

Budget squeeze means extra fees

by Donald D. Betts, Dean,
Faculty of Arts and Science

Students as well as faculty members at Dalhousie must by now be well aware of this university's very difficult financial posi-

tion. Each faculty, and within the Faculty of Arts and Science, each department, has been instructed to budget for a 4.76% increase in net expenditures assuming a 12% increase in salaries. In the Faculty

of Arts and Science salaries amount to over 95% of the budget, which leads to a apparently insoluble equation.

During the past three months departments have been working

very hard to achieve the necessary savings. After several weeks of effort, the experimental science departments had done everything contractually possible to reduce their budgets yet, with one exception, had not met their targets. Clearly revenues had to be increased and one of the most obvious ways of doing so was to impose extra fees for laboratory classes. After all, laboratory classes take up more space, require more time of professors and instructors and use more supplies than do non-laboratory classes, in short, they are more expensive.

The current proposal is that for undergraduate classes with weekly laboratories a fee of \$20 be added to the tuition fee for each half class. This fee would be collected in the usual way by the Business Office. The extra income generated is estimated to be about \$100,000. This income would be devoted entirely to the direct costs of running the laboratories, such as purchases of chemicals and other supplies, payment of undergraduate student demonstrators, etc.

When I was an undergraduate science student at Dalhousie in the 1940's student fees were \$30 per non-laboratory class and \$50 per laboratory class. With subsequent inflation these figures today would be about ten times as much. Dalhousie continued to charge laboratory fees until 1961-62, by which time the amount had declined to \$15.

At present, several other Canadian universities do have various types of special lab fees, musical applied skills fees, etc. At one old and prestigious medium sized

Ontario university with which Dalhousie likes to compare itself, I have learned from the Dean there that the following fees are charged: the Department of Music charges a concert fee, an instrument maintenance fee and a locker fee for a total of \$150 per year. The Department of Geology charges a field expense fee of \$100 per year. The Department of Chemistry charges \$25 per year for laboratory chemicals. In lieu of a lab fee, the Department of Computing Science charges \$70 for notes which cost \$20 to produce.

Dalhousie is unique among Nova Scotia and indeed Maritime universities in the number and size of its professional schools. Some of these professional schools, such as the Faculties of Medicine and Dentistry, are, on a per student basis, very expensive to operate compared with the Faculty of Arts and Science. For this reason students in such schools pay higher tuition fees than Arts and Science students. I am in favour of an even greater differential fee for these professional faculties. The Arts and Science faculties at other Nova Scotia universities do not subsidize the province's one-of-a-kind professional schools. Neither should the Dalhousie Arts and Science Faculty merely because these professional faculties are part of Dalhousie. I know my fellow Deans on the Carleton campus agree. Similarly there is no good reason that Arts students should subsidize Science students.

I hope and do believe that students will understand and accept the necessity for higher fees for laboratory classes.

Fees inequitable

by Caroline Zayid, President,
Dalhousie Science Society

In recent weeks, both the Dalhousie Student Union and the Science Society have passed motions firmly opposing the imposition of lab fees. This opposition is based on the principle that all areas of education should be equally accessible.

Students have opposed the differential fees imposed against professional schools, commerce students, etc., and we view lab fees as a more devious means of restricting accessibility to science education. The federal and provincial governments are emphasizing the importance of scientific and technical education. To limit opportunities in these areas to students from high income families is blatantly irresponsible.

A study conducted by the Student Union revealed that Dalhousie students, in general, tend to come from high income groups. This is hardly surprising, when one considers that Dalhousie University has one of the highest tuition fees in the country, in a region where summer employment opportunities are so limited. The question of accessibility **must** be taken more seriously and, in particular, equal accessibility to all fields must be ensured.

We realize that Dean Betts and the department heads are considering lab fees because the university is facing financial difficul-

ties. The government's funding has been inadequate and the administration has been forced to pass on limited budgets to the departments. The Dean and his department heads see lab fees as a way of meeting Mr. Shaw's budget at the expense of students. This is unacceptable.

Students pay fees (high fees!) to the administration and it must not be possible for every department to institute their own sources of revenue. If the money is needed we believe it should be raised, by the Board of Governors, through tuition fees.

Arguments have been made that lab costs are rising rapidly and that, morally, science students should pay some sort of user-pay tax. The Dean has indicated that lab fees may well be charged even in courses where lab costs are minimal simply to offset general operating costs. Clearly, this is what we pay tuition fees for.

If lab fees are imposed against science students this year, other students can expect charges for language labs, music rooms, and library use soon. The Student Union and the Science Society are committed to opposing the proliferation of hidden costs and mini-fees. The administration may have abandoned the idea of equal accessibility but they should not expect any less than a hard fight.



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