

EDITORIAL

The recent situation in the Department of Romance Languages concerning the Conversational French class is symptomatic of a grave problem with which this university must come face to face.

All you have to do is look around your classrooms to realize that there is a problem of overcrowding at Dalhousie. In many classes students are standing in the doorways or sitting on windowsills, simply because there is nowhere else to sit. It is hardly an environment that is conducive to learning!

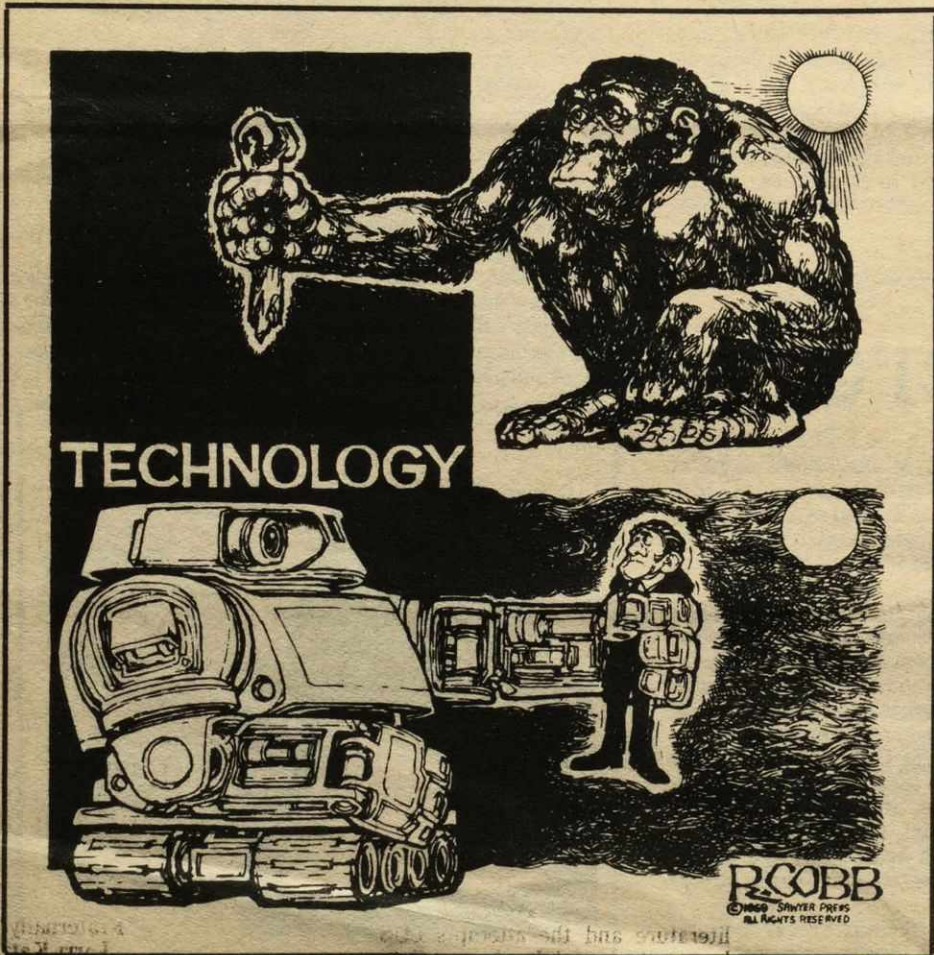
But the lack of physical facilities is only one problem – the university administration has taken no firm steps to ensure that those students who are admitted get an education of any value at all.

While we consider it essential that Dalhousie adopt a policy of universal accessibility (recognition of the right of all those academically qualified, to a university education, regardless of economic or social position) we also are forced to recognize that the administration of this institution has not seen fit to accept the consequences of even limited accessibility.

Though the freshmen count has almost doubled over last year, the administration has made no provision for hiring enough academic staff to meet the increased demand. The increase in the faculty-student ratio which results means that the professor you couldn't get to talk to last year is the same one you can't even see from your vantage point at the back of the class this year. It eliminates even the remote possibility that students and faculty can be engaged in meaningful exchanges of ideas in the classroom.

Besides this very serious problem, there is the difficulty of a lack of student housing and also, the exorbitant rents that are charged for those available. Dalhousie has not made any real and meaningful provision for solving this problem in its multi-million dollar expansion program. Residences appear to be at the bottom of the university's priority lists.

The situation will not resolve itself. If students of Dalhousie are to defend their own interests and those of future students, some sort of constructive action must be taken. We must demonstrate to the university our serious concern about the overcrowding and the failure of the university to deal with it.



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