

Catherine Blewett moves in

By KIMBERLY WILLIAMS

CATHERINE BLEWETT, Dalhousie's first woman student union president, spent her summer attending meetings and acquainting herself with the personalities and politics of the campus.

Blewett spent the early part of her presidential term realizing students of the university are not a priority at budget time nor are they well-informed about the operations of the university.

Blewett says, "For example, the debate over the discontinuation of varsity sports was one that few students knew about, although it would have affected many."

Blewett is pleased with the administration's decision to maintain the varsity sports program.

Blewett says she wants students to know that Dalhousie's support services, such as the bookstore and the residences, are in business to make a profit, unlike similar services at the other Maritime universities.

Blewett says she is concerned about the communication gap

between the DSU and the student body. She says one of her main goals this year is to improve the flow of information on campus.

"When people don't know about something they usually assume that it's bad. The students need to know what the DSU does," says Blewett.



Catherine Blewett, Dal Photo: John Davie

One means of accomplishing this is to work more effectively with campus media. Blewett says she intends to give CKDU and the Gazette her full support. More

directly Blewett plans to make herself more accessible to students by attending events and spending the night in residence from time to time.

Blewett says the DSU has already demonstrated its ability to work effectively with administration. She points to last year's referendum on student contributions to Dalhousie's Capital Fund Drive, where students accepted a \$15 increase in student union fees in exchange for a cap on tuition increases for the next 6 years.

Blewett plans meetings with each student society to discuss their relationship with Council, financial matters and planning for future events.

Blewett says she wants to encourage a good working relationship between the DSU and the Canadian Federation of Students and the Students' Union of Nova Scotia (SUNS).

She says she is aware of the benefits of cooperating with the national students' organization. CFS will help stand up for the DSU in relations with the federal government in Ottawa.

In addition the DSU and SUNS will be working together closely to respond to the upcoming report of the Provincial Royal Commission on Post Secondary Education.

Blewett is planning for a politically active year on campus.

She says she wants to encourage increased political awareness through informative and thought-provoking speakers and special events.

Bouquets and brickbats for Challenge '85

By DAVID OLIE

THE FIGURES ARE NOT ALL in yet, but the federal government's summer student employment program, Challenge '85, appears to have been a limited success.

Flora MacDonald, minister of employment and immigration, says, "I've never had the honour of running a program that was so well received." MacDonald made the statement in a meeting with representatives of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS).

Preliminary statistics from MacDonald's department indicate that the Challenge '85 program created 100,000 jobs over the summer.

As well, unemployment figures for returning full-time students are down slightly compared to the previous summer. In July, 14.4 percent of these students were out of work, down .5 percent from the same month in 1984.

However, the figures also indicate a rise in the unemployment rate in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and a rise in the actual numbers of out of work students in British Columbia, compared to last year.

In July, the unemployment rate for Nova Scotian students was 20.3 percent, up from 15.9 percent in 1984. Newfoundland is the only province with a higher rate of student unemployment, now at 27.9 percent.

James LeBlanc, chair of the Students' Union of Nova Scotia,

says he is not impressed by the record of Challenge '85 in this region.

"This is just another example of the way the Atlantic region is left out of the federal Conservatives' program," says LeBlanc.

LeBlanc says he predicted Challenge '85 would largely benefit Canadian regions where the private sector is strongest, leaving students in more economically depressed areas, like Nova Scotia, out in the cold. He says he is disappointed but not surprised to see his prediction realized.

Unlike previous years, when the government funded a large number of student jobs in non-profit institutions and the public sector, the Challenge '85 program was geared almost entirely to cost-sharing with private industry.

LeBlanc says the provincial government is responsible for part of the problem.

"There's been no coherent, planned provincial employment program this summer," says LeBlanc. Instead, funds have been coming from the Department of Development "in dribs and drabs."

The province has funded about 4000 jobs for students this year, compared to 6500 in 1984.

CFS executive officer John Casola says he is skeptical of the government's claim that 85 percent of students found summer jobs.

With files from Canadian University Press.

Councils push for bus passes

By MARY ELLEN JONES

AFTER YEARS OF STUDENTS complaining about transit costs, cheaper fares may be at hand.

The student councils of the six post-secondary institutions in the Metro area have joined together to plan a strategy to make bus passes available for students using Metro Transit.

"With the support of so many institutions something will be accomplished," says Reza Rizvi, executive vice-president of the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU).

The bus pass would benefit more than 14,000 students in the area.

Student politicians have talked

about the idea for years but little has been accomplished.

"This year was the year to do it because the pieces fit into place so beautifully," says Rizvi. With municipal elections taking place October 19, the DSU has a chance to lobby each candidate running for office.

Three years ago, the DSU tried to arrange a system of bus passes for students. They were turned down because they did not have enough organized support from the rest of the universities in Metro.

"I would advocate that we (the DSU) in the past made a strategic error in approaching this issue," says Rizvi. This year Dalhousie plans to go to the Metro Transit Commission well prepared.

The Students' Union of Nova Scotia (SUNS) also endorsed the project at a recent conference at Acadia University. Rizvi says this will be a major help in the DSU's

A questionnaire survey of students will be taken during the last week in September. With the help of Dymaxium research and the university's Department of Statistics the survey will be complete by the first week in October.

In order to be effective the survey should reach 10 percent of the student population.

"If the results are positive, which I am confident will be the case, we can approach the transit authorities and advocate that the students of the city demand a student bus pass," says Rizvi.

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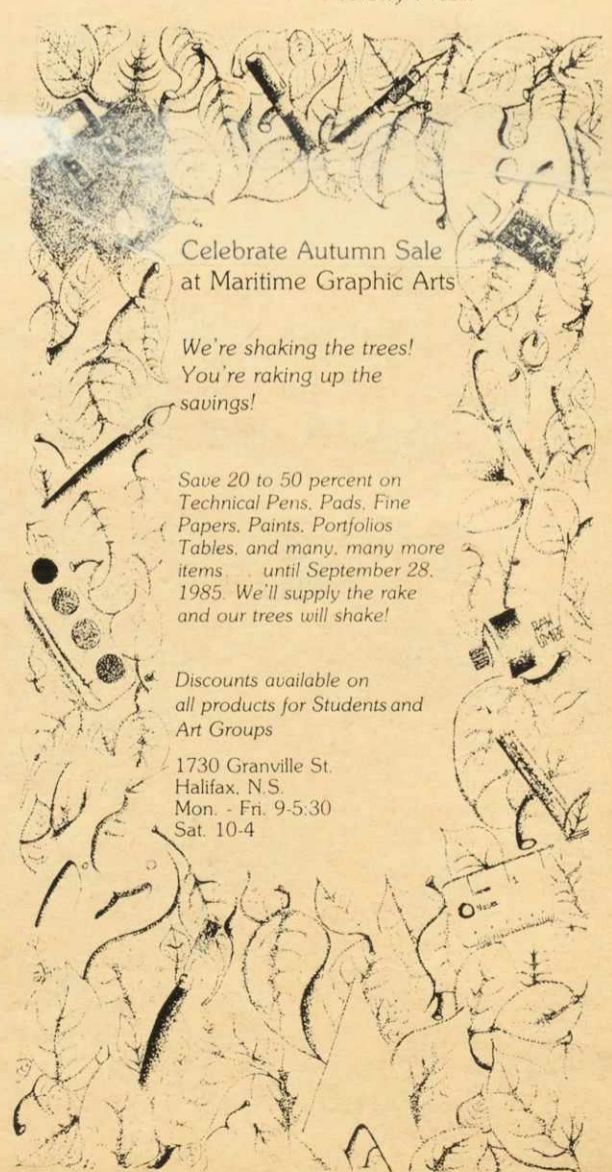
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