

Politically correct?

DSU council should think hard about their own political motivations

It is unfortunate that so few students are aware of the political currents which underlie the student union here at Dalhousie. In many cases the DSU does have the students' best interests at heart, and for the most part the elected members of the union do work hard to ensure that students are well represented.

However, there are some cases in which the political motivations of the elected members get out of hand. Students without an inside knowledge of the DSU cannot be expected to know when these occasions arise. It is occasions such as these when students who are in the position to have some knowledge about the workings of the DSU should feel compelled to speak up. They need to let other students know what is happening so they can make informed decisions about the situation and hold their elected representatives accountable for their actions.

One such occasion occurred recently at the Dalhousie Science Society AGM. Dean Naugler, our current VP community affairs purposely slandered one of the nominees for DSU representative. During the election he stated that Dan Clark had a political agenda

that would not make him an appropriate choice for a DSU representative. Another elected DSU representative also voiced a similar complaint about Dan.

What role should the DSU have in attempting to influence the outcome of a society's election? How then as students will we be able to hold the DSU executive accountable if we are influenced by the DSU when choosing our elected representatives?

Another such occasion occurred at last Sunday's DSU council meeting when Ted Chiasson, president of the DSU, instructed the councillors present at the meeting that if they did not vote for Nick Murphy's (who is currently VP internal of the DSU) impeachment, they would be wrong.

How are councillors expected to make an informed and unprejudiced decision when they are not presented with an unbiased view from their leaders. Out of fairness, Ted was later forced to retract the statement, but the incident should give students an indication of the political manipulations that occur on a regular basis at the DSU.

In writing this article I have my own biases, as does anyone who writes an opinion piece, but I love Dal and feel very strongly about

these issues. The unfairness which I have been in the position to observe compels me speak out. I encourage the executive to remember that they are representing students.

The DSU should not simply be considered a large firm. Try to remember that a harsh and unforgiving stance is not always the best course of action, especially when the issue involves students who are here at Dalhousie to learn, to make mistakes, and to grow so that they are prepared to make important decisions in their future lives. Sometimes compassion is the best example that anyone can give.

I urge the elected representatives to consider their motivations carefully, and also to consider the implications their actions may have on students here at Dalhousie. I encourage council members to make informed decisions about the issues presented to them, and I hope that as students we will all make an effort to learn more about the DSU so that we are better able to make our voices heard.

Perhaps students are aware of the inner-workings of the student union, and it is this very awareness that increases the apathy against which the DSU strives so hard to fight.

KATHLEEN TERROUX

LETTERS *cont'd from page 6*

Men's centre defender

To the editor,

I was disturbed by comments made by Jaime Reban regarding the proposal of opening a men's centre on the University of Regina campus.

Ms. Reban denounced the idea, claiming it somehow degraded the reasons for having women's centres. She supported her dismissal by stating that men aren't victims of domestic violence, body image, or pay inequity. While I agree this may be the case, I am sure Ms. Reban isn't suggesting that men have no issues to deal with at all.

In a letter to the Gazette, Erin Findley stated that 1 in 8 Canadian women will be assaulted this year by male partners. To assume that men have no issues to address, one must ignore this statistic completely. It seems clear that behind every assaulted woman there is a man with problems which must be dealt with. Most men don't abuse "for the hell of it". Abusers are disturbed individuals who, with help and guidance, may refrain from violent tendencies.

I am in no way trying to justify the actions of these men,

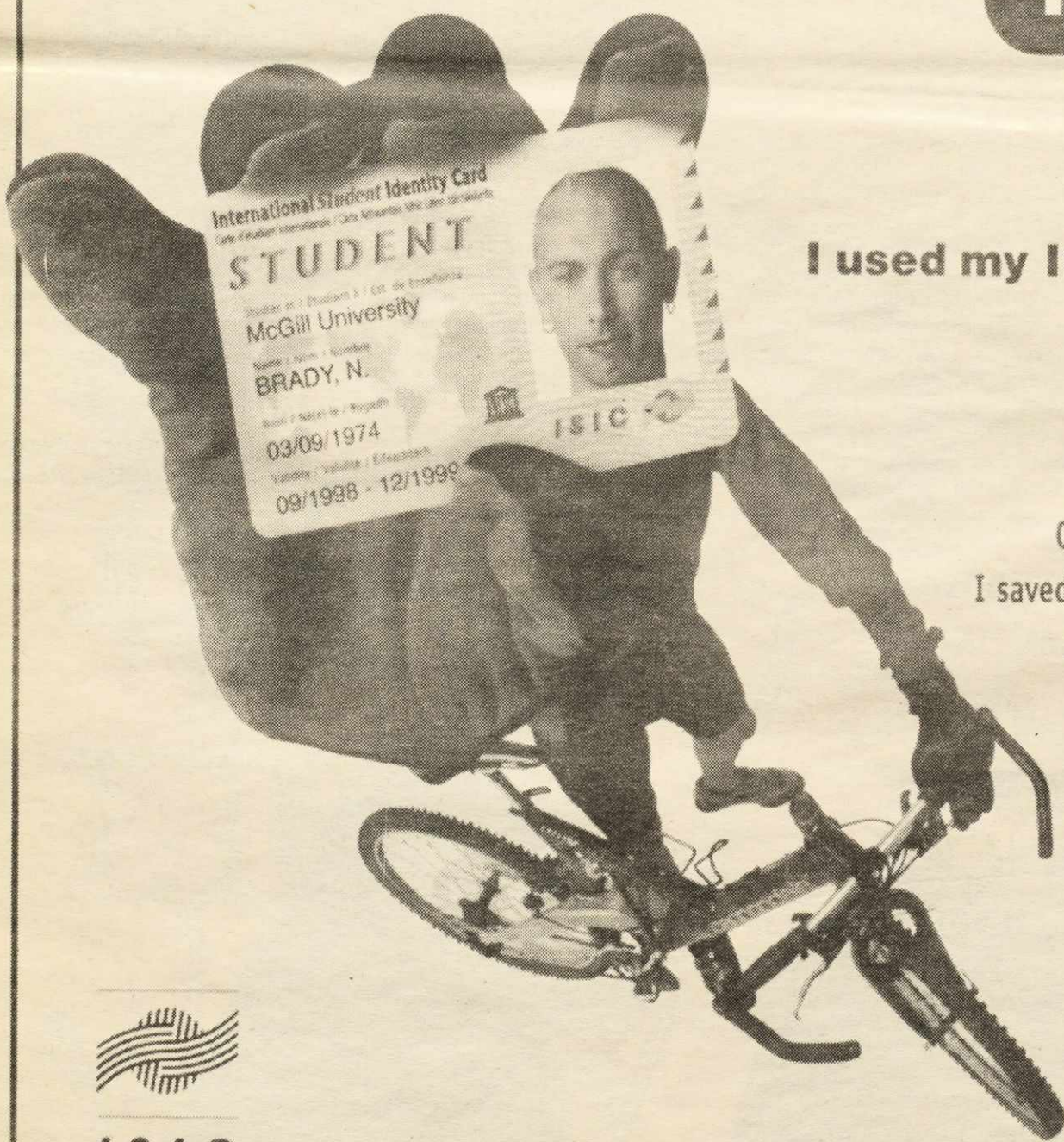
nor am I suggesting that all men who abuse women will seek rehabilitation at a centre for men. I am simply stating that perhaps we can start addressing problems before violence starts. As men, we are often expected to suppress our emotions and appear strong at all times. While these issues may seem "trivial" to Ms. Reban, they are very real and damaging. The resulting outlet for many men is violence.

Feminists have often had to fight the stereotype of being "men-haters", and responses such as Ms. Reban's only perpetuate the myth. Feminists desire equality of the genders, yet Ms. Reban seems to believe that the only way to achieve equality is to dismiss men's issues altogether.

I support equal rights for women and men, and consider myself a reasonably well-balanced male. This positive conviction did not occur overnight, but came through lengthy self-evaluation and introspection. If a centre for men, on any campus, can help even one male achieve a level of self-acceptance (and prevent abuse or harassment of one female), then I for one believe it is worth the effort.

Dana Pero

THE WAY TO SAVE

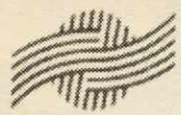


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