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Dalhousie officially ditches SUNS

BY MARCUS LOPES

At the end of the fiscal year, Dalhousie University students will no longer be members of the Students' Union of Nova Scotia (SUNS).

In the mid-October by-election, students decided against remaining in SUNS by a narrow margin of 810 to 745 votes. On Sunday, November 5, council voted to ratify the referendum results.

"I feel that we should abide by the decision (of) the majority of

students, but it should go back to referendum," said Erin Ahern, Vice President (VP) External, during the debate leading up to the vote.

Council was not bound by the referendum result because the number of students who voted to withdraw from SUNS was not the necessary eight percent of the membership.

DSU President David Cox said he feels that this by-law is wrong.

"I'd like to see it changed...we have to accept the will of the majority," he said.

Ahern added that the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) will be a member of SUNS until the end of the year, that the fees have to be paid, and that she would not tell people that council had a mandate to take such action with only a small difference between the No and the Yes.

Bret Leech, DSU Treasurer, pointed out that a democratic vote had been held and that withdrawing from SUNS will decrease student fees, not increase them.

Council Meeting Highlights

- Council ratified those societies that hadn't been previously ratified.
- Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) President David Cox reiterated that confidentiality must be respected in the matter concerning Steve Gaetz's dismissal, saying, "Steve has that right as a former employee. It is my job to protect the integrity of this organization."
- The DSU's Annual General Meeting (AGM) has been rescheduled from November 15 to Thursday, January 26, 1996.
- Council ratified the referendum results. At the end of the fiscal year, students at Dalhousie University will no longer be members of the Students' Union of Nova Scotia.
- Council went in-camera to discuss staff restructuring and the GST audit of the DSU.



Off to the nationals

The Dalhousie men's and women's soccer teams attained sweet soccer success over the weekend. Both squads captured AUA titles and head to the CIAU's. The women will defend their CIAU title in Ottawa, while the men are off to Trois Rivières.

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Voting difficult for Québec expats

BY KRISTEN MCNEILL

The NO side's victory in last month's Québec Referendum on sovereignty was too close a call for the hundreds of discontented out of province Quebecers who never received their ballots in the mail.

Tom Singleton, a lawyer working in Halifax and a Quebecer of fifteen years, created the Nova Scotia branch of the Committee to Register Voters Outside Québec. His main goal was to inform out of province Quebecers of their right to vote.

Singleton and his team helped applicants complete their registrations for voting rights, and were angry to discover that about two thirds of the processed applications sent to the Office of the Directeur Général were refused.

"I have yet to find anyone in the forces whose application was accepted," said Singleton, referring specifically to Québec military personnel based outside Québec. "And we were talking quite literally to hundreds of people in the last fifteen to twenty days."

"In our opinion, they simply did not want people who were probably going to vote No being

registered to vote," he added.

The applications, sent out by the *Directeur Général des Élections du Québec*, were intended to determine whether or not Quebecers living outside the province met the voting eligibility criteria. The format consisted of eleven lines attached to a brochure describing the registration procedure, conditions for eligibility, deadline, and proof of Québec citizenship.

In the two months before the referendum, Singleton's office provided applications to Quebecers living in Nova Scotia. His team also helped the applicants complete the form and verified that their documentation was sufficient.

He estimated that his team communicated with almost 1000 people, with members of his firm personally sending about 300 of these applications to a law firm in Montréal. The applications were then hand delivered to the Office of the Directeur Général in Montréal before the deadline.

A few days before the election, Singleton discovered that nearly two thirds of the applications from the Halifax area were refused.

"All of these people were routinely turned down. There are

many cases that are quite flagrant because there were some cases where we actually sat down with some people — there was a big effort made to try to get their documentation in on time," said Singleton.

Several cases for refusing permission to vote were based on, among others, missing proof of citizenship, failure to indicate date of departure from Québec, or failure to prove that residence outside of Québec was less than two years. Normally, applicants received an official refusal from the Directeur Général in Quebec City.

David Leduc, a student at Dalhousie University, was one of many Quebecers who never received a ballot. In early October he sent his application along with the appropriate identification to the Office of the Directeur Général.

"Around the 17th of October, I got the response saying that I was ineligible to vote because I hadn't filled in the date of departure from Québec to Halifax on the form," said Leduc. "It's such a simple little form, there's no way I didn't fill that in."

A common complaint was that the electoral process did not allow for sufficient time to provide missing documentation or to make any corrections.

According to Leduc, while the application itself was simple, the process of voting for out of province Quebecers was difficult.

"I think it was a conscious effort to not necessarily misinform, but to just not inform," said Leduc.

The impact of refusing ballots to Quebecers situated in Nova Scotia, along with reports of a high number of spoiled ballots in Québec, led some to question the credibility of the final count.

When asked how this issue will be addressed, Singleton said, "I know the Québec Liberal Party and people who ran the NO campaign are going to ask for judicial recounts in some districts."

Judicial recounts involve the presence of a provincial court judge who supervises a recounting of ballots at polls which had a particularly high count of spoiled ballots.

Ontario government cuts welfare payments

Minister says poor can live on \$90-per-month food budget

BY RICHARD MCKERGOW

TORONTO (CUP) — An Ontario government shopping list geared to help single welfare recipients make due with less is being condemned by activists and community workers.

On October 20, Community and Social Services Minister David Tsubouchi released a list showing how a single welfare recipient could live on a \$90-per-month food budget.

The list was prepared in response to criticisms that a recent 20 per cent cut to welfare benefits by the provincial government left people with too little money left for food after rent had been paid.

Tsubouchi's list is an insult to students or anyone else on welfare, says Heather Bishop, chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario.

"The idea that he could come up with this list disgusts me," she said. "It is obvious he has never taken a look at the situation people are in."

Bishop says many university and college students are already making due with less, as tuition goes up and student loans are less readily available.

Gerald Kennedy, director of Toronto's Daily Bread Food Bank, says six to seven per cent of the people who use the bank are college or university students.

He says this works out to be-

tween 6,000 and 7,000 users.

Welfare recipients commonly put food purchases on the bottom of their list of priorities, says Kennedy.

"A lot of people don't have enough for rent, transport, and laundry," he said.

He says the minister's list does little to help welfare recipients in light of how their benefits have been cut.

"Can somebody live on \$500 month?" he asked. "If the answer is no, the answer is no, no matter what list comes out of the ministry."

However, Judy Midgette, a registered dietitian, says the minister's list could probably sustain most people.

"Most people can (live on the

list), but men up to the age of 50 would probably lose weight."

Midgette says the list does not include sufficient calories for men under the age of 50, causing them to lose energy.

She adds this energy loss could make job seeking more difficult.

The list will only work if there is no waste or spoilage, Midgette adds, and says it uses prices from Metropolitan Toronto at peak harvest times of the year when produce is cheaper.

Midgette says staples such as flour, sugar, margarine, oil, and salt and pepper are overlooked on the list.

"Without these ingredients, food is unpalatable for a lot of people," she said, "regardless of culture."