

NEWS

Putting the "you" in students union

BY LILLI JU

Late last Thursday night, March 12, as most people were settling down in the comfort of their own abodes or enjoying an evening out, three groups anxiously awaited the results of this year's DSU elections.

At 11 p.m., there were only 35 votes separating the top two teams. At last, after 1 a.m., the final tally was announced: Lale Kesebi and Dennis MacNeil had won the election with a narrow margin of 127 votes. A formidable election race indeed, from start to finish!

So who are these two individuals who'll be heading the Dalhousie Student Union next year, and what is their position on various student issues?

Lale Kesebi is currently in her second year of law school. Previously she completed her B.Sc. in Psychology at Dal. Kesebi presently holds the position of VP-Community Affairs on the DSU executive, which terminates at the end of April. Immediately afterwards, the new 92/93 executive takes over with Kesebi at the helm.

"It hasn't sunk in yet," said Kesebi on Monday. "I'm very excited about

the upcoming year. I'm happy that the work the DSU and students did this year will continue next year."

Kesebi's goals for next year are "to make the DSU for you [the students]... making the students feel that the DSU is accessible and is serving their best interests." She and MacNeil also see fulfilling their election platform as a priority. This puts on their mandate a wide range of issues, such as rationalization, course evaluation, tuition freeze, improving DSU-campus communications, and daycare facilities for mature students.

Kesebi plans to continue pressuring the Dalhousie Board of Governor's with students' concerns.

Kesebi would like to "maintain a legitimate student voice... make Board members more aware of student concerns, including quality of education, security, and residence life." Starting with the BoG, Kesebi would like to "create and establish a sense of community within all facets of the university, where the student voice is heard and respected."

Concerning the possibility of the establishment of a Women's Centre at Dalhousie, Kesebi is "committed to having a resource centre for women which provides support for women

who are sexually harassed or assaulted, provides a safe and secure meeting place for women at Dal, and seeks to celebrate women's contributions to society and to further their role in the established power hierarchy."

Post-secondary institutions have been suffering from neglect on the part of our governments. Kesebi will "maintain student lobbying efforts with the provincial and federal governments... seeking a higher degree of commitment to post-secondary education." She also stresses "rationalization of post-secondary institutions should focus primarily at the registration and administrative levels as a first step and not the deletion of programs."

So what will she do until May 1 (when she officially assumes the role of DSU President)? "There's still a lot of work left with Community Affairs and getting the office ready for the next person," she said. "Then there's trying to be a law student for the next few weeks!"

DSU Executive Vice-President Elect, Dennis MacNeil, is graduating this year with his undergrad in Psychology. As the current Dalhousie Science Society President, MacNeil feels his experience working within



Lale Kesebi and Dennis MacNeil

the society and with other societies will greatly enhance his work as Executive VP, which is mainly directed at the society-level.

"I want to make sure they [the societies and students] are aware of what the DSU does, and how the DSU works so that they can get their money's worth," said MacNeil. "I want to hear what students want with this university. A lot of people have good ideas. My door is open to anyone and everyone who wants to have their say." MacNeil stresses the importance of making certain that the DSU "works for the majority of students, as well as for groups with special needs."

"Remember when [course evaluation] was here? Especially with so few courses available, it can serve as a valuable tool for students and in the assessment of the quality of education at Dal," he said.

MacNeil would like "to see societies working together in integrated activities." He mentioned the Cultural Diversity Festival as a very positive example of this. "I'd also like to encourage 'society pride' and 'mass participation'." This will come through communication, he said. "The key is, everyone should know what's going on, what's going to affect them, and what they can do. All students have the right to be informed."

Security is also on MacNeil's mandate. "Tiger Patrol is great." He plans

to look into enlarging the service to include a third pair of patrollers and extending the service to Fenwick. However, he noted insurance technicalities may restrict Tiger Patrol's area of service. Lighting is also a concern he would like to see administration put more effort into. "Students will notice and appreciate [the administration] for such things, especially in areas surrounding the residences and main buildings used at night, where lighting is minimal to none."

A number of proposals have been made about Studley Field. It is important to MacNeil to have a "...suitable and acceptable playing surface for varsity, intramural and club sports, with particular attention to the different needs of the various groups that may use the field. For example, a synthetic surface seems to be best but we must consider the rugby team, which has a rich tradition and is almost as old as the DSU."

Students will find out to what extent campaign promises and "words" really turn into action. Hopefully, in light of the significant increase in voter turnout, there are more students out there who will be paying attention to what's going on and will take an active part in the workings of the DSU (other than just voting). After all, in the end when it comes down to the 'crunch,' the DSU is what students make it.

Defining AIDS for women

BY KAREN HILL

OTTAWA (CUP) — The American Centre for Disease Control's definition of AIDS is about to be expanded to include symptoms particular to women, according to a draft of the revised definition.

There have been no changes to the CDC's definition of AIDS since 1987, and AIDS activists have been lobbying for the inclusion of women's symptoms. A new definition is scheduled for release later this month.

"I'm very happy," said Linda Rowe, a Vancouver AIDS activist. "I'm HIV-positive, so I've been pushing for [the expansion of the definition] since October, 1989."

The definition, used to determine eligibility for family benefits and welfare in Canada, has excluded symptoms specific to women but recognized by AIDS activists and counsellors. HIV, or human immunodeficiency virus, is thought to cause AIDS.

While Kaposi's sarcoma and pneumocystis carinii pneumonia are common to gay men, women rarely display these symptoms. Women more often exhibit upper respiratory infections, chronic, persistent yeast infection, human papillomavirus (HPV) and cervical cancer.

Symptoms outlined in the new definition include thrush, pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), cervical cancer and chronic yeast infections which do not respond to treatment.

Darien Taylor, co-founder of the Toronto-based group, Voices of Positive Women, said the failure to recognize these symptoms often leads doctors to misdiagnose, or simple dismiss women's health concerns.

"If you're a woman and have a constellation of symptoms that would indicate to activists that you're HIV-positive, it may often go unrecognized by doctors until it's too late," she said.

Miranda LaFaye (not her real name) said she became ill six years ago. Her doctor treated her for asthma and a throat infection, ignoring her other symptoms. She was not tested for HIV. It wasn't until 1987, after discovering her partner was HIV-positive that she was tested. The result was positive.

When she went to a Toronto hospital for treatment, LaFaye was given a questionnaire asking her if she engaged in fisting, how often she had anal intercourse and if her partner ejaculated inside her.

"I couldn't believe it," she said. "It was asking me questions completely foreign to my experience. I just stared at the page and I started to cry."

Women are not only misdiagnosed or diagnosed late in their illness, they are also underdiagnosed. Since women's symptoms are not in the 1987 CDC definition, they die with AIDS-related complex (ARC), which is viewed as a point between asymptomatic illness and AIDS.

While the average life expectancy

following an AIDS diagnosis for women is 15.5 weeks, it is 21 months for a white, gay man, according to a 1989 paper presented to the Fifth International Conference on AIDS.

This is attributable to misdiagnosis and the fact that women simply aren't being tested for HIV at the same rate men are, Taylor said.

Another problem facing women with HIV and AIDS is the lack of clinical trials which test new drugs. In Canada, 40 trials are underway, but none of them are specifically directed at women.

Rowe said she wants to see some action.

"I'm hoping to see clinical trials looking at yeast infection, PID and cervical cancer," Rowe said. "There are none specific to us [and] we need to know things."

"Is PID more prevalent in women with HIV? If so, should we be testing for HIV" when a woman is diagnosed with pelvic inflammatory disease, she said.

But, according to Robyn Sussel of the Canadian HIV Trials Network, it is difficult to set up trials geared to women because there are so few who have been diagnosed with AIDS.

"Logistically it's a nightmare and there's too few [women] to make it statistically relevant," Sussel said.

According to Oct. 1991 statistics from the federal Department of Health and Welfare, 179 women and 2,972 men have died of AIDS since 1979 in Canada.

