

# Letter "cherry pie" compared to real situation in science at Dal

by Mary Elen Jones

After several years of serious budget cuts and academic decline, the Dalhousie Science Society (DSS) is joining other campus groups in addressing the problems.

Last month DSS president Donna Hammill sent a newsletter to all science students concerning budget cuts and their impact on Dalhousie science departments.

The letter was a "cherry pie", in that the situation is really much worse, said Hammill.

By sending the newsletter, she hoped students would become aware of the problems facing them.

"It's time people got up and reacted to this problem," said Hammill.

"I want students to put pressure on the administration," she said.

Of the departments, mathematics is in one of the worst situations, said Hammill.

"It's in real trouble and there is no publicity made of this fact," she said.

Math department chair Dr. Kenneth Dunn is not sure if publicity will accomplish anything.

"The Dean is well aware of what is going on and every department has been hit," said Dunn.

"It seems that the math department is the most vulnerable because it has so many part-time teachers," said Dunn.

This is a tight year for the entire university, he said. If budget cuts continue first year enrollment will suffer rather than advanced programs, and he said he does not want to hinder students already in the university.

Hammill said the continuing lab shortage is another problem facing students.

Chemistry department chair Dr. Walter Aue agreed it is hard to learn in the labs due to overcrowding, but the chemistry department is pushed to the limit trying to provide lab space for students.

Aue said that the chemistry department is "obligated to accommodate students" in their selection of courses because it is a service department and provides grounding for further education.

Enrollment is limited on a first come first serve basis, but the waiting lists are numbered and are organized fairly.

"What chemistry needs is a new building," said Aue, and he is hopeful "chemistry will have a prominent place" during the current fundraising campaign.

Hammill said it is essential to replace retiring faculty with well-qualified professors. However, at present the university is depending more and more on part-time teachers who are paid only \$3000 per full-time course.

Due to this increase in part-time staff, access to the professors during non-class hours is a

problem, writes Dr. Donald D. Betts, Dean of the Arts and Science Faculty, in a recent commentary.

"Sometimes (part-time professors) are not fully qualified and often have other full-time occupations which command their primary loyalty," he writes.

And Betts says he is afraid of a continuing trend toward decreasing standards of education, though "we are doing our best to cope with the situation," he says.

There has been no decision

made about limiting enrollment although "each department has the freedom to make its own restrictions," Betts says.

As for long term solutions, there are no plans to eliminate programs entirely in the coming year, though there is a possibility in the following year, he says.

Any elimination of university programs or departments is the responsibility of the university Senate, and must be done only after a complicated process involving many campus groups, including the faculty association.

## Mature students sing the blues

by Elizabeth Donovan

David is a student at a Halifax university but he and his family live in New Brunswick. Three times a week David drives from Sackville to the Maritime School of Social Work.

Lynn has just started her degree after a twelve year break from academics. She attends classes at night and stays home days with her three children.

David and Lynn are only two of a growing number of older students returning to university and the problems they face are unique.

Daycare, class scheduling and financial constraints are just a few of the problems mature students usually encounter.

At Dalhousie there is a ten year time limit to complete an Arts degree. Polly MacFarlane of Dalhousie psychological and counselling services says this is unfair to mature students who are often only able to attend classes part-time.

Many mature students complain that classes they want to take are not offered at night and most spend their days at work.

"It is difficult for anyone receiving chemistry or biology degrees. As soon as you pass the first year, I've been told that

some of the required second and third year classes are not offered during the evening," said MacFarlane.

In an attempt to deal with some of these problems, mature students at Dalhousie formed a mature students association. Earlier this year the group split up because members did not have enough time.

"There just wasn't enough people to keep it going," said Barb Abbot, coordinator of the association.

MacFarlane says the dissolving of the association does not reflect the lack of need for such a group.

"At Memorial University, the mature students group there is ever-expanding. The ones that do work seem to adopt some kind of cause and they lobby for services for the specific needs of mature students on campus," said MacFarlane.

"The group at Dalhousie had a different purpose. It provided a social network, where Memorial was more political and involved in committees," she said.

*For a national angle on the dilemma of mature students see story in centre spread.*

## Alumni contributions increase in the eighties

by Susan Fullerton

In a time of financial restraint and cutbacks, donations to the Dalhousie Alumni Association's 1983 fund increased approximately fifty percent.

There was a concerted effort to strengthen the Alumni Relations program, using the Alumni News, published three times a year, said alumni director Heather Sutherland.

As well, Sutherland organized cross-Canada branch meetings to

strengthen support for Dalhousie in its time of financial need.

They are trying to show the alumni that they are a service association, says Sutherland.

There were two major mailouts to alumni who had not made a donation during 1983. The association conducted a phone-athon where athletes at Dalhousie called former athletes to encourage them to donate.

Sutherland said she is very pleased with the results.



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Students at Dalhousie are cheered by the news of only a 7% increase in tuition fees. But university administrators and student leaders are holding their breath over the results of the provincial budget for education.

The students' smiles are not without some reservation. If they don't find a summer job, it doesn't matter how little tuition rises.

## Students cheer tuition decision but are still concerned

by M. Anthony Klug

With tuition increases recently announced at 7% across the board for the 84/85 academic year, Dalhousie students reacted with a mixture of immediate relief, continued worries about the long-term future of post-secondary education and some perplexing questions.

Most of the students questioned looked at the 7% increase (about \$100) as a victory for Dalhousie students. None felt the increase alone would keep them from returning to university next year. Some students charged that any increase was one more step toward inaccessibility for a growing portion of the population.

Still others are looking ahead and worrying about next year when the administration may not be in such a generous mood.

The most commonly heard question from students was, "Why do Dalhousie students pay the highest tuition fees in Canada?" "How can other universities, like McGill and Waterloo,

charge substantially lower tuition fees than Dalhousie?" asked one Dal science major.

Dwight Robar, a commerce student, asked why students in his department pay higher tuition fees than students in any other.

News of the tuition increase has not kept Dalhousie students from worrying about the prospects of summer employment. "Government job-creation programs are far more vital to student-accessibility than tuition increases," was another student's comment.

She praised Dalhousie's student union president for his work lobbying the provincial government, which resulted in increased funds for summer employment, more than for his success with tuition.

"With a good job I can make up the tuition increase in a week, without one I'm not returning," she said.

Similar worries about the cost of housing were common among many students interviewed.