

The Letters/Opinions section of the Gazette is meant as a campus forum for all Dalhousie students. The opinions expressed within may not necessarily be those of the Gazette staff or editorial board. We welcome all submissions, but reserve the right to edit for style and content. It is the Gazette's mandate not to print racist, sexist or homophobic material.

Dalhousie's 365 days of action

Hi there! My name is Kelly MacKenzie and I'm your VP Student Advocacy (Academic/External) of the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU).

I feel that it is necessary to say a few things about the Canadian Federation of Students' (CFS) Week of Action. Now, I know what you're probably already thinking... the VP Student Advocacy is about to make a statement about how the DSU does not support the Week of Action and then go on to explain why CFS is wrong. Well, I'm here to do the opposite. The fact is that no one is wrong because it's what they believe in.

The CFS protest is on Friday afternoon. Will I be there? Nope, I have an exam at the time. Would I be there if I didn't have an exam? Nope, because the students at Dalhousie University had a referendum a couple of years ago to pull out of CFS activities. For the DSU to participate in CFS actions would be to go against a mandate placed upon them from their constituents.

For the past few years there has been an expectation that the CFS Nova Scotia component and the DSU would put each other up against one another come this time of year. Well, this year will be different. The DSU does not have any inclination nor does it wish to get into an argument over what type of actions get more dollars from the government. It's a waste of both parties' time and it puts students against students while taking our eye off the ball (lobbying government).

Now let's talk about CFS and why the DSU does not participate in their activities, besides the point of referendum. First of all, we have to ask ourselves the question, do we want to get involved with a group that believes that all corporations are evil? How many of our constituents will be employed by companies when they graduate? How many Dal students work for companies in the summer or for work terms to help support their way through university? This is not to say that the CFS is wrong in their view of corporations, but is just one of the things we as your elected leaders must think about when we

support such an organization.

Next let's ask ourselves, do we want to get involved with an organization that believes that private educational institutions should be prohibited? I'll be the first one to admit that private institutions are costly, inaccessible to many and should be offered through the public system — but our students should have the right to choose. How many of our constituents will go on to attend a school such as ITI? How many of our students are already enrolled? This is just another issue we must consider.

Does this mean that we should discourage those of our constituents that believe in all that CFS believes in from participating in their Day of Action? Of course not. We only hope that you may be fully informed of the issues before you jump on board. We have students on this campus that believe in some of the social causes that CFS does, and we have students that don't. We believe that we are representing our constituents in the best way possible.

Do we support an organization that continues to boycott the Red Cross because of its blood donor questionnaire, even after the fact that the Red Cross is out of the blood supply and now contributes all of its resources to international development and emergency support? These are some of the questions that we must ask ourselves.

Dalhousie is a large, diverse community, and that's one of the reasons I love it so much. However, when you are placed in such a diverse population you must come to respect others' differences. This is what we (the DSU) are trying our hardest to do. On Friday I hope that the schools and students involved with the Day of Action understand our situation. Please don't yell at us or tell us that we love the government, because we don't. Don't tell us that we're inactive, because we aren't. I hope that they realize that we are doing our best to ensure that all of our constituents get the responsible representation they deserve. I'd like to think that none of us would want to participate in activities that would offend or be detrimental to any of our fellow

community members.

Now comes the question: *what is your student union doing for you?*

First of all, would it be prudent of us to speak up for one day of protest during a time in which our provincial government is dealing with a major deficit without offering sound policy alternatives? It's easy to ask the government for money, but it's a lot harder to show them where they can come up with it. That's what we are trying to do. We are members of our Dalhousie community, but we are also members of our Nova Scotian community, and with that comes responsibilities. Do we simply tell the government that we need more

funding and then leave it up to them to decide where to cut? Cut health care? Cut new roads? Cut economic development?

The times we are in demand that we take a more proactive, rather than reactive, approach to lobbying. Asking, even demanding, doesn't cut it anymore. Your DSU is attempting labour-intensive research so that we can show the government where they can get the money that we have given them to run our society properly. Maybe the government can start in their own backyard. But one thing is for sure and that is that we have to start working together — all students, government and the community at large — so that we can start taking

responsibility for educating our community.

Finally, let's talk about the Day of Action. Is it wrong? Of course not! It's great to see that students want to get involved and are willing to speak up about what they believe in. *Bravo*. I wish CFS all the luck for Friday.

Can Dalhousie students become involved in their own Day of Action? I would love it! You can find us in room 222 of your Student Union Building. When is our Dalhousie Day of Action? 365 days a year.

KELLY MACKENZIE
vice-president Student Advocacy
Dalhousie Student Union

The Genius of the Simpsons

I would have known *the Simpsons* could explain our world and our future with eerie accuracy

On Sunday last, a repeat of *the Simpsons* (which I, a devoted fan, had missed last season) explored the age-old debate between science and religion. So there they are, science and religion duking it out — people destroying science — because there are "things we don't want the answers to" — although the court puts a restraining order on religion to keep back from science. But the thing was, while these old enemies focussed on the flaws of the other, capitalism came right up the middle and crushed and replaced both.

It was absolutely perfect — that capitalism would defeat these two entrenched beliefs is both accurate to the times, and prophetic of the future.

We have seen the emergence already of capitalism as religion. Case in point is the recent offer by the Nova Scotia government to

Sheraton Casinos to allow a 24-hour gambling room, offers of free drinks, and a \$100-a-pull slot machines, among others. It is tragic the casino culture of the United States has been purchased by Nova Scotia. Too many people get sucked in by gambling — everything from auto-lotto to get-rich-quick TV programs — because money will supposedly solve their problems, without changing them.

Money talks, but it also kills. Many people have gambling as an illness. Gambling is about money. Therefore, money is an illness? I won't draw that conclusion.

Capitalism as science? You betcha. Just look at economics or commerce or the science of business. The corporate world already supports research in and practice in genetic engineering of food products. Business, run by money — not ethics — drive research and science. Whether you believe science explores truth or not, you have to admit that

capitalism certainly doesn't.

I ask you what this will mean? Well, being in the media, I'll tell you.

It means people pray to capitalism and money as god/God. People live their lives guided by money's eternal truths and its divine laws. Besides, you can *buy* the Bible and every other religious text.

It means many students study science because that's where the money is, and research and medicine revolve around cost and cost-efficiency.

I ask what the solution is.

It isn't capitalism, and any church will tell you it isn't science, and science responds similarly. OK, revolt against capitalism, burn the scientific institutes and convert religious edifices into museums. And, install the one true science and religion and the capitalism that governs them — the media.

Welcome to the new revolution. It will be televised.

TRISTAN STEWART-ROBERTSON

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