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DSU helps students

by Samantha Brennan

"Read the best books first, or you may not have a chance to read them at all," said Thoreau. Today he would have to add the qualifying statement: "that is if you can afford them."

Faced with increased tuition fees of 15 per cent and severe provincial unemployment of 25 per cent, students returned to classes this September to find the price of textbooks had risen again, making the purchase of books costly for all and impossible for some.

Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) is working to help students find the books they need at a reasonable cost by operating the Second Hand Bookstore in the SUB lobby.

"I felt it was a service desperately needed by the students," said Phil Dunn, past DSU councillor and manager of the Second Hand Bookstore. "And it's a way we can be doubly effective," added Peter Rans, assistant manager and past DSU president. "Students get money for their books and other students can buy books at a reduced price."

If sales are any indication the Second Hand Bookstore is proving a major success. Operations began Sept. 8 and within five days over 3400 dollars worth of books had been sold. The project, when attempted last year did only 2100 dollars in business.

Rans attributes the bookstore's

success to a number of factors including increased visibility, longer hours and more students who need to sell last year's books to buy this year's.

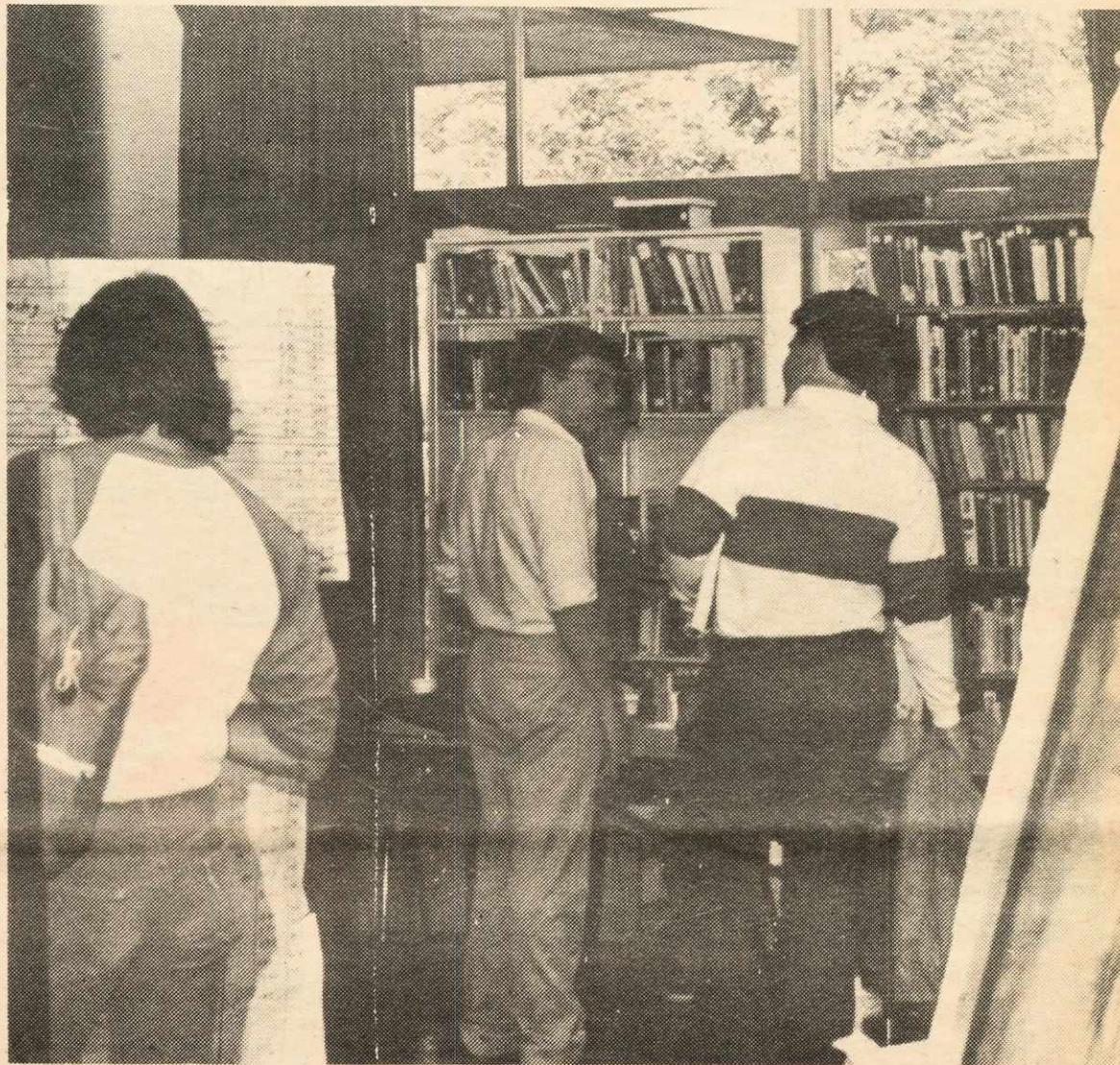
According to the University Bookstore manager Irving Kirke, the cost of books has risen by approximately 12 per cent over last year.

Rans related stories of students who have to buy the latest edition of a textbook for a half-credit course, meaning they can't buy a used copy because pagination differences and inversion of chapters make it more difficult to follow along in class. He also told of students trying to sell complete art and history collections to pay their tuition.

Both Dunn and Rans think the used bookstore is an effective way the Student Union can reach students. "Students don't necessarily realize the things the Student Union does for them," explained Rans, adding, "Students see this as a tangible way the Student Union is directly helping them."

Despite all this, few student councillors volunteered time to help run the bookstore, leaving Dunn, Rans and a few loyal supporters to endure 10 - 14 hour days in the SUB lobby.

"Personally," said Rans, "if they (student councillors) helped they'd then be seen to be working for the Student Union and more importantly, for students."



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Sharma sees important role for SUNS this fall

by Bob Morrison

"The fundamental problem with post secondary education in Nova Scotia is that it is forced to operate from day to day," according to Atul Sharma, Chair of Student Unions of Nova Scotia (SUNS).

Sharma says the theme of SUNS' activities this fall will be "Plan it, please", a phrase intended to point out the need for long range planning in post-secondary education.

At the end of September SUNS will begin publishing leaflets on a bi-weekly basis dealing with topics ranging from student aid to student employment to keep students up to date on relevant issues.

SUNS also plans to have bi-weekly informational pickets at the Nova Scotia Legislature Building with delegates from all the student unions across the province taking part. The first one will be held Friday October 14 in conjunction with a SUNS conference to take place later that day.

The organization has formalized the idea of organizing workshops for students, informing them of the proper way in which to appeal for student aid. Leaflets

will first be put out explaining the procedure, with the workshops to follow soon after. "The province has put more of its rules concerning student aid up for appeal so we want to have more people taking advantage of this," said Sharma.

SUNS will also be submitting a position paper on a number of student issues to a Royal Commission on Post Secondary Education in Nova Scotia by November 1. The issues it will address are: student aid, student housing, research and development, student unemployment, university governance, tuition fee policy, changing demographic trends and their effects on students, university financing, centralized planning and foreign students and differential fees.

Sharma said the first draft will soon be completed and "it is a very credible document which is well thought out; most positions are realistic and hopefully will convince the Royal Commission."

Executives of SUNS are also occupied with having formalized monthly meetings with members of the provincial Department of

Education. "The meetings are useful to both concerned parties - it makes them more aware of the needs of students and us more aware of what the government plans to do about it," said Sharma.

SUNS also plans to make a submission to the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission's Financial Planning Committee in October.

In late fall, SUNS plans to renew communications with the Provincial Department of Development concerning student summer employment, to make certain the problems of last summer will not be repeated next year.

Sharma cited "the ongoing battle in Student Aid" as being very important this fall. He said the government's extending the program to include part-time students was an important step. But he added a major obstacle now standing in the way of students is that chartered banks in the province have refused to negotiate part-time student loans. Sharma concluded saying it is important to get aggressive on this issue to see that the situa-

tion is cleared up soon.

According to SUNS the provincial government is slower this year in processing student loans, so it will be asking the Minister of Education to hire more staff to speed up the process.

Sharma said SUNS wants the Ministry of Education to use federal guidelines when evaluating a student's need for a student loan. He said the Ministry has agreed to at least talk to them about it.

SUNS has also been in contact with members of the provincial

opposition parties to ask them if a SUNS representative may sit on the Education Policy Committee of their party. The Liberal Party has agreed. The New Democratic Party (NDP) has not yet replied, but SUNS executives are expecting a favourable response.

Sharma said it would be difficult for a member of SUNS to sit on a similar Progressive Conservative Committee because "The government doesn't have an education policy."

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