

the Dalhousie Gazette

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The **Dalhousie Gazette**, Canada's oldest college newspaper, is a weekly publication of the Dalhousie Student Union members and is a founding member of the Canadian University Press.

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The deadline for articles and letters-to-the-editor is noon on Monday. No unsigned material will be accepted, but anonymity may be granted on request. Letters should not exceed 500 words and must be typed double-spaced. Advertising copy must be submitted by the Friday preceding publication.

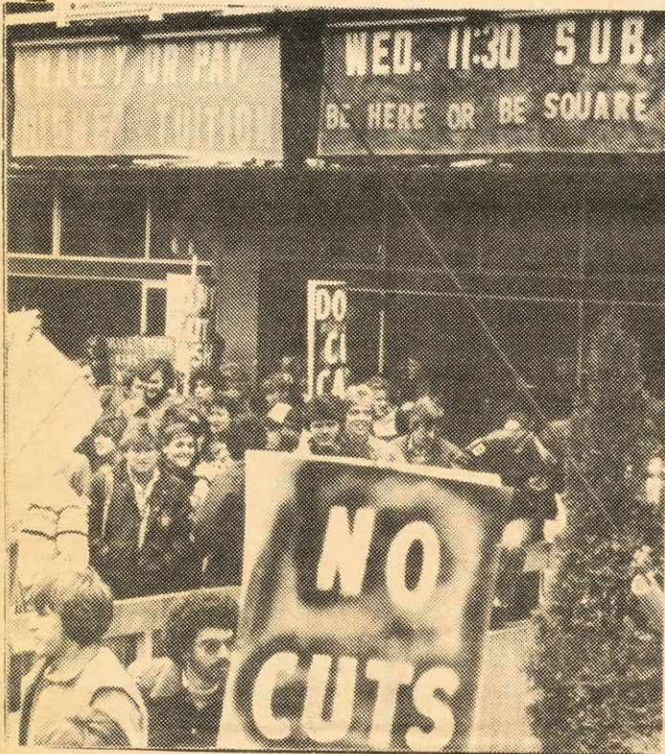
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Letters

Counselling centre threatened

The struggle continues



Rally

AND pay more

To the Editor,

As Presidents of the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU), the Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students (DAGS) and the Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA) we are taking the extraordinary step of making a public statement about a proposal that threatens the existence of the Centre for Counselling and Psychological Services, located on the fourth floor of the S.U.B. and in continuous operation since 1968.

The Centre is an essential service to the Dalhousie University community. This year (if the Centre remains open) we expect more than a thousand people to come to it for basic study skills, for career counselling, for workshops in time management and how to speak in seminars and for help in how to deal with personal and academic stress.

The Centre provides a crucial service to many members of the University community. In the case of students the Centre will result in a marked improvement in their ability to succeed at Dalhousie; in some cases the visits to the Centre will make the difference between graduating and dropping out.

At the second-last session held to negotiate the new collective agreement between the DFA and the Board of Governors in July, 1982, the Board's negotiators offered the DFA a quick salary settlement if, among other things, the DFA would grant the Board the right to lay off the professional counsellors without explanation, without consultation, without review. In short, they wish the professional counsellors of the Centre to have none of the normal protections against arbitrary lay-offs that are granted to other members of their bargaining unit, such as professors and librarians. The Board's negotiators will not say one way or the other whether

they plan to lay off the professional counsellors, in effect shutting down the Centre. However, if they are going to keep the Counselling and Psychological Services, why do they want the legal right to get rid of its counsellors without so much as one line of justification?

The DFA negotiators refused to make a quick settlement at the expense of the professional counsellors and the University community whom the counsellors serve. We are appalled that the Board's negotiators should make such a proposal. Dalhousie has no time to waste on games of this sort. During the summer the provincial government slashed millions of dollars from a university budget that was inadequate to begin with; and radically altered the student aid program, much to the detriment of students. The whole University community — students, faculty and administrators — should be speaking with a united voice to the provincial government about the damage being done to our present and future, but instead internal debates are occurring over something that should never have been up for discussion in the first place.

The proposal to deny normal protection against lay-offs to the professional counsellors is outrageous. In our view the Counselling and Psychological Services Centre plays its part in Dalhousie life as surely as the lecture hall and the library do. We hope that other students and faculty will join us in getting that message through to the Board of Governors.

Om Kamra, President,

Dalhousie Faculty Association

Peter Rans, President,
Dalhousie Student Union

David Jolliffe, President,

Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students.

Commentary

Student politicians are favourite topic for columnist

by Martin Baker

This was to be a column of coy cynicism. My working title was "No politics please, we're students." I had composed a list of suitable pseudonyms to choose from (such as Art Nouveau, Cliff Hanger, Phil E. Buster, Sue Donem, Tim Id and so on). From the relative safety of one of these merry monikers I planned to issue dark brooding diatribes on the moral, not to mention financial, bankruptcy of this not so venerable institution.

As in the past, the focus of my angst was to be the Student Council; on account of its constant lack of legitimacy and habit of harbouring the worst sort of power-seeking scum (witness the now infamous F.).

BUT

While the past was indeed imperfect, it's now the present tense. There's room for optimism and political recompense. The Rans Regime's in office and activism now makes sense.

I know what you're thinking: can this be the same jaded neo-neurotic Martin Baker who vented his political spleen throughout several issues of the Gazette just last year?

Yep. In all seriousness I have a great deal of faith in the ability of the present council executive (something I could never truly say in years previous). Rans, I believe, regards politics as something of an art form. The art of the possible, if you will. In the broadest sense the council can be seen as committed

to the belief that it is possible for students to have a say in the shape of the university system.

This sort of notion of student activism can become a reality only when the student union as a whole is convinced of its necessity. It is incumbent upon the Student Council to do the convincing.

Work has already begun on establishing a high profile for the more public student groups such as SUNS. Equally important individual societies must adopt a sense of purpose and direction. It is an unfortunate fact that in years gone by several societies have served chiefly as an arena for the self-aggrandizement of their executive members. Societies ought to be vehicles for active communication

among peers, as initiators and sponsors of student union events; in general (dare I say it) as antidotes to apathy.

Perhaps my optimism is naive. I hope not. I believe that for the first time in a long time we have an active executive with a definite idea of the role of the Student Union in the University system. At the very least they deserve some of your attention. As for entire membership of the council, I hope it is free of the aforementioned power seeking scum. If some should happen to rise to the surface I'd be the last to be surprised, though.

In fact it wouldn't surprise me in the least to hear ominous rumblings from certain quarters regarding Rans' status as a foreign student.



Well, in anticipation of just such an occurrence allow me to leave you with this rather strident bit of verbiage: the real foreigners are those who would conspire to remove themselves and/or others from legitimate political involvement.