

Editorial/Opinion

An embarrassment to students

Sigh. Just when the advent of a potential year for our eternally struggling Nova Scotia student organization is announced, an embarrassing blow befalls us.

SUNS defiantly made one point clear last year to the Minister of Education: that it is the democratic student representative body and therefore the rightful selector of an appointee to represent students on the student aid Higher Appeals Board. Terry Donahoe, Minister of Education, admitted he had made a mistake in bypassing SUNS to make his own appointment last year, and vowed to consult students in the future.

So what happens? SUNS is asked to forward a nomination, and it fails to do so; to exercise the right for which it fought so valiantly.

So what's the problem? SUNS seems to be having difficulties this year. The organization couldn't get quorum to a conference in February which in turn muddled up the election process for its own executive. The executive terms finished at the conference two weeks ago, but it was felt there had been insufficient notice to hold them at that time. An interim executive committee was formed until elections can be held in May.

SUNS is suffering from a circular problem, and an analogy can be made to the controversy over CKDU. There isn't the money for a full-time SUNS chairperson, which saps the energy and enthusiasm from the volunteers trying to run the show. In turn SUNS is blamed for its lack of organization and starts to lose support, contributing to poor turnouts at conferences.

In CKDU's case, it has been agreed after many years of debate that a solution to the quality of the programming lies in financial support. This will bolster the operations of the station that will in turn attract student volunteers who won't be continually frustrated with equipment breakdowns.

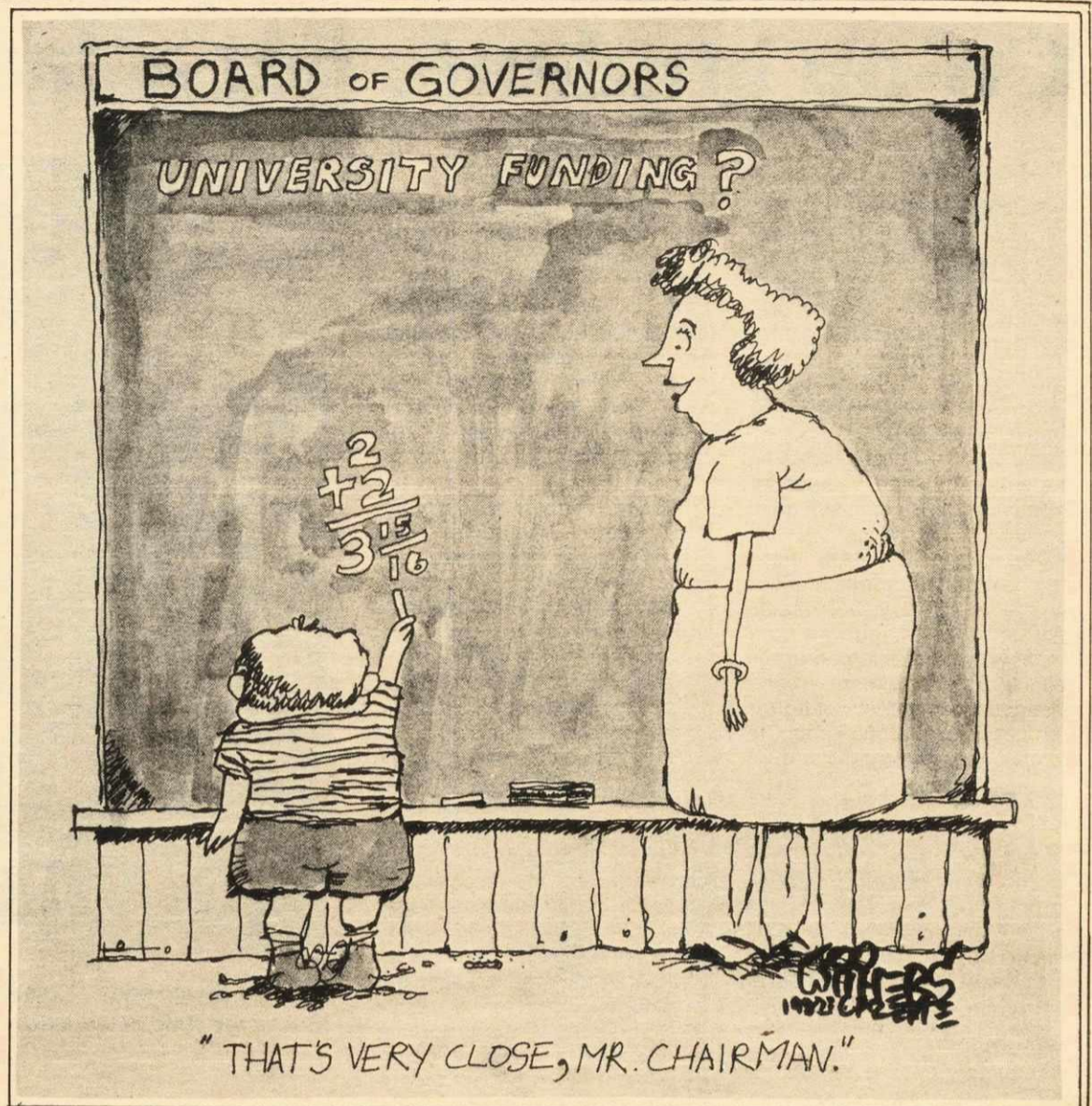
According to this analogy, it is a godsend that with the restructuring of the Canadian student organization, the Canadian Federation of Students, SUNS will receive a similar infusion of funds to get it off its feet, perhaps with a paid coordinator. (Since SUNS is affiliated with CFS, it receives a portion of CFS fees. Dalhousie is one of four Nova Scotia institutions that have joined CFS.)

From an organizational point of view, the SUNS executive doesn't have a leg on which to stand. The executive turnouts to the last two conferences have been low, and communication with the member institutions has dwindled. There is a lot of groundwork necessary in making conferences the successful bolster to the organization they should be. What can't be done at conferences (when they don't take place) takes four times as much effort to do in letters and individual communication, to get the notices of elections out, and to inform members on a regular basis what's happening (like seeking applications for an appointee to the Student Appeals Board.)

It must be construed that this organizational work just isn't getting done.

Recent lobbying efforts on the part of student representatives from Dalhousie and other institutions (meeting with MLA's and speaking on radio talk-shows, for example) has been well-organized and effective. But if students are gaining credibility in the eyes of politicians, it is necessary to have the backing of an efficient provincial organization. In its present state, SUNS is an embarrassing liability.

One hopes money can help the situation, as something must improve.



Letters

Not only offended but angry too!

To the Editor:

It was exactly four weeks ago today that Mr. Joel Sapp asked me to fill the role of "Candy" in his production of the Steinbeck play (with less than two weeks to opening date) for the Student Union.

I am seventy years of age -- and apart from having been employed with Sir Lawrence Olivier and Sir John Gielgud at London's "Old Vic" Theatre as a young man, I have not only played lead roles, but also directed many very successful productions in several parts of the world. In 1962/63 I won the "Best Actor" awards in the Vancouver Island Dominion Drama Festival, and have been happily (and very successfully) a member of our Theatre Arts Guild for fifteen years.

I was therefore not only greatly offended, but extremely angry with your published remarks by Michael McCarthy in the University newspaper, in his infantile assessment of my performance -- and I vow never again to respond to a call for

help where the S.U.B. theatre is concerned.

I hope that your Arts critic will eventually reach maturity and a sense of responsibility towards his elders. He has much to learn!

Regretfully yours,

John Poulton

Are we not sheep, er, men?

To the Editor:

Kathryn Morse's letter to the Editor that was published in the Dal Gazette in the 11 March 1982 issue has some good, clearly axiomatic insight into variables that may interfere with this year's electoral process. However, Morse has seen fit to be overly subjective towards Perla (not Paula) Arditti and her office than need be, therefore contaminating her contextual perspective.

True, "taking the polls into the classroom is diminishing the importance of the act of voting", but this approach to polling does not take away the right "of individual choice". No one is forcing you to vote for anyone

particular, or even to vote! The choice still remains solely in the hands of the individual, eligible voter. Also, I don't think the election organizers had any intention of conforming to an attitude of "Apathy or no apathy - you're going to vote", but more to the simple cause of finding some way to increase the voter turnout.

Please don't get me wrong, just for the record, I too oppose classroom polling. However, we should not be arguing against the cause-effect approach to the principle, but for principle of the matter itself. Of course taking the polls to the classroom will influence some students to vote who would not normally vote, but I don't think many of those students would vote "by haphazard guess".

Kathryn Morse's letter makes the reader believe that you are forced to vote, and she is wrong. I also take offense to Morse's reference to Dal students "unwittingly becoming victims". Surely, we are a smarter group than to be unaware of such a simple matter as this. I would assume that University level students are mature enough to vote conscientiously or not vote at all.

And, Kathryn, I care.

Respectfully,

David W. Horner
Student, Dalhousie University