

Soc. takes aim at sexual harassment

by Eleanor Brown

Dalhousie's sociology and social anthropology department has adopted three policies — including a request the professors keep office doors open when speaking with students — which were originally proposed by the unit's new sexual harassment committee.

It's virtually certain that sexual harassment is something that happens throughout the university

On the committee's recommendation, the faculty also agreed to set up a double-marking system and added three questions dealing with sexual harassment or discrimination to course-end evaluations.

"Our main role is keeping the issue alive in the department,"

said committee chair and sociology graduate student Brenda Beagan.

The six-person board was created last march after an ad hoc group of students and professors met to discuss sexual harassment. Its focus is education, Beagan stresses.

Sociology professor and board member Dr. Graham Morgan hopes each university department will set up similar committees.

"It's virtually certain sexual harassment is something which happens throughout (the university). There's no reason other departments shouldn't be doing it."

According to a recently published guide co-sponsored by Lakehead University's student union, sexual attraction and relationships are likely to occur.

"What makes sexual harassment different from 'flirting' or casual 'asides' is that it is unwanted by the recipient and it occurs in a relationship in which the parties are generally unequal. "In the educational setting,"

the booklet continues, "harassment in its extreme form occurs when a faculty member who is in a position to control, influence, or otherwise affect a student's

harassment includes repeated or unwanted looks, comments, jokes, hugging, patting or brushing against someone

academic future uses that authority and power either to coerce the student into sexual relations or to punish the student for refusing to enter into such relations, or threatens to do so."

The booklet also says harassment includes repeated or unwanted looks, comments, jokes, hugging, patting, or brushing against someone which causes discomfort on the job or in the classroom.

Beagan says the department is so small and friendly that concerned professors are unsure just what sexual harassment is.

"A responsible use of that power (held by profs) is making sure you ask those questions (about what makes students uncomfortable)."

The new 'open door' policy means office doors won't be shut unless both the professor and the student agree that it be closed.

The three questions added to the regular course evaluation forms students are requested to fill out at the end of each course ask whether gender or racial discrimination has been encountered from either students or staff. The third deals with sexual harassment.

"We tried to word the questions carefully, to weed out people who are just picking on women professors," said Beagan.

A recent Canadian study shows students filling out course evaluations consistently give women and members of visible minorities lower marks than white male professors.

Students who feel they have received an unfair mark for any reasons which could include sexual harassment may present their work to the Undergraduate or Graduate Education Committee, which will appoint a second reader. That second mark replaces the first.

Office doors won't be shut unless both the professor and the student agree that it be closed

The committee has already brought in speakers, organized meetings, and sponsored film showings. It consists of two faculty, one support staff, and three students.

Dalhousie has a university sexual harassment committee which deals with specific complaints of harassment.

New four year B.A. will get respect

by Geoff Stone

Dalhousie's proposed four-year bachelor of arts degree is being introduced partly because of the concern that employers are no longer likely to hire three-year graduates as opposed to four-year graduates, said Alan Andrews, associate dean of Arts and Sciences.

"Employers don't look with much respect on a three-year degree," said Andrews. He said many other universities are switching to four years, mainly because they see a four-year degree as better education.

"We are clearly faced with a trend nationwide," said Andrews, who is coordinating much of the program. The new degree should be available to all arts students next year, and will add five credits to the 15-credit degree.

Andrews said that while the original proposal was to move to a 20-credit degree and cut the 15-credit degree, it was changed

to include both.

"There may be a time down the road when Dalhousie drops the 15-credit degree," Andrews added.

Andrews said the 15-credit degree does not in the opinion of many faculty give enough education to students. Andrews called the 20-credit degree a better education value, giving students more time for careful study, without the requirements of an honours program.

Bill Jeffery from the DSU said there is a growing demand from professors that students be better-educated in their fields. but Jeffery said he is not all that certain whether the university, holding a \$25 million debt, could afford to essentially increase its enrollment by 1/3. "They are not in a position to do this," said Jeffery.

For students who wish to transfer from a 15-credit degree after next year, Andrews said that was possible as long as there

is a sufficient number of credits. For the 20-credit courses, six to nine credits will be required to switch majors.

In the 20-credit BA, students will also be required to take a science course and at least two classes beyond the 2nd-year

level.

Andrews said many students in BA programs already take psychology, a course that has a typically high enrollment, mainly because it is an interesting course not available in high school.

Andrews denied that the four-year BA was in any way introduced so that the university could make more money off students. Rather, it is to increase the quality of the education and give students a wider choice of degrees available to them.

