

Student aid changes discussed

Poor, a loan, and rejected

by Robert Drinkwater

Student delegates at a conference in Halifax last weekend say changing trends in student aid could leave some students out in the cold.

The conference, held in the Dalhousie SUB, was co-hosted by the Canadian Federation of Students and the Students' Union of Nova Scotia (SUNS). It dealt specifically with changes to student assistance.

"There's so much going on, particularly this year with New Brunswick and Nova Scotia having significantly altered their student aid programs," said Sue Drapeau of SUNS on why the two student lobby groups called the conference.

"In Nova Scotia, the bursary program is no more," she said. "You used to get a Canada Student Loan followed by a Nova Scotia bursary, which you didn't pay back. This year you get a Canada Student Loan followed by a Nova Scotia student loan."

Drapeau said delegates at the conference discussed the privatization of student loans, also new in Nova Scotia. The province handed over control of the loan program to the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce in December.

"This is the first time ever that any student loans we know of have

loans this year, Maclean says 783 were turned down. While the provincial government has stepped in to guarantee these people loans for this year, he says they've been told they'll be on their own after that.

Maclean also worries students may be denied loans because of stupid mistakes made while living away from home for the first time.

"In my first year, I missed paying a phone bill or two because I just wasn't used to paying bills. I signed up for the book-of-the-month club, for instance. Bang! I didn't remember, went home, and forgot to pay a bill. The next thing I knew, an eight-dollar bill was a fifty-dollar bill. I finally paid it off, but it's delinquent."

At the close of the conference, delegates decided they would try to get information sheets on the recent changes included in student loan packages, and would raise the issue of student aid in local media.

Students may be denied loans for stupid mistakes.

included in them a credit check by the bank, and have allowed the bank some option in turning students down for loans," she said.

Hal Maclean, representing Dalhousie at the conference, said some Nova Scotians have already been rejected for loans. Out of 12,000 who applied for provincial student



Shirley Tillotson reacts during the debate.

DAL PHOTO: MIKE DEVONPORT

Senate approves harassment policy

by Gazette staff

Dalhousie's Senate spent two hours on Valentine's Day debating a less-than-romantic subject: the proposed Discriminatory Harassment Policy.

By the end of it, a large majority voted to approve the policy which has divided professors since the committee to develop it was struck three years ago.

President Howard Clark set up the Committee to Develop a Policy on Racism and Sexism in November 1990. It was composed of two professors, three administrators and a student.

Up to now Dalhousie has had no policy to handle incidents of discriminatory behaviour, although a sexual harassment grievance policy is in place.

The hundred or so faculty members, students and administrators spent most of the afternoon discussing how to structure the debate, and whether to discuss the policy as a whole or individual aspects of it. Eventually the members of the Senate decided to overrule the Chair,

Kenneth Dunn, and proceeded to examine the policy as an entire document.

The policy has been criticized by some professors who say it threatens the principle of academic freedom at a university, where controversial ideas should be discussed freely. Some have said the policy's definition of offensive behaviour is too vague.

Its proponents have said it would protect the rights of students and professors who might be victims of discriminatory attacks in the classroom and elsewhere on campus.

Earlier drafts of the policy had contained provisions for formal hearings which could have ended in a person being expelled from the university. The policy passed Monday emphasizes mediation procedures.

The policy must be approved by the Board of Governors before it becomes official. It is scheduled to go before the Board in March. Afterwards, a Committee on Discriminatory Harassment would be nominated to oversee implementation of the policy. It will be reviewed in three years.



Jean Charest likes being Tory leader THIS much.

DAL PHOTO: KEN KAM

After the big landslide

by Adam Newman

Jean Charest, the federal Progressive Conservative Party leader and one half of its parliamentary caucus, was in town last weekend for a provincial party annual meeting. Charest became an MP in 1984, when he was 26 years old. Since then he has served as Youth Minister, Minister of Fitness and Amateur Sport, and Minister of the Environment.

Charest granted the Gazette's request for an interview.

Gazette: How do you find the new House of Commons?

Charest: It's quite different, to say the least. It's testing my sense of perspective and history and of humour. But it's not a place where we are going to have a great deal to say — in fact, if anything, the parties in the House of Commons — the Reform, the Bloc — have indicated quite clearly that they prefer we say

as little as possible, which is disappointing for us because we do have 16 per cent of the vote, and two million Canadians voted for us, and they have a right to be heard. You know the irony of it is that the Bloc has 14 per cent of the vote and they're the official opposition, with a wealth of financial resources to back them up. And here we are with 16 per cent being shut out, quite deliberately, and that's the way things are.

But that being the way it is though, I'm not going to spend my time complaining about it. I'm just going to go out there and do the work that I have to do to rebuild our party.

G: What lesson can be learned from Kim Campbell's defeat and the dramatic decline in the number of PCs elected to Parliament?

C: Well, it's very much our party's defeat. It's not one that I think is attributed to either one individual or one decision or one pronounce-

ment. The fact of the matter is we've been in power for nine years, we have had two consecutive majority governments, and we took difficult decisions, I think courageous decisions, in the period of time we were there. We also experienced a world recession that has tested the viability of every government in the free world. There are very few governments today who are able to survive the electoral process, because people are hostile to the pressure of change and have reacted by changing their government. So it would have been very difficult for anyone.

What we do have to learn though is to accept that defeat, acknowledge it, and look at what we could have done differently — obviously we weren't listening as much as we should have. And now we have to go back within our own party and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

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March 3.

Just so you know.

The Gazette

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