

Keep the
dream
alive

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Photo by Mike Davenport

Maclean's editor gives Dal a pep talk

Rankings editor is somewhat optimistic of the future of Canadian universities

BY SALLY THOMAS

Anne Dowsett-Johnston is optimistic about the future of universities — because they couldn't get any worse.

Dowsett-Johnston, the editor of *Maclean's* magazine's Guide to Universities, has a lot to say about schools, career choices and the future.

Johnston says she is wary of what choices students make in

university. She is sympathetic with the legions of students who graduate with an enormous debt hanging over their heads. But she cautions students not to let finances dictate their education.

In particular she is vocal about the choice students make while in university. She says some students, actually interested in arts, enroll in a commerce or science degree thinking there will be more jobs available for them after graduation.

Dowsett-Johnston says a liberal arts degree is a credible one to earn and it will still leave possibilities open, despite popular opinion. And she has a warning for those in degrees they don't prefer.

"Don't be bullied by finances. Don't do something you don't want to do."

Tuesday night, Dowsett-Johnston discussed these issues with about 30 people in a near-

empty McInnes Room.

She says universities in Canada are waking up to a reality where money isn't as available to

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New withdrawal deadlines take some by surprise

"R" classes affected by change in university policy

BY KATIE TINKER

Last year you had until Jan. 21 to drop a full-year course without any penalty. This year that date has been moved back to Nov. 9 — if you drop it now you'll get a "W" — for withdrawal.

And some say not enough students knew about the change.

Amy MacDonald, a second-year French major, discovered the date change when she decided to drop a full-year course in December.

"The French secretary didn't even know about it — she said I had plenty of time, and when she checked the dates in the calendar she was surprised."

The change, explains associate registrar Mary MacGillivray, is a result of Dalhousie's amalgamation with the former Technical University of Nova Scotia (TUNS), now DalTech. Since TUNS gave students less time to drop courses than Dal did, the dates had to be adjusted.

"We looked at other universities across Canada," she said. "The dates do vary a lot —

some give as little as a week, some give more."

The new system, which applies to both half-year and full-year courses, came into effect this year. During the first third of a course, a student can withdraw with no record. In the second third, a student can drop a course and

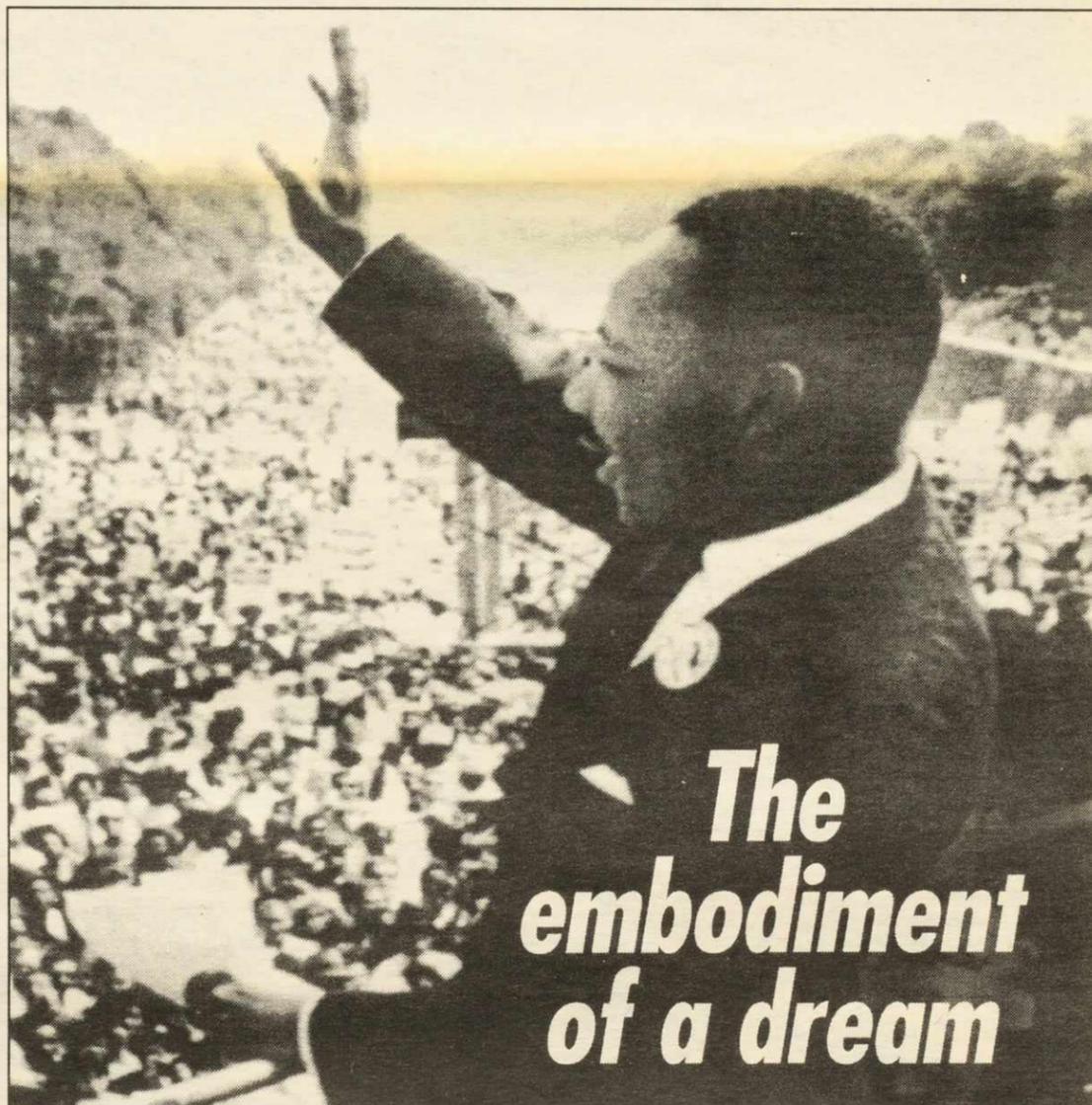
receive a "W" on their transcript. In the final third, students are not allowed to withdraw at all.

MacGillivray says the fact that students would no longer have the opportunity to see the results of their Christmas exams before deciding to drop without penalty was never really discussed.

Amy MacDonald says she was assured that a "W" on her transcript would not affect her negatively down the road. But she says she doesn't see the rationale for moving the date back so much.

"In most [full-year] courses you don't have a good idea of how you're really doing by November," she said.

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The embodiment of a dream

Symphony Nova Scotia tribute does justice to King's legacy

BY SHELLEY ROBINSON

There are good causes, and good times.

The first — from grade eight pageants to musical tributes — usually feel like charity work. You silently suffer through bad knockoffs of inspirational music, jiggling your leg to keep it from falling asleep and you end up feeling good about yourself in the same way you feel good about

flossing.

Good times though, are supposed to be vaguely bad. They're the kind of things you do late at night and have trouble remembering all the details about once the light of morning hits.

The last place you expect to have a good time is in an auditorium, watching the symphony, at eight o'clock on a Saturday night — singing "Kumbaya". I'm not kidding,

"Kumbaya".

In honour of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday Jan. 15, Symphony Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Mass choir and some soloists got together and did a musical tribute that would have knocked anyone on their ass.

The tribute was true to the spirit of Dr. King and what he stood for, without being overly moralistic.

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