



President's Symposium on Undergraduate Education

Clark's Symposium

Faculty outnumbered undergraduates

by Geoff Stone

Very few of Dalhousie's undergraduates attended the symposium on undergraduate education held last week. But students say the reasons include problems caused by symposium organizers, time schedules, professors, and the students themselves.

Most students, asked in an informal poll, said they could not make the symposium either because of time or because they had not really heard of the event. Students said classes and labs were not cancelled during the event, and also that their workload, even without a class, kept them from going.

Kim Vance, the student organizer for a students' forum held before the symposium, says she also could not attend the symposium due to time restrictions.

But Vance added that both students and faculty that attended the event were disappointed. She says students felt the symposium would just be an exercise in futility, and this was confirmed by many participants.

Vance says students felt they had very little direct input into the symposium, and were alienated by the glossy, faculty-oriented posters and promotion. "It seemed like a big plan, not a student-oriented event," Vance says.



Who is man number 4? Certainly not a student. Turnout for the President's Symposium on Undergraduate Education was mostly faculty, administration and professionals from the community.

Vance added that the committee organizing the symposium, which was hand-picked by the president, lacked any student

representatives. She says the committee assumed "student input came from the forum." Vance says the Student Union is

working to get a student rep on the committee.

In contrast, Vance says the students' forum, which was held before the symposium in the Student Union Building's Green Room, was set up informally.

Vance says the majority of student concerns were voiced at this forum, which involved a panel of professors, and a microphone for students to ask questions. Because the forum was during the lunch periods, in a popular students' area, it attracted more students. "It was at a time when students could make it," says Vance.

She says the students' forum

gave the students a sense of direct input. "We were taking right to the committee" Vance says.

She says students knew all their comments would go right to the president, and might have some impact.

Some of the biggest concerns raised at the forum were unfair lab/class ratios, large class sizes, and a number of problems with professors.

"I don't think this symposium is enough," says Vance. She says the symposium did bring up some important ideas, but adds, "What will come of it, I don't know."

Jogging for dollars

by Brian McDonald

Student Council this Sunday will decide the timing and wording of a referendum concerning a proposed athletics/recreation fee.

The fee would be imposed on every student attending Dalhousie, on top of their regular tuition fees. According to Student Council president Caroline Zayid, "The student council has to work out just how much the students will be asked to contribute and where specifically the money will go."

Forcing the referendum is a petition, signed by the required ten per cent of the student population, which calls for the introduction of an athletic fee.

A separate report to the senate from the Department of Athletics and Recreation Services recommends an athletics fee of \$25.00 be charged to students. The report claims that "by comparison, Dalhousie Athletic and Recreation Services is underfunded and the figures show the student component is primarily responsible."

Tony Martin, head of Athletic and Recreation Services, is hopeful the referendum will result in a separate athletic fee. "When you consider the services Dalhousie provides in this area, it's a reasonable request. Other universities of Dalhousie's size charge a separate athletic fee, and most of those charge more than the \$25.00 we're asking for. We need this fee if we're going to provide, and hopefully expand on, the services provided to Dalhousie students."

There are some problems with

the request for the fee, Zayid says. The report from the Athletic and Recreational Services, although it lists a number of needs, doesn't specifically state where any increase in revenues would go. "We want to word the referendum so the students will know where the money will go. The administration shouldn't have a free hand in spending."

The report suggests priorities for spending the increased revenues should be set by the Advisory Council on Athletics. Zayid, however, says the Advisory Council "has no real power to control where the money is spent. It just reports to the administration, and the administration makes the final decision." Negotiations are underway to guarantee student representatives do have input on where the money will be spent. "Student council knows the athletic department provides a lot of services and does need more money, but they are asking for a lot of money, and if we are going to ask students for that much, we should be as detailed as possible in telling them why it is needed."

Suggestions were made to attempt to link this referendum question with the renewal of a tuition fee agreement with the university administration which is due to expire in the coming year. This agreement has frozen tuition increments at an annual rate of four per cent. As well, there was some concern by a number of council members that this referendum is being held in close proximity to two other major referendums regarding student fee increases. A

Symposium's keynote speaker says . . .

Dal to be elite, yet open

There is no clash between affirmative action and limiting Dal's enrolment in order to attract the 'creme de la creme' of Canada's high school graduates.

This revelation came during the question period following the session on "Accessibility, Quality, and Retention". Keynote speaker Rosemary Brown, former politician and now women's studies professor at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, urged a stronger effort to recruit the disadvantaged. However, she said standards should be kept up, because "second-class professionals contribute as little to society as second-rate artists do." Efforts should concentrate on raising the level of the students, she said.

Brown defended affirmative action and said universities cannot be absolved from paying back the "outstanding debts"

owed to the disadvantaged groups.

In the panel discussion following Brown's address, Dal Registrar Gudrun Curri presented ways in which Dal could get better students by limiting enrolment.

"I agree with (medical student) Doug Manuel's comments. What makes a university great is good students and good faculty. (Manuel spoke last Thursday about the failure of a majority of teachers to stimulate their students.) Curri said a student's success will depend on his or her choice of a faculty. Success can be predicted within 35 per cent for the first year only, she said. "The other 65 per cent depends on student's environment, participation, and motivation."

Brown said the difference between herself and Curri were not "irreconcilable" because disadvantaged students must also choose their major carefully. Deciding between arts and

science is often an instinctive choice, said Brown. Referring to the elitist practice of "streaming" black and native children into remedial classes, Brown said the arts vs. science "streaming" takes place in grade two, when children first encounter serious math.

In her address, Brown outlined 3 ways to bring more of the disadvantaged into universities. Universities must reach down into the schools system, reach out to combat prejudice, and reach in "to eliminate biased content and teaching which sometimes defeats students who make it that far."

Brown used as an example women and natives to illustrate different approaches to breaching educational barriers.

In the sixties, said Brown, there was the surge of the women's movement. "Women decided education could empower them. It could open the

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