

NEWS

Budget for students, not for benches

BY JERRY WEST

Students and university administration battled to control the agenda of a Board of Governors (BoG) meeting on Tuesday.

The meeting was convened as a forum to express students' concern over the proposed tuition hike. It opened though, with chair Piercey spelling out the rules designed to keep the kerfuffle to a minimum, and to get the BoG members home for supper.

President Clarke led off the discussion with a slide show designed to convince BoG members that the administration was not making any unreasonable demands. The students immediately denounced the show for its obvious expense, inconsistencies, and irrelevance.

"As much as I try, I can't understand your slide show when it tells me not to be angry about tuition increases," said Dylan Edwards.

After Clarke's lengthy presentation student gripes were limited to three minutes apiece. Piercey spent much of the afternoon argu-

ing with individuals who couldn't fit all of their discontent into this time.

A major point of contention was the hardship a 10 per cent rise in tuition would present. Clarke said the increase would not affect accessibility for students. Many of the students disagreed.

Tom Digby quoted a discrepancy in the administrations figures in that 25 per cent of the students have been identified as having dire need. The amount that will be helped by the administration's bursary program — a major justification for the tuition increase — will be closer to 16 per cent.

Many others related stories of personal hardship. Bev Johnson the Black Students' Advisor pointed out that some Nova Scotian Black communities have unemployment rates as high as 80 per cent.

"This university is proposing a chair in Black Canadian Studies," said Althea Reyes, "who are you going to teach if there are no black students left?"

Students also protested that last

year's 25 per cent hike resulted not in an increase in the quality of education, but a decrease. Overcrowded and fewer classes were some of the most common complaints.

Many claimed that the budget shortfalls are a direct result of Administration mismanagement. The *Gazette* has learned that renovations to the MacDonald Science Library will cost close to \$1 million. This for a building that will house mostly alumni offices, and the new BoG meeting room. The grassing-over of the walkway next to the Studley gym cost \$25,000, and the new oak benches in the quad cost \$2500 each.

Alex Boston of the DSU charged that the administration was ineffective in lobbying the various levels of government for funding.

"Students are doing your jobs for you," said Boston.

In the end the students' message to the BoG members was clear: the proposed tuition increase is not acceptable.

"You've got to look past the numbers to the people," said Tim Scott.



...And he drinks Pepto-Bismol.

DAL PHOTO: MARIA PATRIQUIN

Weathering the Tories

BY DAWN MITCHELL

HALIFAX (CUP) — A tornado touches down, laying waste to Canadian university budgets, while administrators cower under the table waiting for the storm to pass.

The tornado is the federal Progressive Conservative government and the storm continues to rage.

Universities have been feeling the Tory pinch since 1986 when the federal government began cutting funding for Established Programs Financing. EPF transfers money to provincial governments for health care and post-secondary education.

The 1986 cut knocked off two per cent from the annual increase used to calculate per capita EPF payments, reducing it from 7.78 per cent to 5.78 per cent. In June 1990, the government froze the escalator for two years and in last year's budget, the Tories extended the freeze for another three years.

Damage from the tornado will cost about \$4.4 billion in transfer payments between 1990-91 and 1995-96, according to estimates by the Canadian Association of University Teachers.

University administrators are scrambling for other sources of funding to lessen the effects of the storm, including the private sector.

Saint Mary's University in Halifax wants to adopt a scheme Ontario universities have been using to draw in dollars — centres of excellence.

SMU administrators want Nova Scotia universities to provide a core education of arts and science, but develop specialties in a limited number of areas — or "centres of excellence" — where they can demonstrate a level of expertise. They plan on approaching the federal and provincial governments to ask for a re-allotment of funding based on the existence of these centres.

SMU vice president Colin Dodds said he expects the centres would attract money from the pri-

private sector as well as federal government agencies, and reduce the duplication of services in Nova Scotia's colleges and universities.

"[Universities] have to recognize that they can't be all things to all people," Dodds said. "They're going to have to focus on what things they can do well and do it well."

"People will know that their money is going to go into an area the university feels is significant and at the top of its priorities. Secondly, there will be a critical mass of faculty and students so the money will be used effectively."

John D'Orsay, executive director of the Nova Scotia Confederation of University Faculty Associations, said the plan would make universities more autonomous.

"It is a healthy development because it starts to take decisions about what universities are going to do and puts it back into the hands of the universities," he said.

But D'Orsay said that autonomy is threatened when funding is tied to specific research projects.

This is one of the major concerns identified in the Ontario

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Reproduction: from experimentation to theory

BY JERRY WEST

Maureen McTeer has some major fears. McTeer was fired from the Royal Commission on Reproductive Technology, in December for disagreeing with the chair. On January 16 she outlined the nature of this disagreement to students at Dalhousie's Law School.

"If there's one thing I learned from the fiasco of the Royal Commission," said McTeer, "it's the [ease] with which controversial ideas can be set aside by a democratic society."

McTeer is advocating a moratorium on advances in reproductive technology until the ethics and repercussions of the present technology are properly understood.

She points to recent developments in reproductive practises among livestock as warning signs. She witnessed one top breeding cow that had been super-ovulated to produce a large number of eggs. These eggs had all been inseminated by sperm from the same bull, and then had been planted in the wombs of less valuable cows. The result was that 21 calves with the same father and the same mother were all born within two days of each other.

The cow, she says, will never bear her progeny, because she is too valuable. The bull is destined to spend its days being electronically stimulated to produce sperm.

McTeer stresses the relevance of this anecdote, along with the present availability of technology to clone cow embryos.

"In the past," she says "what was perfected

in vitro fertilisation [for livestock] was transferred directly to women."

And, she says, it only takes five or six success stories in a row for a process to go from "experimentation" to "therapy".

McTeer also tells of two women who went to the Royal Commission hearings in Ottawa together. The two had met because their children were in the same class. Over the course of their discussions they discovered that they had both been artificially inseminated... by the same man. Now their children, one male and one female, are growing up together.

Another issue McTeer addressed was frozen embryos. She questioned the fate of an embryo whose parents had died before it was carried to term, and its place in the family inheritance.

McTeer also expressed her fear that tech-

nology could be used to weed out undesirable offspring before they were born. She said that with the ability to spot genetic defects in unborn children, and then abort them, it could eventually be considered immoral to give birth to handicapped children.

Comparing this process of selective abortions to the Holocaust of the Second World War she said, "What we have here is the tool to wipe out an entire segment of our population before anyone even knows they existed."

McTeer was accused by one student of being alarmist.

"Not at all," she replied, "I'm just trying to broaden the scope of debate. Until now we've only seen the scientific and medical point of view."