

SU sends "responsible" STU residences looking to change tuition policy to BOG

by Joe FitzPatrick
Co-News Editor

The UNB Student Union has released its proposal for a new tuition policy. The policy is to be submitted to the Board of Governors and dealt with during open session at the December meeting of the BOG.

SU President Kelly Lamrock and Jeff Clark, Student Senator, sit as the Student representatives on the Board of Governors. Since their first meeting, the two have been fighting for changes to Board Policy. During that first meeting, both launched a series of initiatives aimed at improving the responsiveness of the University to the Students. One such initiative was a proposed amendment to the BOG standing policy which would require the BOG to appoint a student to the hiring/review committee of the President or Vice-Presidents. It has been referred to the Nominating Committee.

Another initiative, which is ultimately more innovative, is the tuition fee proposal. In a document submitted to the Student Council, and passed in principle by the Council, the position of the Union is outlined.

"In the past," said Lamrock, "we have dealt with the problem [of tuition levels] at loggerheads, not by hearing each other out and solving the problem together."

"Every year, the Finance Committee retreats behind closed doors to decide upon tuition fee levels that will be necessary, some years, students fight these hikes at the Board level. In recent years,

students have succeeded in getting government, formally or informally, to limit tuition fee hikes."

"Basically," said Lamrock to Council, "we can either sit down together and set a reasonable tuition or we can continue in our separate ways. Students will lobby the government to cap tuition fees; universities will try to use tuition to make up shortfalls in government grants."

"We're just as happy doing a reach-out-and-touch Camille campaign, during which we logged 3,000 calls to the Minister of Advanced Education and Labour demanding a tuition freeze, but it's easier to do it within the university community than get the government involved in that aspect," said Lamrock.

The proposal attempts to forge a "cooperation in developing a tuition policy for ourselves by determining levels we can live with and budget priorities that meet out twin goals of quality and access."

Lamrock calls upon the University Finance Committee and the BOG to "responsibly figure out how [the decision to set tuition fee levels] will impact on our enrollment levels, our mission statement, and our responsibility to the community."

Lamrock is quick to point out that "this process in no way signifies our acceptance of the federal education cuts, not the end of our fight against them."

"Yet, it has been a hallmark of the Student Union approach in the last 18 months to work towards a response from the university community that works together on these issues, not one which divides us against each other."

by Cynthia Kirkby
Co-News Editor

The Saint Thomas Student Union released a report titled "Rules We Can Live With" this week, asking for changes to the policies concerning the "outdated, oppressive, and unreasonable" rules at the university's three residences.

The proposal, accredited to STU VP Administration Shawn Rouse, maintains that, for the amount of money students pay to live in residence, students should have a better standard of service and living than they are receiving now. It cites the fact that the majority of residence students are in their first or second year of university as proof, claiming that "students tolerate residence life as long as possible before they head for other quarters because they cannot stand it anymore."

Although sarcastic at times — "the time-honoured residence policy at St. Thomas of 'You agreed to live by these rules when you moved into residence and we don't have to change them' and 'If you don't like it, move.'" — the report provides alternatives to five issues of contention for residence students. The "changes we can live with" include amendments to the rules concerning the opposite sex, leaving residence, and adopting new rules.

Change the Girl/Guy policy

Under the current policy, STU students are not allowed to have members of the opposite sex in the residence between midnight and 10 am on weekdays or between 2 am and 10 am on weekends.

The paper states that this rule should not be in place merely because a minority of students feel more comfortable with the restrictions. "If the minority of students wanted proctors to roam the hallways with flashlights and listening devices to ensure other members of the opposite sex were not in the residence in prohibited hours, it does not make it a good idea either just because a minority of students believe it to be so." It labels the rule as a "misguided attempt at moral guidance by the administration," and continues that "while the regulation might be an indication of the Catholic heritage of the university... [religion] is not a basis for legislation."

The paper's proposal is that overnight guests must be signed in, and must follow all existing rules concerning guests. This is important for safety and for consideration reasons. It asks that parents' opinions not be considered in formulating a new policy, and that a trial run be held to determine the feasibility of the suggestion.

Improvements to Holy Cross

Dubbed a "barely habitable... second class residence" that has "sunk to disgusting lows of student accommodation," Holy Cross House needs "extensive renovations." The areas needing improvement include inadequate heating, broken beds and furniture, and lack of privacy for shower stalls. As well, "despite repeated requests from the House Committee and the Student Union," the lighting from the rest of campus to the residence is inadequate, which "creates a huge safety hazard."

students withdrawing from residence mid-semester find a replacement in order to receive full remuneration. "How is it that the administration expects Joe or Jill average resident to convince someone to take their place in residence? ... Hey Bill! How would you like to live in a six by ten foot room with another guy, stand in line for your food three times a day, and never have your girlfriend overnight? ... The university gives the option of leaving residence but does not make it realistic which is really no option at all."

The Student Union asks the administration to "abolish the practice of obliging students to find replacements for themselves in residence when leaving," and to "create a policy which pro-rates students' residence fees and refunds a corresponding amount to those students leaving residence during the academic year."

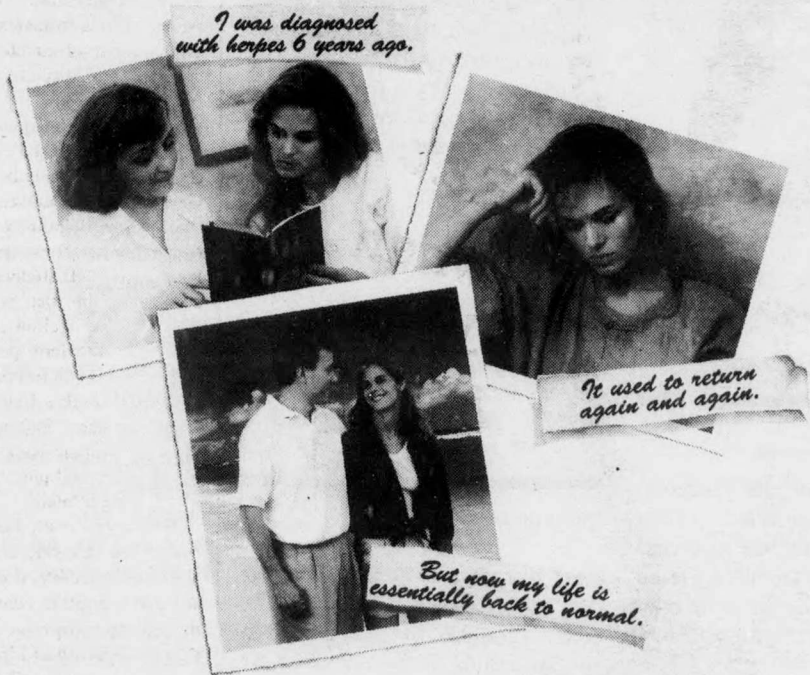
Other requests are that the side doors of Harrington Hall be kept open during the hours when visitors are permitted, and that the administration "strike a committee consisting of members of all house committees and a representative from the Student Union to consult on policy changes before they are enacted."

The paper concludes that "if the Dean of Student Affairs stood in line for 25 minutes for a mediocre dinner, or had to walk over garbage on the way to his room, or had to fumble with keys outside in sub-zero temperatures instead of rushing in a side door, or had to walk home scared in almost complete darkness back to his residence at night, or couldn't have his wife overnight, he would understand that residence students are already making many sacrifices for the sake of residence."

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