

# Plans for the SUB still sketchy

BY LAURA GRAY

Remediating design flaws to the Dalhousie Student Union Building is just one change planned by the union's president-elect, Ted Chaisson — but he's not sharing any information about how this will be achieved.

"Traffic flow is really, really bad [in the Student Union Building]," said Chaisson, explaining why he thinks the

building is flawed and in need of revamping.

Chaisson would not go into details about what changes would be made to improve traffic flow. However, he said that it is difficult to get to, or find, the Grawood, the Union Market, and the Green Room, and suggested he has plans to make changes to these areas of the building.

"It's just not efficient...this building is just not well-

designed."

Chaisson says that the inefficiency of the Student Union Building (SUB) is something that the student union has to become increasingly concerned with in the future.

"In another couple of years we'll have the new [Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences] building across from us with no food facilities or lounge areas and students are going to come [to the

SUB]."

He says that his goal is to make the SUB "more student friendly".

While Chaisson is not releasing any details of his plan, he admits that he is not the first student union president who has had great expectations for their term in office.

"The problem is that executive have been coming in and getting caught up in the details, [like painting the Union Market],"

Chaisson said. As a result, he says, they have never been successful in fixing up the bigger problems in the SUB.

Chaisson says his renovation plans would be costly, but funds would come out of the Dalhousie Student Union's existing budget and he added that efforts will be made to keep the costs as low as possible.

# Memorial pres wants students at the table

BY SEAN RYAN

ST. JOHN'S (CUP) — The Memorial University president says a student should be present for their next round of contract negotiations with faculty and if necessary he will open up a seat on the administration's bargaining team to make it a reality.

Memorial University of Newfoundland president Art May says since tuition fees account for so much of the university's budget, students have a right to be present at negotiations.

"Students are paying 25-per cent of the bill," he said. "If they're not in the room, somebody else is spending their money."

Students at Dalhousie unsuccessfully called for a place at the bargaining table in their university's contract talks. While May fights to allow student representation at the bargaining table, Dal president Tom Traves has refused to allow students to observe negotiations.

May's proposal comes in the wake of Acadia University's ground-breaking decision earlier this year to allow the student union president to sit in on negotiations as an unbiased observer.

But Acadia student union president Paul Black was allowed to participate in the talks only after he agreed to not disclose information about the proceedings.

May says he agrees with this policy of strict confidentiality.

"Of course there would have to be some rules and there would have to be some boundaries as to

how you would behave," he said. "There is a dynamic that you can hardly report on from day to day."

While Dalhousie's faculty association supports a student present during collective bargaining, the faculty association at Memorial has come down against the idea of a student sitting in on their negotiations.

In a written response to May's proposal, faculty association president John Bear stated: "Although students, like many other groups, may well be affected by the outcome of negotiations, they are not parties to the Collective Agreement and therefore the arrangement you propose is inappropriate."

Bear says he understands the interest of students and other parties at the university in the progress of negotiations, but adds that methods used during the last round of negotiations between faculty and administration — such as frequent newsletters — kept everybody effectively informed.

"We take the position that we're better able to keep people apprised of what's going on through sitting down and talking with them outside the context of the negotiations," he said. "It's not the sort of thing that's a spectator sport."

Late in the last round of negotiations, which took place in 1995-96, May proposed bringing a student in on the talks. But Mike Carley, who at the time was designated by the student union to fill that role, says faculty balked at the idea.

He says the only way professors would agree to allow a student in the room was if he or

she openly supported the faculty.

In response, May offered the student union a seat on the administration's bargaining team — which would have included the right to help shape the team's approach and positions.

But Carley says the student union declined that option

because the faculty association stated such a move would be interpreted as support for the administration. The student union did, however, accept an invitation from May to sit on a 'strategy' committee aimed at preparing the university for the anticipated strike.

# Students claim victory

## But clash over which approach was right

BY PAUL MANSFIELD

Students may not have agreed about what side to take in recent labour disputes at Dal — but they are all ready to take credit for the quick end to the faculty strike.

Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) president Chris Adams says that by not choosing sides in the strike the DSU looked after the best interests of students. But Adams added that the strike's resolution was due to many factors.

"In all fairness, I don't think any one party can say they are the reason for the settlement," he said.

"I think that what we did made an impact. I think our approach led to a very seclusive atmosphere for the negotiations to work properly."

But some students disagree with the union's approach.

Students in Solidarity for Quality Education wanted to put pressure on the Dalhousie administration by siding with the faculty, and the group says that it had a role in ending the strike.

"Our group helped in the

resolution. I think that the administration felt our presence and heard us," said Tracey Thorne, a spokesperson for Students in Solidarity.

Thorne says she is glad the strike has ended, but isn't assuming anything until the ordeal is entirely over.

"I won't be perfectly happy until I see the agreement, but I don't think the [Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA)] would agree to something that wasn't in their best interest," she said.

Thorne says the Students in Solidarity understand the DSU's position, but did not agree with it.

"They should have taken a side," she said.

May says the faculty association should rethink its position on the matter.

"The people who are in the bargaining situation have to understand that it's the students themselves who ultimately lose [in the event of a strike]."

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But Adams says the picture is bigger than the one painted by the administration and the DFA. He says Dalhousie is facing these concerns as a result of government cuts to funding.

"People need to realize that government funding is still the real problem right now. If the university had the proper funding levels each year, then none of this would have been an issue," he said.

And even before the strike ended, Dalhousie student Jacob Conrad agreed.

"The government is resting peacefully right now while Dalhousie struggles between students, teachers and

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