

EDITORIAL

The Brunswickan's deficit and the budgetary process

by Lynne Wanyeki

The Brunswickan is currently operating at a \$14 000 deficit. This is a large amount of money, as many Student Union Councillors pointed out during Wednesday night's Student Union Council meeting, and it is especially disturbing to discover this deficit with only three more issues to go until the end of this publishing year. In order to keep the deficit at the current level, and hopefully decrease it slightly, these three issues will be as low in page number as can be managed without sacrificing too much content. The distorted advertising to content ratio will mean that printing costs will be covered to the extent that the \$7000 loss in that area will be partially recouped.

The other \$7000 arises in the area that the Student Union members subsidize, the operating costs of the paper. (The Brunswickan generates approximately 2/3 of its total budget from advertising and outside production and the remaining 1/3 is subsidized by the Student Union). The problem has arisen from a miscommunication between, on the one hand, the former Managing Editor and the present Managing Editor of the Brunswickan, and on the other hand, the former SU VP Finance and Administration and the UNB Foundation Secretary.

Last year, for the first time in many years, the Brunswickan ended up with a surplus, due to the fact that advertising revenue drastically increased under an efficient and organized Advertising Manager. Thus, during the budgetary process, it was decided that the Student Union contribution could be lowered significantly. The lower subsidy was granted as a lump sum, with the expectation that the Brunswickan would work "backwards" through our budget, and prioritize spending line item by line item ourselves. However, this was not made clear to either the incoming Managing Editor by the outgoing Managing Editor, or to the UNB Foundation Secretary by the outgoing SU VP Finance and Administration, who therefore assumed that the line item totals on the proposed Brunswickan Budget were to stand as was.

The result was that until two weeks ago, the Brunswickan, UNB Foundation for Students and the SU VP Finance and Administration all assumed that the Brunswickan were operating fairly close to the budgetary allocations. It was only when the Managing Editor realized that the line items on the unamended budget did not add up to the Student Union's lump sum allocation and asked the UNB Foundation Secretary to print out a copy of operating costs to date that they realized that there was a pro

The situation raises questions about the budgetary process in general, and about the budgetary process as it affects the campus media whose subsidies are relatively large in comparison to other clubs and societies and whose financial dealings with the Student Union should be carried out with respect to the desired autonomy of these organizations. It is a given that until the Brunswickan and CHSR can operate without resort to student subsidization that they have to be accountable in some way to the student body for their financial runnings. However, the means by which this accountability is ensured should be consistent. It is not a necessarily antagonistic process for the Brunswickan to justify its list of needs for the upcoming year to the Student Union, for the Student Union to outline the constraints under which that list of needs must be effected, and for the two to work out a mutually satisfactory agreement which respects both the needs of the paper and the constraints of the Student Union. It is simply not good enough to say that although our proposed budget looked both reasonable and justifiable last year, a unilateral cut had to be made without reference to the particular areas which justified the magnitude of that cut. Although the allocation of a lump sum was intended as a show of confidence in the management of the Brunswickan, it obviously has left the Brunswickan in a quandary.

The outgoing Editorial Board would like to congratulate the 1992/93 Editorial Board for the Brunswickan. One of the exciting things about a volunteer organization of this kind is that the turnover of staff results in a paper whose presentation varies from year to year. We are confident that the differing visions of the students listed below will ensure that the student body continues to enjoy an interesting and diverse paper every Friday morning.

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The Brunswickan

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