

NEWS

Reform plans ignore students

by Alex Burton

There has been no student involvement in plans to remove duplication of university programs in Nova Scotia, J.R. Perkin, President of Acadia University, said Monday.

The reduction of university programs offered at two or more Nova Scotia schools and attempts to coordinate university programs, purchasing, and credit transfers, known as 'rationalization', is an issue Nova Scotia universities were asked to look at over a year ago.

Speaking at a press conference Perkin said student input on any related decisions would have to come from student representatives on university Boards and Senates.

However, in a report to the Nova Scotia Council on Higher Education on December 5, the Students' Union of Nova Scotia questioned the amount of input students have at that level.

"Often what has been presented to a university's Board of Governors has been a complete package, formulated without student input and presented to the Board merely for a stamp of approval."

Joel Matheson, the Minister of Advanced Education and Job Training, said there are "no other real alternatives" to rationalization if Nova Scotia is to maintain a quality accessible advanced education system.

However, neither the Nova Scotia Council on Higher Education, the Maritime Premiers Higher Education Commission, or the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents have passed formal motions to approve of such action.

Over a year ago the Adlington Report brought forward the idea of 'rationalization' as way to increase university efficiency and reduce the rising costs of running universities.

It appears the only new initiative announced yesterday was the ap-

pointment of Gregory MacKinnon, a former President of St. Francis Xavier University, as "facilitator to work with all parties".

Yet, neither the Minister's press release nor the announcement made on Monday expanded on MacKinnon's role or his job description.

Matheson said one of the major issues under consideration are the Business and Commerce Schools at Dalhousie and Saint Mary's Universities.

Matheson said the spirit of communication and cooperation shown by Dalhousie and St. Mary's in discussing the roles of these

schools was commendable, but emphasized "there are no plans to eliminate or minimize" any university in Nova Scotia.

"The government will not force (university) amalgamation," said Matheson. However, Perkin said, "if institutions refuse to do things government - government doesn't have to fund them."

Spicer visits Metro

by Paul Webster and Chris Lambie

"This is a remarkably new process — this is not an old fashioned Royal Commission." According to Keith Spicer, The Citizen's Forum on Canada's Future is going to find a synthesis of the Canadian political will for the nineties.

Brian Mulroney created the Spicer Commission in August of 1990 in response to the collapse of the Meech Lake Accord. The Commission's mandate is to collect and focus a panorama of citizen's views. According to the Commission's literature, they are "to improve the climate of dialogue by lowering the level of distrust that slows progress on so many vital issues."

The Commission pitched camp in Halifax last Thursday on a bitterly cold night. Despite a remarkable lack of specifically detailed publicity, 150 people managed to find Spicer and his commission tucked away in a back

alley auditorium of the Technical University of Nova Scotia.

Surrounded by a plethora of drooling media hounds, the well polished and lean jawed mandarin introduced his Commission; he and his paid staff exude an aura of glamorous folksiness. They are employed, they say, "to hear the people speak."

"To improve the climate of dialogue"

The Spicer Commission will cost at least ten million dollars. For this price, every Canadian is eligible to receive an information package consisting of eighteen sheets of paper, several of the shiniest of which are extremely redundant, and to, as Madonna so aptly put it, express yourself.

The Commissioner's strategy is to break down the traditional barriers that defeat a national dialogue by dividing the respondents into "moderated groups" of ten to fifteen people.

The groups are guided by volunteer facilitators who pose key questions involving the issues of Quebec independence, official bilingualism, aboriginal land claims and self-government. Other questions include an associated array of unwieldy and vague issues like "what are the major issues facing Canada as a whole in the 1990's?" or "what does Canada have to do to succeed in the 1990's?"

Describing the participants' responses would be as difficult as Keith Spicer's job will be. The plurality of opinions expressed may defy synthesis. The Commissioner's unenviable task is to provide a three line answer to each of the country's perceived "problems" by July 1st of this year.



Student Union Elections

THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

**ELECTION DATES,
FEBRUARY 11-13, 1991**

The following positions are available:

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| President/Executive | Dentistry Rep. |
| Vice President (one team) | Medicine Rep. |
| Board of Governors. (2) | Nursing Rep. |
| Science Reps. (3) | Occupational Therapy Rep. |
| Arts Reps. (2) | Physiotherapy Rep. |
| Management Studies Rep. | Pharmacy Rep. |
| Engineering Rep. | Law Rep. |
| SAHPER Rep. | International Students' Rep. |
| Part-time students' Rep. | Women's Rep. |
| Mature Students' Rep. | Men's Rep. |
| Graduate Studies Reps. (2) | |

SENATE POSITIONS:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Science Rep. | Medicine Rep. |
| Arts Rep. | Law Rep. |
| Management Studies Rep. | Health Professions Rep. |
| Dentistry Rep. | Graduate Studies Rep. |

Nominations open: Thursday, January 10, 9:30 am
Nominations close: Friday, January 25, 4:30 pm

Nomination forms are available from Room 222 of the Student Union Building starting Thursday, January 10. For further information, please contact Tamara Long, Chief Returning Officer at 494-2146, or in room 222, S.U.B.

DSA

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But the administration said it is coping. "Services are generally going quite well. Committee activity has slowed down. People are probably aware of the fact that services are scarce," said a worker in the Administration building.

Administration workers are bearing the burden well, said Marilyn MacDonald, Director of Public Relations for Dalhousie. "Morale is quite good. No doubt they'd all like to see their colleagues back."

"[The administration] say they are committed to keep the university running. Having said that, we obviously can't have a full lockout," said Yetman.

"Students would very quickly see their studies restricted. Exams could not be put together. Labs would eventually close. Dental patient care could not continue.

The impact ... I cannot see that the university would keep running if the DSA was locked out."

MacDonald said she didn't want to speculate on the possibility of a lockout. "Lockout is an option for management, just as striking is an option for the union."

"The university has not taken any action to take the thing to a higher boiling point, but we may have to in the near future.

However, the administration said no meeting is planned in the future. "This is the best offer that can be made," said one representative.

The cost to the DSA would be very high, he said. "The total unit cost would be \$310,502 a week in lost payrolls in the event of a walkout."

A cost of living agreement seemed to be the main issue at negotiations. "There was a change in mood as one got down to the monetary issues. Bargaining became increasingly difficult. Expectations were beyond what was available," said the representative.

The DFA's settlement did not apparently affect negotiations. "It's not a matter of equality — the issues are different. Each negotiation has its own comparisons. It's not universality and uniformity ... appealing to that is simply the rhetoric of the game," he said.

MacDonald said shutting the university down is not an option. "We could continue to meet basic services, and that's the course of action being contemplated at the moment."

"I hope [they're taking it seriously]," concluded Yetman, "If management aren't taking it seriously, they're foolish. They aren't coping."

There will be a march on Jan 22 at 12:30 in front of the Student Union Building in support of a quick settlement, to which all faculty, staff and DSU executives have been invited. Students are welcome to participate.