

Dalplex joins the cutbacks era

BY KATHARINE DUNN

In an age where the predominant catchword is "cutbacks," three Dalplex employees are the latest victims of the downsizing routine.

Two weeks ago, two individuals were immediately dismissed from their jobs after their administrative positions were cut. In addition, one Dalhousie Staff Association (DSA) position was downgraded and is currently undergoing changes so that a portion of the job will be integrated into pre-existing positions.

Tony Martin, Director of the Department of Athletic and Recreational Services, said axing the positions was "a financial, not a performance, decision."

This year, Dalplex added a further dimension to its current line of services in an effort to attract families with small children. These changes were made to increase the facility's membership base. Ac-

ording to Martin, the new focus has been "working well" so far.

However, a new payment structure, which gives members the opportunity to pay on a month-per-month basis, has resulted in lost revenues. Instead of collecting twelve months of membership fees at the beginning of the year, Dalplex must now rely on patron fees from members who commit only one month at a time.

This new membership policy, combined with the cost of additions such as the family Fun Zone, a general decline in membership in aquatics and leisure classes, and the anticipation of further university cuts in the next few years, are the primary reasons for the cutbacks.

"We had to make a move now," said Martin. "People are being cautious. They are worried about personal finances and jobs. The public is very conservative with expenditures, and that has hurt us."

Martin hopes that by terminating these positions now, Dalplex will reach financial stability over the next few years, thus saving the recreation facility from having to make further cuts.

However, future decisions inevitably depend on the severity of the university's own cutbacks.

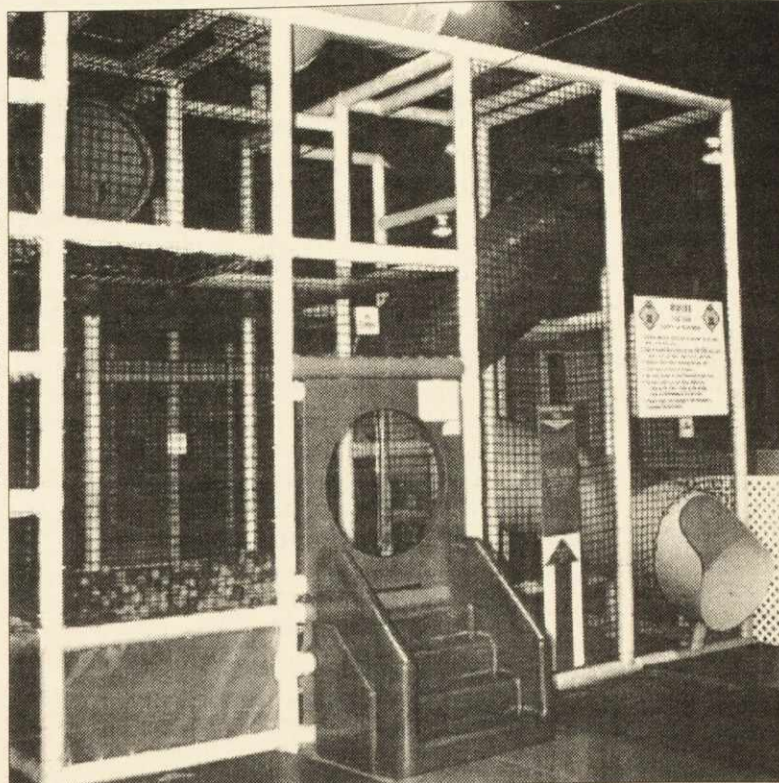
"We can look at what will potentially happen, but Dalhousie does not even know what is going to take place," Martin said.

When asked about student jobs at Dalplex, Martin conceded that there has been a reduction in staff this term. This was not a financial decision but rather a "push for longer shifts, resulting in a higher commitment," he said.

One student currently working at the Equipment Desk agreed that cutting staff in favour of longer shifts is not a sacrifice.

"You need at least a year to be familiarized with the building," he said. "They should keep numbers down so we can have more hours."

Martin stated that students presently working in the facility need not worry about their jobs.



GAZETTE PHOTO BY DANIELLE BOURDEAU

"I see us maintaining similar numbers to keep the building operating," he said.

Despite the addition of the Fun Zone, it hasn't been all fun and games at Dalplex.

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