

# Equity Officer to tackle the monolith

by Jeff Harrington

Dalhousie will soon be on the prowl for someone to supervise the implementation of its long-overdue new affirmative action policy.

The task of the new "Employment Equity Officer" is to "reverse the historic underrepresentation on Dalhousie's faculty and staff of women, aboriginal peoples, visible minorities and the disabled."

Whoever gets the job has a hell of a lot of work to do.

Dal has had a "policy for increasing the proportion of female faculty" since 1983, but its impact has been less than spectac-

ular. Between 1984 and 1989, an average of 29 per cent of faculty appointments were women.

"I think that, as a whole, the process has been weak," said Barbara Harris, Dal's new status-of-women coordinator, on Monday.

"Just the results are monitored. The only time you can express disagreement is at the end, which is problematic," she said.

While a number of departments, such as Nursing, Dental Hygiene, and Social Work are exempt from the "reporting procedure" because more than half their faculty members are female, other departments are chronically male. The most recent (December 1987) figures on

faculty distribution within the Dalhousie Faculty Association show poor female representation (at the level of professor and associate professor) in the Humanities (15 per cent), Management Studies (6.8 per cent), Law (14.3 per cent) and Preclinical Medicine (11.9 per cent). Outside the bargaining unit, the figures (at the professor level) are even worse (Humanities - 0 per cent, Science - 0 per cent, Management Studies - 0 per cent, Dentistry - 0 per cent, and Clinical Medicine - 1.9 per cent).

Since 1987, the percentage of women appointed in these areas has remained low, with the notable exception of the Faculty of

Law, which appoints women unless a man is "substantially more qualified." No men have been appointed since the 1986-7 year.

Dal does not keep figures on the number of visible minority or disabled faculty.

"There are certainly not very many indigenous blacks (in the faculty), and there are absolutely zero MicMacs," said law professor Wayne Mackay Tuesday.

MacKay chaired a task force last year on Dalhousie's accessibility to minorities, especially indigenous Nova Scotian blacks and MicMacs.

According to Dalhousie President Howard Clark, the adminis-

tration is "in the process of finalizing a response" to the recommendations of the MacKay task force. Clark said Tuesday that he met this week with members of the black and MicMac communities, including the Black Canadian Students Association and the Dalhousie University Aboriginal Students Association. Clark said that, following more consultations, "we will immediately put measures in place to deal with these issues."

The new affirmative action policy pledges "fulfillment of employment equity ... in all aspects and all levels of employment." But, as the new Employment Equity Officer surveys the administrative pyramid, he or she may well heave a sigh of discouragement.

December 1987 figures on the distribution of administrative positions by gender show that, excluding the (highest) positions of vice-presidents, deans and administrative directors, 58.5 per cent of administrators were women. (There are nine classes of administrators below these positions.) However, 78 per cent of the administrators considered "below mid-range" (level 5) were women, while 61 per cent of administrators "above middle range" were men. Ten of 11 level 8 administrators were men and all seven of the top-paying level 9 administrators (\$53,528) were men.

Dalhousie does not monitor administrative hiring, or the distribution of minorities or the disabled in the administration.

In the upper echelons, the employment equity officer could have either a heyday or a nightmare. Every senior administrative position (president, VPs, deans, registrar) is held by a man, with the exception of the registrar, Gudrun Curri.

"There are no female deans, no vice-presidents," said Harris.

"In terms of academic administration, there are no women, no blacks, or other minorities. When you look around, you see faces that are male, faces that are white," she said.

"At the present time, that is true," said President Clark. Clark said he has searches underway to fill two deans' positions.

"It is certainly my hope that at least one of the positions (will be filled by someone who is not a white male). But it's really in the hands of the selections committee," he said.

The MacKay task force has recommended that the Board of Governors include blacks and MicMacs. At present, there are 17 women, one black and no MicMacs on the board, which has 53 members and one vacancy.

Clark said he hopes to begin advertising for applicants for the new position by the beginning of

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