

Grad student withholds thesis fees

by Paul Creelman

Geoff Strople, a graduate student in the Institute of Public Affairs, has been withholding about \$80 of his tuition fees as "a matter of principle". The \$80 is the difference between last year's part-time thesis fees of \$156, and the new fee for the 1980-81 year, which is \$234. "I thought that was a big increase", said Strople, "so I went to the faculty of Graduate studies to find out why it had gone up so much."

"Of course they didn't know anything, since the fee increase had just recently come down from the administration. So I made an appointment with President MacKay to find out. After all, it was a 50% increase—I wanted to know why it had gone up so much considering. I don't get any services from the university."

Strople stated that he was told by MacKay the fee increase was approved by the Board of Governors, and that MacKay would investigate the increase and contact Strople with the results. Strople continued to withhold his fees pending this information, and on March third, wrote Dal financial services explaining that his accounts were in arrears pending communication by MacKay.

"I'm not pleased with the response I've got so far, which is basically no response at all", said Strople.

However, President MacKay has a different perspective of the fee increase.

"I think what he means is a response that suits him", said MacKay when asked why

Strople had not been contacted.

"I explained to him that there wasn't much likelihood that anything could be done about the fees at this point in time."

MacKay said that the argument that Strople was addressing was not necessarily valid.

"The argument that he addresses is that some students had fee increases greater than others, and he thinks they shouldn't. It is an argument, but the fact is that is it not unusual for some particular group of students to have greater tuition fees than other students."

Graduate student council rep Greg Graham disagrees with this idea, stating that the increases are unwarranted in view of the fact that part-time thesis only students like Strople make minimal use of the

university resources compared with other students. (Part-time thesis only students do not have any classes, and because their only academic responsibility is completion of their thesis project, they are often not even on campus.)

President MacKay does not feel that the services provided by the university should be a consideration in the calcula-

tion of fees.

"We don't attribute particular student fees to particular costs that the students incur. If we did that, we'd get into the business of costing all the programs, to see if commerce is more expensive than arts or science, for example", said MacKay.

Meanwhile, Strople says he is still awaiting an official reply by MacKay. Saying that he is still standing on the principle that university fees should rise gradually. Strople ruefully admits that he doesn't have the chance of a "snowball in hell" of changing administration policies single-

handedly.

"One of the things I most regret was not organizing a more official protest. One person alone dealing with the university administration is no-one. They don't feel any particular responsibility to a single student", said Strople.

Strople emphasizes that his actions so far have all been through the prescribed official channels.

"Without speculating on the reason why they haven't given me an explanation—I'll leave that to you—my official position is that I want a reply to justify this increase", said Strople.

Dictator retains honorary degree

by Paul Creelman

Dalhousie Senate has decided to "take no action" to revoke the honorary degree of Guyanan dictator Forbes Burnham. Dr. A.M. Sinclair, the chairperson of the Senate, stated that Senate was not empowered to revoke the honorary degree.

"The Senate of Dalhousie was advised by the university solicitors that revocation of honorary degrees is not within its statutory power," said Sinclair. When asked if the Senate considered alternatives to revocation of the degree, such as censure, Sinclair stated that there had been only brief discussion along those lines.

The motion to review the honorary degree was motivated by publicity last November of numerous human rights violations and interference in the

electoral and judicial processes in Guyana.

Professor Sankar, a professor of the School of Business administration, feels that the review of the honorary degree was not done seriously enough by Senate.

"I think on the whole that the effort by the Senate was quite tokenistic. First of all, if the committee that awarded the degree is called on to revoke the degree — the committee is passing judgement on its own actions," says Sankar.

MacKay held hearings on the honorary degree, according to Senate chairperson Sinclair. Ken Persaud and Prof. Sankar charge that authors of the original brief to Senate on the Guyanan situation were not allowed to speak before the com-

mittee, and that Philomena Shury, a former member of Guyana's parliament, was not invited to testify.

In January, Sinclair was quoted in the Gazette as saying that

"There was a feeling she had come a long way and that it posed a problem in not letting her speak. But the members of Senate voted to let her speak to the committee instead."

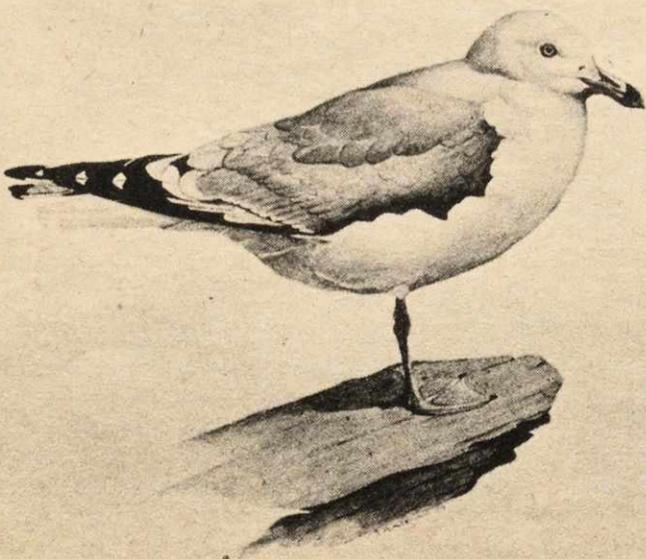
After the decision of the Senate not to take any action on the honorary degree, a statement was released by the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights in Guyana, whose membership includes both Persaud and Sankar. The statement charges that a cover up of the whole affair has been advised. This is a sentiment echoed by Sankar:

"It's never been done in a university," said Sankar about a revocation of an honorary degree.

"It may have political implications, and it may cause embarrassment to the university. These are the main reasons why they have sheltered under some legal technicality," he charges.

When asked whether the Senate was trying to cover up the whole affair, Chairperson Sinclair replied, "I have no comment on that".

However, he re-emphasized that the reason why Senate made the decision was based on the fact they did not have the statutory power to revoke an honorary degree. Sinclair was unable to comment further on the debate in Senate because the discussions were conducted in camera.



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