

Orientation week needs serious overhaul

by Alison Manzer

Orientation week — orienting or socializing? What is the purpose of this week supposed to be?

Last week the Gazette spoke with some first year students as well as Orientation Committee members, co-chairmen, Pat Cook, Herman Varma, and co-ordinator, Wolfgang Novak.

While the committee members made it clear that to become "oriented", social events are essential, first year students were not quite sure this is the most effective way to find out about the university.

One student said the events were basically good but they could have been more informative. Others felt that course outlines should be made available before registration day, rather than during the first week of classes.

Judging by the comments of first year students, orientation should have a two-fold purpose.

It should include a social atmosphere in which new students can become used to the campus and meet other students. The week should also serve as an introduction to the university and its operations.

Socializing is a great way to start off and may even be what most students want. But something more needs to be offered to those students genuinely in need of help.

However, the committee members disagree. They view this week as one of the few times people get really involved in special events. In this light, the committee feels this year was a success.

The possibility of holding information meetings at

the beginning of the year would be of little benefit, according to the committee members. "We don't think any help can be given before classes start."

Several first year students suggested holding seminars on university operations and how to best cope with them.

"This is something that has to be started by the administration — to bring students in a week earlier," said the committee. They also thought it might be worthwhile to hold mini-classes. These would give students a chance to see their classes in action before registration.

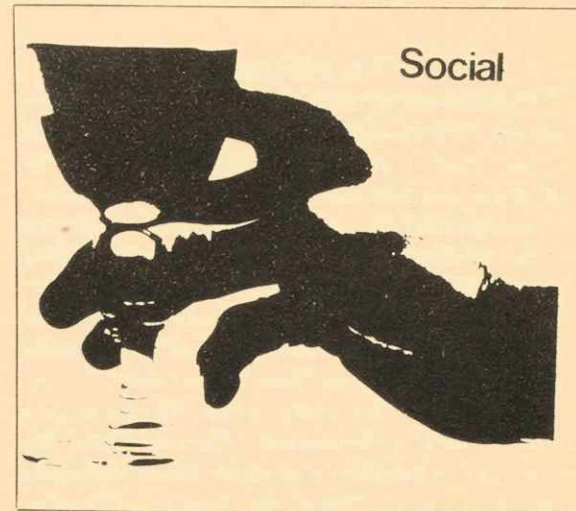
"Several years ago," explained the members, "there were seminars, and about five to ten per cent of the professors attended."

"Two years ago we had a seminar in the McInnes Room. Although notices were sent to every department, only 100 students and six professors showed up. Nobody learned much."

These poor turnouts could be partially due to the format. Perhaps informative and social events could be combined. Some information has to be given to the students. This is obvious from the number of students who ran into registration and bookstore hassles.

Another aspect of orientation which must be re-evaluated is the "frosh" card. This year new students could purchase one for \$7 to get into all events. Only 750 of these cards were sold, out of 1500 potential buyers. As a result, their usefulness must be questioned.

Many first year students were not pleased with the



Orientation — too much drink, not enough service.

hard sell approach on the cards. The committee explains this: "The predominant reason was that the Dublin Corporation was an expensive group and the committee had to break even. We could not lose more than \$500."

The Orientation committee had a budget of \$7,600. They expect they have broken even or better.

The actual social purpose of the week is somewhat nebulous and thus its success is hard to measure. The variety of events presented could technically achieve an atmosphere of congeniality and facilitate intermingling between first year and upper class students. If properly handled it could also provide necessary information for new students.

Whatever the rationalization, information was not imparted. The obvious conclusion has to be that orientation failed to adjust students to all the ways and means of Dalhousie.

Orientation week should have encompassed many things, but a number of these were neglected. The outlook, purpose and actual planning require much revision.

Future years will hopefully bring greater integration of student services and organizations to provide a wider view of the university and campus life.

Improvements must occur, so students should make their ideas known to the Orientation committee.

HelpLine still needs funds

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developed in the spring of 1971, when most of the volunteers left at the end of the school term.

Adjusting to this set-back, volunteers were recruited from the community. Of the 235 people who registered for the training program, about 50 per cent attended all sessions. Out of this group, approximately 90 met the criteria set by the evaluators, the Line co-ordinators.

These volunteers did not necessarily have any experience in the counselling field but wanted to help others.

Co-ordinator Webber describes why some people work on the Line.

"It provides an outlet for them that they couldn't find elsewhere. A lot of volunteers wanted to get involved in community affairs, but didn't know how to go about it. Some of these people have been able to get involved in other projects as a result of working for Help Line. So

in some ways, it is a two-way service — by helping others, they have been able to help themselves."

Now about 100 people including administrative staff, board members and volunteers are working on the Line. During the summer, Webber was assisted with the administrative work by two students — John Howitt and Gail Chaddock — employed under the Opportunities for Youth Program.

The Line is having financial difficulties, however. "We are living from hand to mouth right now, and any donations would be appreciated," Webber explained. "However, by the spring of 1972, we hope to be brought under the wing of United Appeal. In the meantime, we will try to keep going with the help of private funding."

People needing any kind of aid should not hesitate to use the service. Callers do not have to give their name, in keeping with the principle of confidentiality.

If YOU need help, call 422-7444.

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Office Hours (subject to revision)

Monday	8:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m.; 3:00 — 5:00 p.m.	(6 1/2)
Tuesday	8:30 a.m. — 10:30 a.m.; 2:30 — 5:00 p.m.; and 7:00 — 9:00 p.m.	(6 1/2)
Wednesday	8:30 a.m. — 1:00 p.m.; 1:30 — 5:00 p.m.	(8)
Thursday	8:30 a.m. — 11:30 a.m.; 3:00 — 5:00 p.m.	(5)
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Ian Chambers will be in Monday afternoon and every morning except Friday; Steve Aronson will be in Tuesday evening and Friday morning, and every afternoon except Monday.

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