

Why students sit on council, some motives are better than others

Students run for student council positions for different reasons, and there are many a multitude of experiences they can gain if they are successful.

The first basic lust is simply to be involved, to be a part of the workings of student life, a hopefully oiled cog in the central wheel of student administration. Judging by the peels of laughter at council meetings, having a vote can be an enjoyable experience.

Going a step further, a sense of responsibility is apparent with those councillors that sit on administration and student committees and make their contributions a live part of the decisions the university makes.

The final step sees councillors who take an active lead, instigating campaigns, feeling out the political climate and watchdogging the students' cause.

It is obvious that students are on council for different reasons, as one hears the common complaint of the lack of support from the more static councillors who can't even get out to help spray a couple of posters for the demonstration.

Last year's election sent enough dynamic reps to be counted on two hands, who are making their seat count for a lot more than they may get recognized for. A caucus of members met this week to hatch a potentially substantial force for students at Dalhousie, with the first campaign item the way students will vote on the Senate report.

As for the 'less political' councillors, there's lots to learn and issues to understand, for example RCMP practises on campuses portrayed in this week's Gazette, that received zero in terms of discussion at last week's council meeting. Let's hope that all 30 councillors find the extent of their potential next term.

What has your councillor been doing lately?

Students choose their delegate

A topic of much debate and concern at Dalhousie these days is the controversial proposal in front of the Senate, authored by the Senate Financial Planning Committee. The move to cut off the license to appoint new faculty members when they leave or retire, and the inability to create new faculty positions is of obvious concern to students, and finally made it into council debate last Sunday.

It was therefore dismaying to observe the debate and vote to fill the vacant student senate position, (which resulted with the untimely resignation of Martin Baker).

Three students ran for the position, Frank Dunn, Mary Lou Hames and Steven Pinter. They each gave a statement on why they were running, two of which were brief, and one which was long and philosophical.

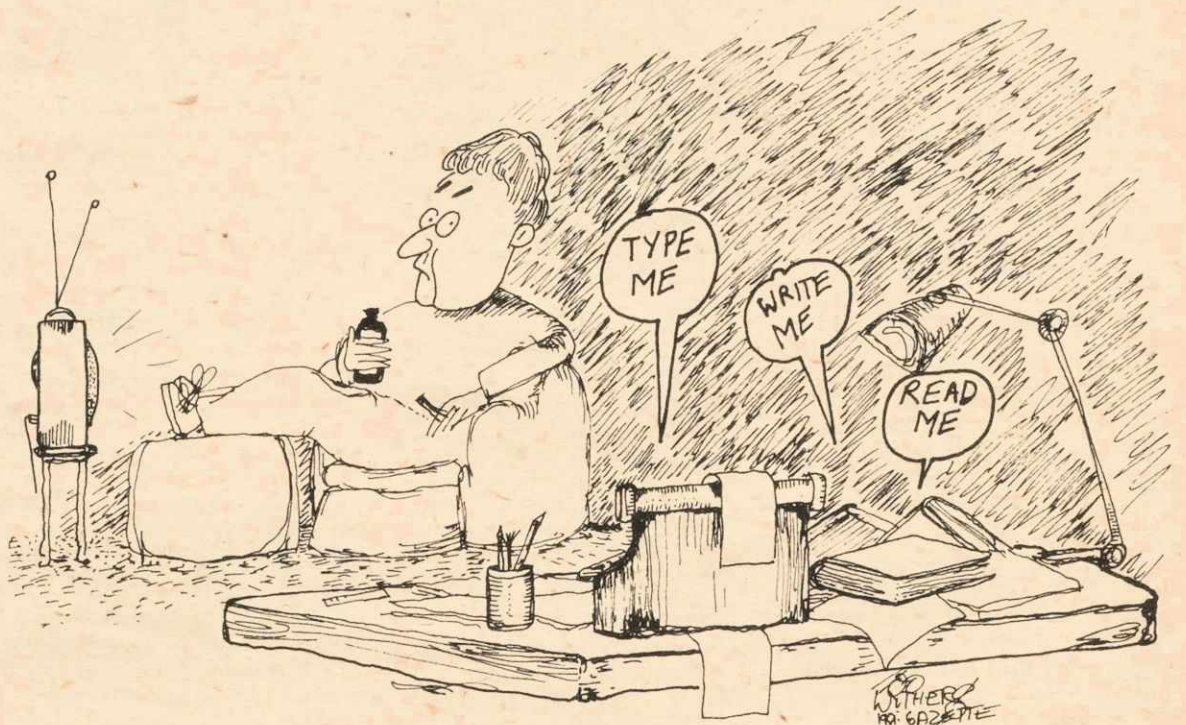
In a close vote, council elected Mary Lou Hames, who said she wanted to be a student senator essentially because she wanted to remain on council, after resigning as Arts rep since she is now a commerce student.

A curious argument in favor of her election was that the ability to speak (referring to Steven Pinter's more lengthy oration) was not necessary of a student senator. It was argued that although student senators say very little in official Senate meetings, their efforts to represent the students' point of view is much more effective at the informal Senate committee stage.

True, formulating policy is often achieved at the committee stage, but it is not an excuse for electing quiet people.

Neither candidate exhibited an understanding of the issue before Senate. Hames' level of activity as a councillor is questionable. While Pinter's past is perhaps more unknown, (a transposed McGill student), his concern for student issues was fairly explicit, whereas Hames lacked noticeably any political perspective.

It is odd that people wanting to elect Hames, perhaps out of a feeling of loyalty to a former council member, should drum up the irresponsible and foolish excuse that it is not advantageous for a spokesperson for student rights to have the ability to stand up and speak.



LETTERS

Cheap shot cartoon

To the Editor:

To say the least I am not impressed with the political cheap shot by your cartoonist Withers. To refresh your memory, the cartoonist used Finance Minister Allan MacEachen to depict the federal government as rich and leaves the impression the wealth was gained at the expense of the provinces. The caption reads, "I didn't see his hands move. Did you see his hands move?"

While it has become fashionable to criticize the federal government's cutbacks, I would have liked the cartoonist to have put a lot more thought behind his cartoon. I do not want to give the impression that I am in favour of the budget. I thought it neither hurt nor helped Canadians, typical of Liberal budgets of the past. But I am fed up with the attitude of portraying the federal government as the bad guys and the provinces as the "poor penniless victims".

We live in a country where there are small pockets of people spread over a large area. We need a strong central government to supply services to these areas because it is often unprofitable for private business. The federal government provides huge subsidies to the provinces. Some of the provinces are getting wealthy in the meantime, but they continue to ask the federal government to foot the bill for services and, at this point, are asking for increased subsidies.

The federal government rightly feels that they should share some of the profits made by the provinces, for example, resources. This might help to offset the large federal deficit, which, contrary to popular belief, exists not because of

government waste but because of these subsidies to the provinces. The provinces will not budge, so the federal government, under great pressure to balance the budget, is cutting back on its subsidies to the provinces.

Like a lot of Dal students I marched to protest cutbacks. Education is definitely not the place to make cuts. Nor is medicare, who may need to increase their contribution in Health and Welfare to prevent greedy doctors from private billing because the provinces are not prepared to increase their input. They would rather blame the federal government as justification for the potentially destructive private billing. Heaven forbid we should have a health care system like the United States, where only those wealthy enough to afford it get proper medical care.

Not all the provinces are wealthy; a lot are quite poor. But so is the federal government. I feel it is hypocritical to ask for more subsidies on one hand and a larger share of the revenue on the other. I therefore ask how your cartoonist could portray the federal government as rich? They are clearly not. And if they are taking any money away it is only a small portion of what they hand out to the provinces. I am just fed up to here with this unthinking propaganda from everyone, and especially your "jump on the band wagon while it is hot" cartoonist.

Sincerely,
Kevin C. Little

Editor's reply: The cartoon in question depicts not a rich federal government but rather a fast-dealing finance minister whose performance leaves onlookers, including the provinces, in a state of confusion. If

The Gazette is guilty of jumping on a bandwagon, it is in wishing for a federal budget which could solve some of Canada's serious economic problems.

But, as you point out, students, doctors, provinces, etc. etc. are all saying, "Not me, take it from them," making budgeting admittedly difficult for the federal government. But let's not forget that Allan MacEachen is a public servant whose job at the moment is to oversee the finances of the federal government, and that as such he is open to criticism from those who pay his salary.

NDP comments

To the Editor:

I am writing in reply to students B. Mancini and D. Allen who, in your Letters Section (October 21, 1981) wrote that no politicians of any stripe alerted students to the fact they may have been left off the official enumerators list for the October 6 provincial election. Their conclusion was that no political parties showed any respect for student issues or the situation in which students found themselves in this election.

I wish to draw to these students' attention two previous editions of the *Dalhousie Gazette*. In the September 24, 1981 edition, it was reported on the front page that Michael Coyle, NDP candidate for Halifax Cornwallis had filed suit against Returning Officer Arthur Hase in the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia over the enumeration issue. Mr. Coyle's expressed intention was to have students (like Mancini and Allen) enumerated for the vote,

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