



Andy MacKay, President of Dalhousie University, passed around the ole tin cup to raise money for the Capital Fund Drive.

Student groups neutral on faculty disputes

By SUSAN LATTER

The Ontario Federation of Students (OFS) has vowed to remain neutral during the strike by teachers at Ontario's 22 community colleges.

At a recent conference held in late September, OFS decided to support the 7600 teachers, counselors, and librarians in principle, but will declare itself publicly neutral if the dispute between colleges, administration and the Ontario Public Services Employees Union should flare into a strike.

The Ontario Federation of Students (OFS) has vowed to remain neutral during the strike by teachers at Ontario's 22 community colleges.

At a recent conference held in late September, OFS decided to support the 7600 teachers, counselors and librarians in principle, but will declare itself publicly neutral if the dispute between colleges' administration and the Ontario Public Service Employees Union should flare into a strike.

The Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA) has scheduled a strike vote for October 23-25th to put pressure on the administration to settle. Both the Dalhousie Student Union and the Student Union of Nova Scotia are unsure whether they will take sides in the dispute.

"As an organization SUNS would like to remain neutral, but I think both SUNS and the student union have an obligation to their members and will eventually have

to take a side [in the dispute] in the interest of the students," says SUNS chair Geoff Martin.

Dalhousie student union President Alex Gigeroff says that while there is an underlying sympathy for the faculty the complexity of the issue and past associations with both opposing groups does not justify an immediate consensus from the student union to support either side.

Caroline Zayid, Canadian Federation of Students Central Committee rep., believes the decision posed by a subsequent faculty strike would be a very difficult one for the DSU or SUNS to make.

Zayid says she agrees with Luna McKenzie, student vice-president at Humber College, who said support in principle is enough because the teachers know students sympathize with their concerns, many of which are shared by the students.

"Students' support is just a gesture and is not worth jeopardizing their educational future for... as it is the students who will be directly affected," said Zayid.

OFS executive officer, Ellen Waxman says college faculty understand the students' position and their desire to continue going to school, even through a strike.

"The faculty only asked the students not to come out against them," Waxman said. □

With files from Canadian University Press.

The data that control our lives

By WENDY COOMBER

Statistical mystification. That's what Lou Ferleger calls it. The daily bombardment of meaningless numbers and data that control our lives. How does the province decide who gets student aid and how much? Who says unemployment is going up and what does it mean?

Ferleger has a book on the market called *Statistics for Social Change* and he spoke to groups at Saint Mary's University and King's College over the weekend.

Numbers have taken on a whole new meaning, he says. The print media uses statistics all the time to relay information and everyone presumes they are accurate. But the people who use these figures rarely include how they were gathered, or even who did the gathering.

Statistics Canada (StatsCan) gets much of its information on topics like abortion and divorce from administration records, says Keith Matheson, StatsCan representative in Halifax.

Students in Ferleger's statistics class at the University of Massachusetts, he says, can punch information into their computers and receive the numbers they want in 30 seconds. Ferleger worries that they have no desire to know how these figures are arrived at.

Saturday at King's, Ferleger sat on a discussion panel along with Walter Stewart, director of King's School of Journalism, and Keith Matheson of StatsCan's Halifax branch.

Matheson says his agency is just beginning to issue analysis of their figures upon request.

But, he says, "very bitter debates come up over professed unemployment rates" when people and governments take the same figure and interpret it many ways.

Stewart calls this "fiddling, interpolation, and misapplication." He reminded the audience of the oil crisis in the '70s and how the National Energy Board used statistics to approve selling oil and gas to the U.S. When oil and gas became scarce the same numbers were used to prove we didn't have enough fuel even for ourselves.

Collection of stats and their usage is often very political, says Ferleger, and can be used to reconstruct reality. In the 19th century, he says, stats were used to prove black inferiority. Reagan can use numbers to prove inflation is down and the economy is up and no one will ever ask him to prove it.

Ferleger says in Boston right now they're trying to clean up some ponds.

"The EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] can dazzle you with numbers," he says, but if you ask them about the figures they'll tell you they're too complicated to explain.

"My worst fear is that many of these numbers are made up."

There is no present economic justification for the Darlington power plant in Ontario which was just closed, says Stewart. However,

when it was built the numbers looked very wise to the journalists who wrote them down.

"Economists have been wrong about every major development in the western world since 1901," says Stewart, "but it doesn't impede the surety with which they speak."

But all three men agree on the need for statistics, misunderstood and misused as they might be.

Ferleger says people should learn more about them but, until they become bona fide statisticians, should not try interpreting them.

Stewart says, "It's not the journalist's role to know things, it's the journalist's role to ask things."

Matheson says the responsibility is on both the journalist and on StatsCan to explain how and why their data is formulated. □

McGill and Concordia on road to success

By KATIE FRASER

Dalhousie is just getting started with their capital fund drive, but McGill and Concordia are well on their way to success.

McGill University's "Campaign for Excellence" has been in motion for the past year. Their set goal is \$61 million, and they have so far raised \$35 million. McGill's campaign director John Heany says the fund drive will support research, fellowships, scholarships, renovations, research and books.

McGill is looking primarily to the private sector for their funds. As well, students at McGill are committed to raising \$4 million by increasing their student fees. The faculty has also raised approxi-

mately \$250 thousand.

Concordia's competing fund drive, "Building Together" began 18 months ago. They have only raised 1/4 of their \$40 million goal.

Unlike McGill, Concordia University is looking to the government for the majority of their funds.

Joe Berlettano, Concordia's campaign director, says the majority of the funds raised will go towards supporting library projects, specifically the construction of a new eight floor library.

At Dalhousie project goals include additional funding for faculty, computers, building and renovations, library and learning resources, and research. □

With files from the Link, the student newspaper of Concordia University.

Student Union hopes

continued from page 1

Gigeroff. "I think it is a progressive move."

He says this proposal allows tuition fee increases to be considerably lower than in past years. The 12.1 per cent increase average between 1978-1979 and 1983-84 is typical of high tuition increases.

"This proposal allows Dalhousie to bring tuition more in line with the national average, allowing for continued accessibility. I'll defy any university to get that kind of a deal. Unless you have a deal like

this it is going to be extremely difficult to keep tuition down to 4 per cent, unless you have government subsidies that I don't know about," said Gigeroff.

The date for the referendum has not been set, but Gigeroff predicts that it will be "within the next six weeks, probably towards the end of November."

"I think it's just great. I think we will win it," says Gigeroff. "I would like to see other student unions become involved in similar ventures." □



Dalhousie council went "in camera" to discuss their capital fund drive contribution. Rusty James is demonstrating his own technique for secret meetings—If I can't see them, they can't see me. John Davie, Dalhousie Photo.