

Dean Betts a 'milquetoast'?

For the past year, Dalhousie has been in the process of changing almost all of its top administration and not everyone is happy about how it has been done. Currently, the unhappiness centres around the recently selected Dean of Arts and Science, Donald Betts.

Last weekend's Council meeting heard outgoing vice-president Graham Wells describe Betts as a "milquetoast", while incoming vice-president Jeff Champion charged that Betts was only selected because he was a classmate of members of the selection committee.

Professor Mike Cross, who was vocal in his opposition to what he considered to be a highly closed process that led to the selection of president-elect Andy McKay, says that the Betts selection was much more open.

In his History department, faculty met Betts and the other shortlisted candidates. They then discussed them and voted on the candidates in open ballot. Cross admits that while this procedure allowed more faculty input into the selection, he's not sure that this feedback had much affect on the selection committee.

"I really don't know why Betts was picked." But he

notes that Betts was a classmate of MacKay and Guy MacLean, Dal's former Vice President for Academic and Research, at Dalhousie in the early Fifties.

Cross says that campus scuttlebutt is that one or both of two new vice-presidents currently being selected will be outsiders.

"Certainly it is designed so that the new vice-presidents will have no independent power base like MacKay had as an insider."

Graham Wells disagrees, saying that he hopes that the two new vice presidents are outsiders. He was happy with the choice of MacKay as the new president but admits that as an insider, his appointment does "lessen the chance for great and sweeping changes in the university".

This impetus for change he sees as coming from the outsiders on the administration.

Wells dismisses the idea that MacKay is deliberately pushing for outsiders on the administration to build up his own power base. "It's another conspiracy theory from those paranoid maniacs at DFA. The committee picked Betts as a political decision, because they could not decide among several better candidates from within the university. They picked him rather than split

the academic community," he said.

Cross wonders that if an outsider had to be selected, why did a candidate widely seen as weak make it to the committee shortlist? "That's the whole problem with the process, the Senate selection committees persist in refusing to let anyone see the names on the original list, so you never can be sure if the best people truly undergo the final scrutiny."

Cross says there is little to be gained from 'opening up the process' by letting the Dalhousie Faculty Association or the Student Council executives see the names, if they can't go back and discuss them with their members.

"If your constituency can't know about it, they can't pressure the committee one way or the other."

"Applicants for such important posts should expect to have their names revealed publicly in the selection process." If they suffer flak as a result, Cross says, "that's tough. They shouldn't have been playing games with their other job."

Dr. Lea Steeves, the head of the Senate Committee currently seeking applicants and nominations for the post of vice-president Academic,

disagrees, saying that usually applicants for such posts are high in the administrations of other institutions and would be embarrassed to have their job-seeking revealed.

Like Graham Wells, he thinks the interest of the university community and the public is well served by the quality of the members of the selection committees.

"The task is a duty and a very big responsibility. For instance, the selection of the Academic vice-president is crucial to the academic life at Dalhousie.

While Cross complains that most faculty never seem to end up on Senate Committees while a few are on many of them, Steeves sees appointment to a selection committee more as a burden. A bit of an honour but "no matter who you pick someone will always oppose the choice," he says.

Steeves notes that because selection committees are struck so rarely, most members only serve on one of them. He sees appointment to such committees as something that comes to a faculty member in the middle prime of their years. "Something that the senior faculty shouldn't be expected to have to take up."

The actual selection process is well laid out in new regulations the Senate adopted several years ago. The president, who along with the Board of Governors formally selects the new vice-president, requests that the Senate appoint a committee to advise him as to his choice. This is because an Academic

vice-president must be acceptable to most academics with whom he or she will work.

On the other hand, because as Steeves says, "the Academic Vice President must complement the President", the Senate's terms of reference make it clear to the committee that they must seek someone acceptable to the president.

This delicate balancing act is not required with the Vice President for Administration. This post is also being filled but in a much quieter manner. To date, two applications have been received and the deadline for such applicants closes on April 15th. After that president-elect MacKay will appoint a small committee to advise him on his choice. This choice is seen as more exclusively his because this vice-president works so closely with him.

Meanwhile Steeves makes the point that nominations and applications for the Vice President Academic also close on April 15th and that literally anyone that has the best interests of Dalhousie at heart can submit a nominated name and the reasons for doing so.

"We've even had nominations from Dal alumni who are faculty at other universities who have seen our ad and feel they know someone who would be amply suitable.

"He urges all interested faculty or students to do likewise. Nominees are notified by letter and asked to submit their vitae and the names of three referees.

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Communists urge spoiled ballot

by Glenn Walton

Quebecers should spoil their ballots in the upcoming referendum, according to the Worker's Communist Party, which held a slideshow and discussion on Quebec this week in the SUB.

The Canadian workers' movement, as the WCP sees it, would be divided by a separation of Quebec from the rest of Canada. 'Quebec is not just one province out of ten as politicians like Buchanan would have us believe' the party maintains, 'but a nation with a history dating back over 200 years.'

While declaring support for the genuine concerns of Quebecers to maintain their identity and language, the group feels that those concerns can best be achieved in cooperation with other workers' groups. 'We have no interest in supporting either option (either a yes or no vote), a party spokesman said on Friday. The Parti Quebecois is,

for the WCP, just another capitalist front, and independence for Quebec would only mean continuation of capitalist oppression.

Citing continuing oppression of Canada's French-speaking minorities (such as the ban on French schools in Manitoba in 1890, and in Ontario in 1912) the slide show traced the development of the Canadian worker's movements and its part in labour struggles, particularly in the 1930's. Reforms promised by politicians such as Duplessis were only a ploy, and the Liberal modernization of the 1960's (the quiet revolution) only established the capitalists in Quebec. The WCP, founded in 1975 from the older Workers Communist League, thus sees a spoiled ballot as the only option for Quebecers interested in maintaining ties with progressive elements in the rest of Canada, while supporting their right to self-determination.