against the administration if a strike occurs, offering information to students through a special bulletin and trying to ensure that students who refuse to attend classes will not be penalized.

In the end Gigeroff holds on to an optimistic vision. "I'd hope that once they (both sides) see how badly students are going to be affected they may go back to the table," he says.

Feminist mag. starts at U of T

TORONTO (CUP)—Feminism is back in print at the University of Toronto with a new magazine called *OtherWise*.

The staff of the magazine wants to "initiate a feminist dialogue" on campus, says spokesperson Ingrid MacDonald.

"We're having a good time," she says. "We want the campus to know about feminism."

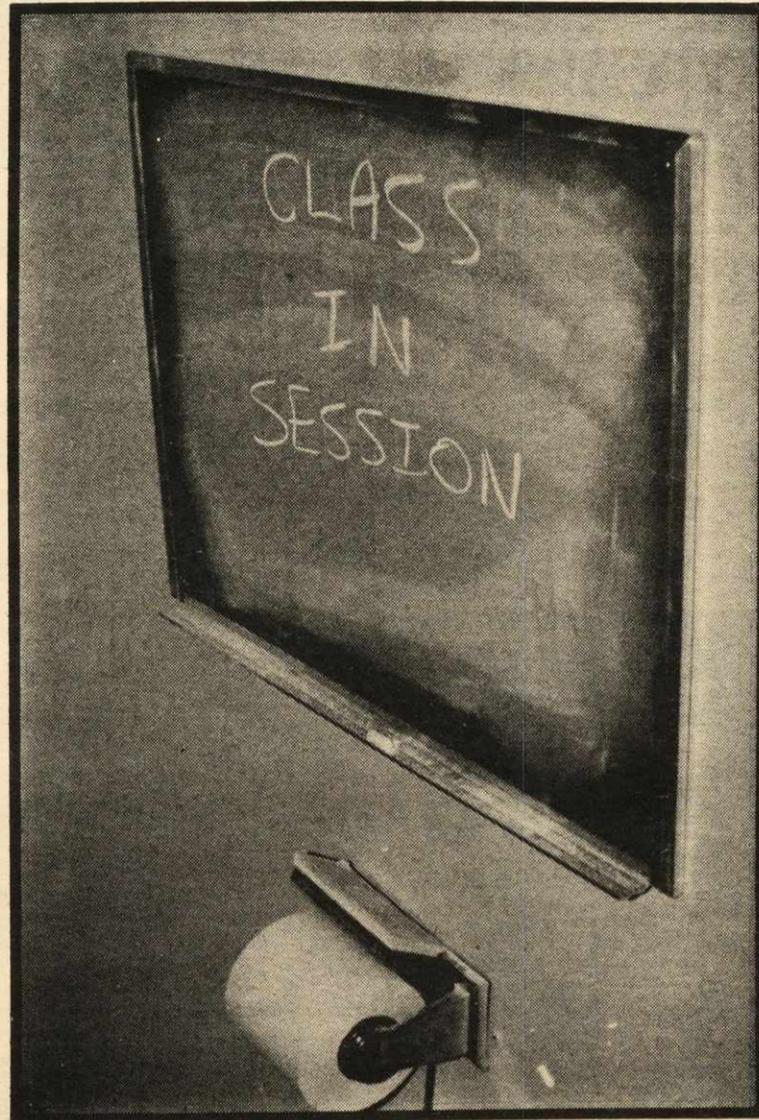
The new magazine is a departure from the trend to campus conservatism marked by last year's start-up of the right-wing *U of T Magazine* and *McGill Magazine*.

In its first issue, *OtherWise* featured articles on the history of the fight for a women's centre on campus, a women's guide to Toronto services and a networking column.

OtherWise was started with money left behind by the *U of T Women's Newsmagazine*. The magazine folded two years ago, partly due to pressure from the student council, which funded the paper but did not like its "women only" policies.

Unlike its predecessor, *OtherWise* encourages contributions from men.

"We welcome new people," says MacDonald, but added that contributors should be aware the magazine has "an explicit agenda." □



Chalk one up for graffiti artists! Chalkboards have recently been installed in Dal SUB washrooms. Fancy new writing paper is also provided. Photo: Darryl C. Macdonald

Blackboards provide forum for debate in washroom stalls

By CHARLENE SADLER

IGNORED FOR YEARS, graffiti art is finally being catered to at Dalhousie.

One of the newer innovations returning students will find this term are chalkboards in washrooms on the second floor of the student union building. Student union president Alex Gigeroff says he hopes the chalkboards will deter students from writing graffiti on the walls.

He says the idea began with one of his "major discoveries" at the Canadian Federation of Students conference at the University of Alberta, where he first saw chalkboards in the washrooms.

As well as the vandalism, Gigeroff hopes the chalkboards will raise the quality of graffiti at Dalhousie.

"There was no vandalism and

people were indefinitely more witty, creative, and less offensive at the U of A," says Gigeroff. "Most graffiti is of the ha-ha, boo-boo kind but the walls still have to be scraped down and repainted each year.

"With chalkboards the graffiti can be erased."

But for now the chalkboards are up on a trial basis and will be taken down if they get broken or cause a "wild outrage" says Gigeroff. He also promises aspiring graffiti artists an ample supply of chalk.

No strike action for now

DFA threaten to initiate full strike action Jan 28 if no progress is made

By WENDY COOMBER

IT'LL BE CLASSES AS USUAL for Dalhousie students. There will be no strike by the Dalhousie Faculty Association in the coming week, says DFA spokesperson Dr. John Rutherford.

After a three-hour meeting Wednesday night, the DFA decided on the following actions should their stand-off with the board of governors continue: Jan 11-14 DFA members will hold informational pickets around the campus. Classes will not be disrupted.

On Jan. 16 there will be a one-day work stoppage.

The DFA will meet on Jan 24 to listen to and assess the negotiating team's progress, if any, and decide on future steps.

If there is no progress on contract negotiations by Jan 28 the DFA will initiate full strike action.

Engineers want to clean up their image at U of T

TORONTO (CUP)—Some engineering students at the University of Toronto are tired of their image as "beer-guzzling partyers" and want to stress the "intellectual" aspects of engineering.

The U of T engineering students say they will educate their peers about the negative image prompted by their antics on Canadian campuses, when they gather for an upcoming Congress of Engineering Students.

"Of course people go to a conference to have a good time," says David Stubbing, chair of the congress organizing committee. "We want to make sure that people go home with more than a hang-over." □

Quote of the week

Former student politician Atul Sharma on the dispute between the Dalhousie Faculty Association and the Dalhousie Administration: "I think the university wants to bust the union and I think the DFA wants a confrontation. I think we'll all be screwed in the long run."