

Refugee group seeks better funding from students

BY JENNIFER LAMONT

Next spring, Dalhousie students will vote by referendum as to whether they are in support of doubling the funds they contribute to the World University Service of Canada.

A national organization, the World University Service of Canada (WUSC) is run at Dalhousie and other universities across the country through its parent service in Ottawa. At Dalhousie, WUSC sponsors two refugee-students per year to study at the school. Anyone who is a refugee, under the guidelines of the United Nations High Commission

on Refugees, is eligible to take part in the program.

Dalhousie students annually contribute 50 cents per full-time student and 25 cents per part-time student to WUSC. The money is collected through the student union fees.

"Most [societies] have increased fees by holding another referendum," said DSU vice-president, Bridgette McCaig.

The current WUSC fee has remained the same since Dalhousie joined the organization in 1984.

"Right now we are running in deficit," said Mohamed Ahmed, a WUSC representative.

But Ahmed says students needn't

feel that money collected will be spent on bureaucracy.

"[The money] goes directly to refugee students," he said.

WUSC not only sponsors refugees, it holds seminars to educate other students on international development issues.

In addition, because Dalhousie is a member of WUSC, any Dal student is eligible to apply for overseas jobs through WUSC-Ottawa. One Dalhousie student is currently employed in Vietnam through this program.

But the money from WUSC is not able to fully support the refugee students. They also receive help from the alumni

association which provides a clothing allowance, the faculty association which provides accommodation, food services which provide food, the bookstore which provides texts and the university which pays their tuition.

Ahmed says that the recent addition of a \$945 immigration fee, coupled with general inflation, makes it nearly impossible for WUSC to support itself. He says that if WUSC does not begin to receive more money their only option is to cut the program down to one student per year.

If students agree to double their

fees to WUSC, full-time Dalhousie students will each contribute \$1 annually to the fund. Ahmed says even the amount being proposed by the referendum is comparatively very little when you consider that some schools give WUSC as much as three dollars per student. In fact, Dal students currently give WUSC less money than any other Canadian university.

"[I hope] Dal students realize how much WUSC does for them and how much they are doing for WUSC by contributing," Ahmed said.

The referendum will be held as part of the Dalhousie Student Union elections in March.

Banner system controversial

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A new subcommittee on the Banner system was struck on Monday.

"Maybe someone will come up with the holy grail," said acting vice-president, Dr. Warrick Kimmins.

"It's not that [full-year classes] are impossible — clearly they are possible, but you have to weigh the pros and cons."

University president Tom

Traves had to leave the Senate meeting early. He said that the tone of the meeting was against accepting the elimination of "R" classes, and suggested the Senate must make a decision quickly, despite the problems.

Sir Wilfred Laurier University in British Columbia also had problems with the Banner system. They attempted to customize the software, but lost the support of the supplier and needed to re-customize every time there was a program upgrade.

Traves also noted that within 10 months, if the Senate does not either accept the motion to eliminate full-year courses, or solve the problem with the computer program, it will be impossible to enroll students at Dalhousie, except by hand — Dalhousie's current computer system cannot recognize the year 2000.

With files from Shelley Robinson

Birdland returns

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director of the Birdland, and will hold the same position in the new bar.

Although the new bar would feature the same type of music as the Birdland, a greater emphasis is planned for international bands, as well as acts from other parts of Canada. Clark said that the former Birdland was on the verge of attracting such acts, "but the time frame didn't allow it".

The "time frame" that the Birdland couldn't get past was one imposed by the owners of their former location. Last spring, the club left its location because of a noise conflict with their neighbours. Specifically, a CIBC 24-hour call centre moved in downstairs.

"The bass in the space was too much for them. One of us had to go," Clark said. "The landlord decided that the Birdland was the one to go."

Syperek says the new location needs a little work before an opening can be considered. The goal is to have the new bar opened for the East Coast Music Awards in January. During the ECMAs, bands perform in venues throughout Halifax, and the hope is that the new bar will be one of these locations.

But housekeeping is not the only issue to be resolved. Syperek says that the pair will apply for a cabaret license, although whether or not they get it is a different story.

Grad House gets bail bucket

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students, which it has not done in the past two years. The Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) had been working on a proposal with DAGS to help oversee the Grad House operation, but decided against submitting it.

"After extensively researching this issue, we decided that a proposal from the DSU would be premature," said McCaig. "We have the responsibility of being accountable to all students and therefore are not prepared to step in at this time."

The original option to close the Grad House was dropped from the agenda after failing a vote to be re-introduced. Because of this, the DAGS council was not given the opportunity to present the background information and rationale leading up to the original Grad House Assessment report. This option had originally been defeated at the last DAGS general meeting, and according to Robert's Rules of Order could not have been considered again without a vote to do so.

Many students were frustrated at how the meeting proceeded. It was interrupted several times to deal with the meeting's rules of order, constitutional technicalities and historical details.

These disruptions were propelled by Sandy Ross, a past DAGS president, and Lewis Jacobson, both of whom were non-graduate students attending the meeting as guests. On more than one occasion, they prompted and asked graduate students to make motions and challenge the chair on their behalf. At DAGS general meetings, only graduate students are able to fully participate and vote.

"A lot of people have come out to help DAGS figure out what to do with the Grad House. Now these

'hangabouts', who aren't even graduate students, have come, treated us [graduate students] with minimal respect, calling points of orders, questions and challenges," said one frustrated student during the meeting. "We've come here to participate and vote."

"We wouldn't have to speak half the time if the meeting was being run properly," said Jacobson. "We stepped in because the Judicial Board would have thrown out any decisions had it not been run properly." The Judicial Board is the highest decision-making body which deals with constitutional disputes of the DSU and its societies.

"I was just here to provide some facts," added Ross, who was DAGS president from 1994 to 1996. "DAGS is, as the result of some shortcomings in the process of how council operated in the last year in particular, is not in possession of a lot of information that's very relevant to be able to budget forecast adequately and make big decisions like whether the House can survive. I just wanted it to be known what decisions were made by my council for two years and what they mean for [DAGS]."

Ross' main point concerned the graduate student fee that was increased \$20 last year to \$44. "Two years ago, when the decision to increase [graduate student] fees was made, it was originally intended to go towards the Grad House, not to keep it open on a scrape and get by basis, but make its operations really work."

Ross did not blame the current DAGS council for their lack of knowledge on past decisions of the Association. "No, it's absolutely not the fault of this year's council. These guys were not aware of the decisions pertaining to the informa-

tion that was removed or destroyed by the previous council."

However, Malaka Henderson, DAGS Treasurer, countered Ross saying that she and Ted Chiasson, DSU Treasurer, "investigated the source of these increased fees, and no stipulation was found saying exactly where this money is supposed to go."

After two hours of heated debate, frustrated students decided that this information on graduate student fees was not significant enough to warrant postponing the vote on the Grad House.

The "Grow the Grad House" proposal is a long term plan to develop the Grad House financially into a growing business, and to use the house socially as a venue for more student activities.

Peter Morden, a graduate student, tried to have his proposal discussed at the meeting. His proposal was not being considered because it had been submitted to DAGS the day before, 11 days after DAGS' deadline for accepting proposals. In order to be presented, it was considered communications to the Association and read at the meeting.

"The Grad House is ours. It has been ours for over 20 years and we should accept responsibility for that," said Morden.

The Grad House is actually owned by the University and is leased by DAGS, and according to four surveys done this term, only 10 per cent of Grad House users are graduate students. His proposal called for minor changes in the Grad House operation which would see some budgetary changes, the DAGS council move to smaller offices, and graduate students getting special 'membership' privileges over other users. It is possible that some of his ideas will be incorporated under the "Grow the Grad House" proposal.

News-In-Brief

FIRE AT FENWICK TOWER

A fire broke out on the main floor of the Fenwick Tower apartment building on Monday night. The fire began in a storage area filled with mattresses just before 11pm, shutting residents out of the building for almost two hours. Fenwick Tower is owned and operated by Dalhousie.

Fenwick resident Tracey Major said, at first, she didn't take the alarm seriously.

"We heard the fire alarm and we thought it was just a drill, and then I looked out the door because I heard people running, and there was smoke in the hallway, so we ran down the stairs...and outside," she said.

"The fire was contained to a storage area on the ground floor," said Michelle Gallant, director of Public Relations for Dalhousie. "...the real issue was the smoke...[Residents] weren't allowed back in until the smoke had cleared, although the smell lingered through the night."

"The students handled it extremely well, the staff were very professional and the evacuation went smoothly."

According to Gallant the fire caused only a small amount of smoke, and water damage, and most of the mess was cleaned up before residents re-entered the building.

The cause of the fire is under investigation and Gallant says Dalhousie has yet to hear from the fire department.

TIGER PATROL HONOURED BY DAL

Dalhousie's Tiger Patrol was given special recognition by the university this week.

The Tiger Patrol received an award to recognize its contribution to campus safety.

"It's really quite something that the university is recognizing this partnership, and that [the Tiger Patrol is] something that does contribute to campus safety," said Dalhousie Student Union vice-president Bridgette McCaig.

The award was presented by the Dalhousie Environmental Health and Safety Committee.