

Notes from the underground: final installment

This week the GAZETTE presents the last instalment in a series on the Student Council Executive and Representatives. The views of four members have not been published due either to the fact that they have resigned or that they have been unavailable and have not returned repeated phone calls.

Hopefully, this series has helped increase understanding of student government and its members. We will be doing further articles on Student Union finances and our representatives on the various bodies within the university structure itself.

It seems clear that drastic change is needed in student government at Dal for it to be at all effective. And it must happen before the next election.

Robert Hyslop — Law

"Perhaps there has been an over-emphasis on controlling the power of the executive. I myself have been very successful in working with Brian Smith and have found he works very hard and diligently. It's not fair to say he dominates council meetings exclusively or is always trying to ram issues through. The latter charge may carry some weight, but it is bound to happen a few times in a large university, and can largely be traced to a breakdown in communications. I myself am just getting to know all of the council members and we have been meeting since last March."

How do you represent your faculty?
"I try to take advantage of any opportunities to address Law Society meetings. Unfortunately, this is a not-too-frequent occurrence, as the society does not meet that often... Generally I try to make myself available at the law students' lounge and library, in order to solicit their opinions. However, it gets a bit discouraging; law students as a whole and perhaps at Dalhousie in particular are not too interested in student government. They regard their studies three year necessary evil in order to equip themselves for their profession. They follow a 'get in, study and get out' philosophy."

How does council serve the interests of the Law faculty?

"Quite well. We have been able to form an effective lobby and get an additional \$700 for law students' purposes. In the past there was the feeling that we were not getting our money's worth out of council. Perhaps the fact that the president is a Law student himself has something to do with the improved situation."

What are your opinions of council and its reformation?

Chris Novelli — Nursing

Why are you not then working on the Committee for Alternative Student Government?

"I feel I can better serve the nursing students by raising funds for a national conference of the Canadian University Nursing Students Association — it's a more worthwhile effort."

The central problem is the apathy of the students. They just don't give a damn. Council members in turn are apathetic with regard to representing their interests. Often they consider themselves above doing menial work. Brian Smith is frustrated — he works like a dog but can do little more than organize.

"Suppose the committee did come up with ten different means of student government — the students wouldn't care enough to get behind one and support it. All they care about is having a place to eat and a place to park their car. On a large campus, I don't see any changes being possible, due to the large apathetic masses involved. Why should I sit and rap with those characters for hours when nothing will come of it? I love to see things change, but what's the good of trying if nobody else cares?"

"You cannot break through the students' apathy without scaring them. Some hassle has to be caused to bring them to their feet. Perhaps a period of anarchy is what's needed."

"In the meantime, Nursing will elect somebody else to sit on Council. Perhaps they will fit into the groove a bit better."

How do you represent your faculty?
"I have given up on Council. I attend Nursing Society meetings and am personally acquainted with almost all the nursing students and their opinions. While it was easier to represent my faculty because of its small size, this was a disadvantage when it came to carrying weight on Council. Nursing, Law, Medicine and the other smaller faculties are looked down upon by council. It seems all power and attention goes to the Arts and Science reps... It turns out that 4 or 5 people on Council always sway the issues — everything goes one way."

Why are you so fed up with council?
"You can't realize how much of a farce it is till you sit on it. It is not representative of the students at all. Many council members speak only for themselves and are working only for their own advantage — in other words, they're power trippers... the majority of the students are being ripped off."

"The whole council system is for the birds. It must be scrapped and something new started... it can't be reformed."

Pictured to the right are:
top: Debbie Henderson — Arts
second: Robert Hyslop — Law, Bob Mohn — Grads
third: Ken MacDougall — Arts, Barry Ward — Commerce
fourth: Chris Novelli — Nursing
(Photos by Charles Gosling/ Dal photos — photos in last week's supplement on the Student Council)

Debbie Henderson — Arts

German. "The role of these representatives would be the giving out of information and receiving of advice."

She suggests that this could be achieved "by the enlargement and formation of departmental societies such as the French, History, and German clubs; the Economics Course Union, the Psychology Course Union, or the Sociology Course Union."

In her capacity as Chairman of the Committee on Course Evaluation Henderson hopes to see a course evaluation booklet published for next year. Henderson is also Chairman of the Course Monitoring Committee and one of the two council members on the Executive Council.

On Council:
She feels that the main reason Council appears ineffective is because the Student Council, although given a lot of responsibility by the executive, "is given no direction nor enough information by the executive to effectively carry out its duties."

She also thinks that the executive could be improved by employing "a system of multi vice-presidents."

Role:
Debbie Henderson, one of four Arts representatives on Student Council, feels that "it is impossible for four students to represent 2400 students."

As a member of the Committee on Alternate Student Government, she would like to see the Art's representatives categorized into smaller divisions. For example, a separate representative would be elected for Political Science and Economics, or English and Music, or French and

Pierre Gagne — Health Professions

On Council:
He feels the power of the presidency is probably too much but this is not just because of Brian Smith — but because of the defined role of the president. As for improving Council, Gagne says he "doesn't really know yet," "but maybe I'll know better after a few months. In some cases they do some good things."

Role of the Union within the University:
"Right now, they are concerned with entertainment, the Task Force and athletic outlets, and they're involved in student discipline, and basically in trying to see that students get a fair shake."

As for getting more student representation on the university decision-making bodies, he says no, we should not, "not from what I've seen. Maybe students have not been responsible in the past to warrant more say. As well, with new people coming into the university how do they know what's right and what's going on."

His role:
He feels he doesn't know enough about Council yet as he has only been to a few meetings. But he says that Brian Smith seems to have all the power and that Council is aiming to control him a bit.

On his own personal role, he says, "How can you represent anyone when only 55 people vote in the election?"

"If students showed real concern for their faculty, the role of the Council rep could be important, but apathy really takes away a lot of the responsibility from the job."

Ken MacDougall — Arts

nalism and condescension of older students." A manifestation of this problem is "Orientation Week" which he describes as a "rip-off" and a "big drunk" and which, while supposedly designed to orient students and buffer the shock of a different world, was instead designed only to show a profit.

Ken is a member of the Elections Committee, the Committee on Alternate Government, the Curriculum Committee, the Course Evaluation Committee, the Course Monitoring Committee and three sub-committees.

ON COUNCIL:
He describes his fellow Council members as "a group of people with the right ideas who lack the leadership to effectively do all they want to do for the Student Union." He would like to see the Student Council "unite in solidarity with the students and take a hard-line shot at the Student Administration."

He describes Brian Smith as a "fence-sitter," Joan McKeigan — "she shouldn't be receiving \$1600 per year," Blakely (treasurer) "competent but misguided, too interested in profit."

ROLE:
Ken MacDougall, one of the more opinionated Council members, is representative of the Arts Faculty. "Theoretically, I'm supposed to represent the whims and desires of 2400 students. Practically, this is impossible."

He believes that in order for Council to operate effectively as representatives of the student body, there must be a well-developed "line of communication" between reps and students. This could be achieved through Clubs and Organizations within the different departments. However, Ken personally believes "that the petty bureaucrats on Council, in Clubs, and in organization are the main cause of the communication problem."

He feels that the chief victims of the communications breakdown are the Freshmen who are intimidated and "alienated by the pater-

