

SRC comptroller begins work at orientation

This is the second in a series regarding the role of the members of the SRC in relation to their positions and the student body. The first article which ran before Christmas talked about the job of the President, Roy Neale. This week the series discusses Chris Fisher's role as Comptroller for the SRC.

The most important part of Chris Fisher's job begins in the first week in September with Orientation Week.

"After Orientation budgets are submitted by all the clubs and societies on campus, and there is at least 30 or 40," says Fisher. "Myself, the finance chairman, Peter Ashton, and the business administrator, Wayne Charters, go over all the budgets at least twice before they go to the Administrative Board for approval."

Then Fisher's job is to reprepare the master budget obtaining the final figure from Blue concerning the total number of students, and multiplying this number by \$35.

He says it is at least November before he begins to straighten things out again. But Fisher's job as Comptroller doesn't end there. Everyday he is faced with allotments and re-allotments for clubs. These must all be gone over before they are brought to an AB meeting.

November, he admits, is a much slacker month, the main, or more busier months, being September and October. However, Winter Carnival time arrives and Fisher then has to work as a liaison between the SRC and the Winter Carnival Committee, working out all budgets for all events and making sure they don't overspend.

"My job is listed in a number of general categories in the constitution. I supervise all funds and payments by the SRC, make sure clubs stay within their budgets, sign purchase orders and cheques for them. I also solicit conference funds and although I have the right to choose delegates from each club to attend conferences I usually leave this decision up to the club in question. I feel it is up to the club, they know best.

"My job also entails negotiating honorariums, amounts and who gets honorariums and who

gets salaries. This includes the business administrator and the secretaries in the SRC office. In short, I am the managing officer of the SRC Business Office.

Another part of Fisher's job also requires him to act as President of the SRC in the absence or vacancy of the President or Vice President.

How many hours does Fisher put in to do his job? During budget time he spends at least 50 hours a week in his office.

At the end of Nov. he spends about two hours a day and during "Carnie" it runs up to four hours a day. He explains that the job could be endless if one wanted to investigate all the places to spend money; especially in such areas as entertainment (i.e. Winter Carnival, Fall Festival and Orientation.)

"I feel that most of the students would want SRC to spend more money on entertainment than we already do. By doing this though we would leave other clubs and societies short of money to carry on their activities i.e. BRUNSWICKAN or CHSR. The SRC constitution states that we should spend our money in the educational and cultural areas."

Although the job is a demanding and busy one, Fisher feels it is the best executive position because there are set standards unlike the President who works on new policies and is sort of a PR man. Fisher feels that the President's job is more subject to complaints and criticism than his.

The hardest aspect of the Comptroller's position is to put budgets together.

Peter and I spend from 9 am to 5 pm in my office for three weeks and at least two or three hours in meetings trying to get the budgets together," says Fisher.

"I had to step on a few toes. I am sort of a 'yes, no man' but it is so hard to say not to a club.

"Then I also have to decide what capital expenditures are going to be good in the long run, the worthwhile investments that will pay for themselves in a few years."

Fisher says he tries to get good ideas in from people. He can't sit in his office all day trying to think where to spend money. He

states he will not turn down any good idea within reason, that students come up with.

What bothers Fisher about students at UNB is that they complain about the BRUNSWICKAN or CHSR or the SRC but they won't come in and sit down and talk about solutions and give their ideas.

He says perhaps the reason students don't approach the SRC as much as they should is because they have this conception of the SRC as an elite, ego and power trippers, which isn't true at all.

"Maybe I did have my head on the ceiling my first day of office but I lost that quickly when I realize people judge you by what you can do, not by who you are. You really get put down in your place in this job."

Fisher says he hasn't had any major hassles this year. He mentions the problem with the residences refusing to pay the dollar for CHSR but he says this did not upset him too much. However, Fisher says looking at CHSR's budget they need the money involved and therefore he had to oppose the residences. Neville House has consented to pay so Fisher feels maybe now the other residences may follow suit.

Has he made any mistakes? Plenty, he says. For example, once he made out a cheque in the wrong name and signed it. Luckily he caught it in time and had it cancelled but if it had slipped by and the wrong person got the money it would have been Fisher's fault.

"A complaint I have is with the Council this year", he says. "It isn't that they are not keen but it is so hard to get them together and when if you want something done you have to do it yourself.

"I am also not pleased with last year's yearbook but there is nothing that can be done about that."

What Fisher has really enjoyed is meeting the people, and the experience involved.

"I am very pleased with all the keen people and I really thought I'd have problems, hassles with the BRUNSWICKAN and CHSR but I haven't. I'm surprised how well everything has worked out.

"I know some people from every club and I enjoy working with most of them; it's rewarding."

"I put myself in the running in the first place for the job and not for the money involved. I knew the comptroller got paid at the time I ran but I didn't know he got his tuition paid.

Fisher has made quite a number of changes in his job during his term. He turned the Guest Lecture Tour Fund into a Speakers Fund and placed it under the direct control of the finance chairman.

Conferences, he says, were getting out of hand and there was a lot of waste, maybe nine people going here or there, so he placed it all under one conference budget heading. This way they have more control over how many and who are going where; there is not so much waste.

Fisher also went through last year's budget and examined what was actually spent, then made the master budget tighter bringing the figures closer to the real figures set. For example previously Orientation may have been budgeted for \$3000 and in fact only \$1500 was spent so Fisher chopped the budget closer to this figure, to \$2000, which gives a more realistic budget.

He also set up a Comptroller's Fund which has never been done before at UNB. This fund of \$1000 is for clubs who may have budgeted for new equipment but forgot to add on the tax, an oversight on the club's and Fisher's part. Therefore this can be paid out of the fund up to \$20 per item. Fisher explains that this saves a lot of red tape.

"One change I made quite a few people did not agree with. This was the 5 percent cut on honorariums which applied to everyone including myself.

"I am a strong believer in being keen for the job first and getting paid later. Honorariums were getting higher and higher. After studying the honorariums

of other universities I found out we have one of the highest and best organized systems. But since we suffered a drop in the budget this year of \$7,000.

What has Fisher learned from his experience as Comptroller at UNB? One thing is, how to work with businessmen and not just students which he says he enjoys more.

"Also you can't afford to be soft on this job or people will run right over you. I've learned how a bureaucracy works, to speak to people, how to run an office. I've learned all this, but not well and it will probably be a long time before I do learn these well, if I ever do."

"Mr. Charters, (business Administrator) has helped me a lot; I can't say enough about that guy. He likes students and recognizes their potential.

"He doesn't want control of the office. He wants you to do it, but if you are going astray you can be sure he'll come in and jam it down your throat."

Fisher feels that in the future a need for a full time President and a part time Comptroller is going to arise.

Right now the Comptroller is getting bogged down with administrative work; Fisher is going to make a recommendation to have the finance chairman look after this.

"If future SRC's don't shape up a change is going to have to occur. People on the Council now have overlapping interests. This has to be remedied."

Fisher will not be running for the position of Comptroller in Feb. SRC election. He says he feels he has contributed his share and now knows his job. The Law of Diminishing Returns is setting in. The experience is the same even though the situations change.

"I've contributed my share to the SRC and I've learned a hell of a lot doing so."

ALL STAFF PLEASE NOTE

There will be an important Brunswickan staff meeting Sunday night at 7 p.m. All staff are asked to attend. Anyone interested is also welcome. Room 35, Student Union Building.

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