

# Opinion

## Lack of information coming from the Board of Governors

by C. Ricketts

"...it seems to me that universities are ever more important - so long as they not only provide access of information but also a haven for ideas and discussions..."

(President W.A. MacKay, Installation Address, February 7, 1981.) With an ailing national economy and the hint of provincial prosperity via oil, planning Dalhousie's course will be critical in the next few years. Student representatives, particularly on the Board of Governors, must play an active role if student interests are to be upheld.

This can be achieved through better communication of administrative activities. At present, Dalhousie students are not well informed. Time limitations placed on the small number of student reps, structural restrictions and a lack of coverage combine with apathy to produce an awareness void.

For "security reasons", Board of Governors meetings are held *in camera*. In the 1980-81 calendar year, five of the nine scheduled Board meetings were slotted for the Board Executive

only. The rest of the Board, including student reps, had no input.

Up until November 1980, University News carried monthly reports taken from Board minutes, edited to safeguard security. This practice ceased just prior to President MacKay's installation. When asked why, Dennis McMann, Editor-in-Chief of University News, agreed that it "looked suspicious" but insisted that there was no particular reason for stopping publication of the briefs.

Of ten standing committees on the Board, four do not have student representation. They are the Dalhousie Fund Council and the Investments, Staff Benefits and Alumni and Community Relations committees. Students should be particularly interested in the Investment committee, if only to oppose investments in multinationals affecting the politics of any country.

According to an informed source, proposals from both the

Finance and Budget and Student Relations and Residence committees were entertained

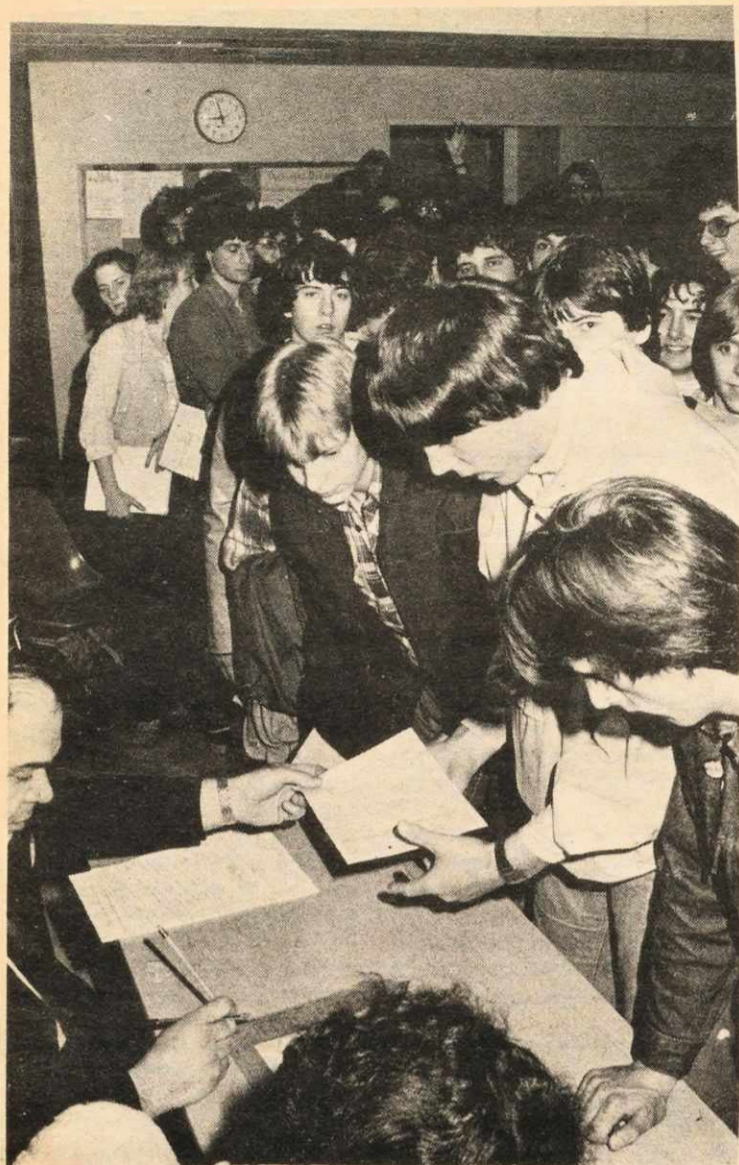
late last April when it was time to finalize tuition and residence fees. Those from the SRR committee were effectively dismissed. This year a joint committee of members from both committees, with greater student input, is working to arrive at tuition and residence fees.

Of ten standing committees on the Senate, the University Tenure Panel does not have a provision for student input. Faculty members are being reduced by attrition. Younger professors with innovative ideas are unable to find employment. The quality of education will effectively stagnate if this policy continues. A student rep could act as watchdog, ensuring that professors not rest on tenure to keep their positions.

Course evaluations should also be more widely collected, and the information used.

A few more student reps could ease the burden of sitting on the various committees. More interested people are needed.

Greater access to and availability of information could be a way to interest people.



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Tradition continues: first year Chemistry students, some after an eleven-hour wait in line, get first choice in section of a second year Chemistry course.

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