

SUNS lobby an education for Nova Scotia politicians

by Samantha Brennan

Alex Gigeroff traded in his bunnysuit for a shirt and tie March 28 when he joined students from throughout Nova Scotia in a day long lobby of politicians.

Representatives from the Students' Union of Nova Scotia came to the provincial legislature to voice their concerns about post-secondary education and summer employment to MLAs.

Students extracted a promise from Minister of development Rolly Thornhill to increase funding from summer employment and a review of the provincial bursary program by education minister Terry Donahoe.

The day coincided with opposition day in the legislature and the liberal caucus devoted most of their questions to post-secondary education.

In a lengthy speech criticizing the Conservative government for its education policies, Liberal opposition leader Sandy Cameron, said Nova Scotia has the highest average tuition in the country and one of the lowest bursary programs.

"With all these kinds of problems and those issues that are facing post-secondary education

institutions, as well as students, the government just sits there and practically is prepared to do nothing about it," said Cameron.

Gigeroff, Dalhousie student union president-elect, says he left the house more aware of how to deal with government and a little more cynical.

"Although I was glad these things were being discussed, there was a certain degree of mirth in the air that I didn't share," said Gigeroff.

He says the thing that surprised him the most was the majority of MLAs didn't have "the foggiest notion" about post-secondary education.

Judith Guthrie, SUNS executive officer says students must make their MLAs more aware of their problems.

During debate Donahoe said no student has ever called him to say they were having difficulties finding money for education.

Despite the promise of a review of bursary criteria DSU president Tim Hill said, "I want to see changes as opposed to hearing about them." He also said it will take time to change the government's attitude towards students.

"I think it would be wrong to say that the government could change three years of regressive philosophy in one day. It's a slow process," said Hill.

Provincial NDP leader Alexa McDonough says she's impressed with how well the student representatives articulated their concerns.

She says the SUNS lobby effort was extremely timely given the cutbacks to education under the Socred government in British Columbia. McDonough says students must increase public support for post-secondary education and sees the SUNS lobby as part of that process.

"I think the mentality of this government is such that if they thought they could get away with cutting funding for education they would. Their mentality combined with the disastrous state of the Nova Scotia treasury could lead to steps in that direction," said McDonough.

SUNS is meeting with Donahoe on April 9 to discuss the criteria for the provincial bursary program.

"Although student go home SUNS will still be around through the summer," says Guthrie.



Ex-councillor Martin Tomlinson — "Sometimes people drink too much and do silly things."

Councillor resigns ledgewise

by Elizabeth Donovan

A student councillor tendered his resignation before a vote of censure over his aerobic activities on the ledge of the student union building March 23.

Council voted unanimously to censure Martin Tomlinson for running around on the 3rd floor ledge of the SUB while intoxicated during a dance featuring the Hopping Penguins.

"It's just a case where people sometimes drink too much and do silly things," said Tomlinson.

Tomlinson did not disagree with the council's censure.

"This was a unique incident and should not reflect badly upon council," said Tomlinson. "My resignation had nothing to do with my elected duties, but council was justified by setting an example."

Despite the resignation further

repercussions could result. SUB staff could be charged for serving liquor to intoxicated persons.

SUB manager John Graham said the SUB could have been liable for Tomlinson had he injured himself.

"If Martin had fell and hurt himself the SUB could have been held responsible," said Graham. "The university does have \$2 million in insurance" for such cases.

At the council meeting president Tim Hill speculated Tomlinson may be banned by SUB operators for a period of time.

Board of Governors student representative Karl Nightingale said "if councillors cannot conduct themselves in a leadership role how can we censure staff for their action?"

Hill called the tendered resignation "the most honourable thing to do."

Hundreds may be turned away from Arts

by Mary Elen Jones

Arts departments are being "stretched and pulled very tight" due to shrinking budgets and increased enrollments, says English department chair Dr. Bruce Stovel.

Actions taken to cope with the dilemma have backfired and accentuated the problems. Two of the five departing professors have not been replaced. Increasing enrollment and fewer sections of first year classes have led to a decline in the quality of learning.

Crowded classrooms are "hard on students and professors," says philosophy department chair Dr. Susan Sherwin.

"I regret that we can't have smaller classes for the students," says Sherwin.

She says they are faced with a choice of having some students get a philosophy class or many students putting up with over-crowding.

It is difficult to decide where to cut-off enrollment.

"Students plead so eloquently," says Sherwin. "It is impossible to turn them away."

Sherwin says the philosophy department can't adequately cope with the large number of students.

The English 100 class is the hardest hit among cuts in the English department.

Next year there will be fewer sections offered in English 100 due to a decrease in part-time faculty. This means fewer students will be accommodated says Stovel.

But "by stretching and pulling

in other areas we have managed to retain 26 out of 27 sections for next year," says Stovel.

There has also been an increase in the number of students per class. This year the limit is 40 students per class which the department has "reluctantly" agreed to.

"We cannot go higher because we want a writing class which will give enough attention to each student," says Stovel.

English 100 is a prerequisite for students going on to further studies in the English department.

"It's a loss to the department," says Stovel. Classes are full by

September and many students are turned away. "We feel that we are turning away scores, maybe hundreds of students."

Another area being "indirectly choked," says Stovel, is the graduate programmes. There are fewer professors to give the individual supervision needed.

Stovel says cuts to libraries budget has meant fewer new books. A student preparing a research report may be deprived of more than 50 percent of the required books.

"The library seems to come last when the budget is being allocated," says Stovel.

Stalemate continues over STU newspaper

by Rick Janson

FREDERICTON -- The month long stalemate between the St. Thomas University student union and its newspaper, the *Aquinian*, remains unresolved as both organizations head toward the end of the academic year.

For the third week in a row the student union refused to allow the *Aquinian* staff the opportunity to speak in their own defense at the council's weekly meeting. The *Aquinian* was officially closed down by the council March 6, although it has continued to publish on independent funds.

"They refuse to recognize us," said ex-*Aquinian* editor Peter Boisseau.

The *Aquinian* has started a petition which about 500 of the 1200 students on campus have already signed. The petition

states the students are opposed to the firing of the editorial board and the suspension of the *Aquinian's* constitution by council.

Two weeks ago the paper elected its new editorial board for the upcoming year.

"They'll talk to me as a St. Thomas student but refuse to talk to me as editor of the paper," said newly elected editor Lois

Corbett.

Council originally shut down the paper claiming it was \$1800 in the red and that it was editorially dishonest. Since then they have remained silent on the issue, refusing to reverse their stand.

The *Aquinian* has published two editions since its official closure, one of them under a phonetic namesake, The *Akwinyan*. The paper has since managed to

obtain a trademark on the original name and has resumed publishing as the *Aquinian*.

Boisseau said if council had continued publishing the *Aquinian* they would be in the black by now, and would have finished the year with a surplus.

"We had \$600 in local advertising in the last issue. We also had \$600 in national advertising. I guess it pays to be notorious," said Boisseau.

The paper is currently making plans to continue operating autonomous of the council next fall.

The paper still hopes to conduct negotiations with the council, however is demanding the council recognize the new editorial board and reinstate the paper's constitution first.

The last *Aquinian* of the publishing year is due out April 11.

