

Accountability for the Arts Society

The following is an excerpt from a letter sent to Dr. Graham Taylor, Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, which was carbon copied to the Gazette.

Dear Dr. Taylor,

I am writing to you in an effort short of appealing to the President of the University himself. What I am about to discuss with you is serious and disturbing. This letter is written in the hope that you may see fit to take action so that the Executive of the Arts Society be held accountable for their abuse and waste of student money.

I have enclosed a copy of the letter which I submitted to the February 2 edition of the Gazette. I am sure that you will agree that the points raised need to be addressed by those responsible and that action must be taken against these parties in order to maintain the credibility of the Arts and Social Sciences faculty and the University itself.

The first point to be discussed is the ill-fated J.J.'s night, where someone gave the orders to open up the bar once the previously paid and agreed number of drinks were consumed. Such action is an example of independent, arbitrary decision making which is void of any sense of responsibility. I believe that Dalhousie University is based on the principles of democracy and not the rule of dictators.

I am sure you will agree that there is a need for accountability for such decisions when one considers

that this is student money that is being wasted, in this case on alcohol. If you were to approve a certain amount of money for one of your departments to hold a social, and were later presented with a bill several hundred dollars in excess of what you had approved, you would demand to know who is responsible and take the necessary action.

The second issue is the Executive decisions made in deciding to use student money to purchase extravagant items. This includes \$1700 for two chairs, a desk, and a bookcase. One must keep in mind that this furniture is used by less than a dozen students.

Another expenditure by the Executive was the purchase of a computer for the use of the Arts Society. The cost of this computer was \$3500. While the price in itself is alarming, it gets worse. The price does not include a printer. The cost was included under the title of "printer and supplies" for \$1400. This is a shame. There is absolutely no justifiable reason for the purchase of such a lavish computer system with students' money.

The sad part of this is that the Executive seems to believe that it should bear no responsibility for these expenditures. They seem to think that as long as these decisions are passed by the full council, it is ok. The fact remains that the full council, made up of the Executive and society reps, do not share equal responsibility. The plain fact is that

society reps are selected by society members, whereby the Executive is elected by all Arts students. As a result of this, the Executive has a duty to disclose their expenses to all Arts students who have paid their society fee.

What better way to inform students of these expenses than through the student newspaper. It is obvious that it is not convenient for all students involved to attend society meetings. Yet it is painfully obvious that the Arts Executive does not intend to do this. I point your attention to the response in the February 9 edition of the Gazette from the President of the Arts society.

This response is an insult to the intelligence of all Dalhousie students. To simply state that the points I raised were "an inaccurate reporting of the Society's expenditures and activities" without discussing their content is a blatant disregard of their duty as elected student representatives. Everyone who read my letter will agree that my point was not the state of the society's books. I believe the President's response is an admission of wrongdoing and waste that the Executive hopes everyone will forget about.

The Executive is sadly mistaken if they think that I am going to end my pursuit for justice when they point out that I have only attended two society meetings. The fact is that I am a Law student and there is absolutely no duty on me to attend their meetings. To think that I was able to

reveal to you what I have after only attending two meetings is alarming. One has to wonder what else they have done that we don't know about. This could easily be put to rest if the Executive published their expense report for all of us to see.

The last point I wish to discuss with you is that the Executive of the Arts society presented the proposed budget of the Greek Council for approval. The budget was approved and the Council was given \$1075 of student society money. Under what grounds could the Greek Council possibly be considered a B-society, therefore placing it on the same educational level as societies such as Music and French? Does the Executive believe that this is a decision which would be supported by the majority of Arts students who elected them? How many students did they think would be pleased that their society fee went to support a fraternity?

It only gets worse. According to the society directory provided by the DSU, the President of the Greek Council is none other than the current Treasurer of the Arts society! This is a blatant violation of the Art Society Constitution. Under Article VI: Duties of the Executive, section (3) outlines the duties of the Treasurer:

The Treasurer: (e) shall not be serving on the Executive of a Member Society.

I am also told that the Treasurer is an executive member of the Political

Science Society. If any of the above is true, the Treasurer must be forced to immediately resign. In order for students to maintain trust in those who govern this University, a sense of accountability and adherence to established rules must be enforced.

You are probably asking yourself why I am appealing to you to take action. As you can see from the letter of February 2, my call for action by both the Arts Executive and the DSU appears to have fallen on deaf ears. According to Article IV: Members of the Council, section (2):

Ex Officio members of the Council shall be: (a) Dean of the Faculty

I believe your authority under the Constitution and your position as Dean allows you to demand that some accountability be exercised. In politics, we see elected representatives being forced to resign everyday for making poor decisions. I see no reason why the Arts Society should operate differently.

A sense of immediacy is required here. The mandate of the current Executive has nearly ended. I am sure you will agree that members of the Executive must be held accountable for their actions before their term is over or that they decide to re-offer for office.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your concern. It is my solemn wish that the necessary action be taken so that justice prevails.

Michel P. Samson

Equality for both men and women

We need more feminist men. Yes, more feminist men. I heard this statement from a co-worker the other day and after careful thought I totally agree.

Men need to be more proactive. Men need to be changing with the changing society we all are living in. Our society is becoming more and more tolerant, more open. There are many groups working towards equal rights. Women are working towards gender equality through support groups, action groups, women's collectives, there is even a Women's Centre.

The question I have found myself asking is: what are men doing and what can they do? If we all wish for a truly open and equal society, then we all must do our part. Many people who I have spoken with have suggested that men do not, or will not change because they are already in a position of power. Why would they want to change?

Let's look at some reasons: when speaking of gender equality, the concept of gender stereotypes comes up.

We are all familiar with the stere-

otype that women are not as able as men in the corporate world, or the male-dominated workplace. Women are considered to be best at home, cleaning and watching the children. I believe that there are many women currently disproving this stereotype and I hope there will be many more.

Women are not the only victims of gender stereotyping. The reverse of these stereotypes is also present in our society. While men are considered to be great corporate workers, they are not considered to be very good caregivers. This is all because of gender socialization and the resulting gender stereotypes.

Now, here is my question: if women are fighting for equal opportunities, why aren't men supporting them and working toward equality in their own right? It's still not socially acceptable to be a househusband, for example. Why aren't men breaking free from their gender roles? It seems to be a question of status and power.

There is the view that if men are "sitting pretty" why would they give up their chair. I see it more along the

lines of becoming so comfortable in a cage designed to keep others out that now men don't want to leave and have become trapped by the social constructs designed to protect their position. This makes it very difficult for men to change.

There are more women doing traditionally male jobs than there are men in traditionally women's jobs. For example, there are many more female doctors than male nurses; more female lawyers than male day-care workers. It's not only that men don't seem to want to change, change is difficult.

I applied to be a volunteer baby-cuddler several years ago. I had to fight to get the position because I was a "tough, probably rough university MALE who didn't know about babies." I got the job and an apology two months later. But, I left my interview wondering if that was how a woman felt applying for a traditionally male job and I thought "this sucks, men and women really need to do something about this, together."

So, we need more feminist men. If a feminist is someone striving for

gender equality, accepting both men and women as having equal value and worth in society, then we should all be feminists. Or, maybe I should say HUMANISTS. People working

for people. If anyone would like to discuss this further, you can contact me over email: kmacleod@is.dal.ca

K. MacLeod

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Darkness" presented a list of things that they felt Sandy had neglected, and as a result tried to put motions forward to correct his behaviour. Oh, you should have seen their frustration when they found out that most of the things that they felt were being neglected had been neglected for the past five years (and most of them were on council last year), and most of the motions that had been put forward were totally irrelevant, since

Sandy had done most of them already, or they belonged to someone else's portfolio.

It was ridiculous. They looked so silly. They really should resign and save a little self esteem.

And did you know that a couple of weeks ago, a memo, signed by a few councillors (Sour Grapes), was circulated to all DAGS councillors suggesting that they either be at the next meeting or resign. Well, one of the people who put their name to the memo didn't attend the meeting,

and didn't even send regrets. I won't tell you who it is, 'cause if you're interested, you can go to the DAGS office and find out for yourself.

Before I end this, I have to suggest to those of you who read this, get involved. DAGS is a good organization. Don't let it become a wasteland of opposing personality cults. And support Sandy, he's doin' a pretty good job, along with a few others who have more than ideology in their heads. Think about it.

Josef Tratnik

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