

editorial

A BAC-hand slap

Dalhousie has become used to hanging on pronouncements like the ones the Budget Advisory Committee and President Howard Clark made yesterday.

The rumours had been flying for days beforehand, with young professors and administrators wondering how many faculty and staff positions would be cut, departments anticipating slashed budgets, and students fearing another wave of tuition fee hikes. Everyone was officially in the dark until the BAC's report was presented and Clark responded, but everyone seemed to have heard something. A student council insider dropped off a tip at the *Gazette* to look for "deep, vertical cuts". A radio journalist called the office to ask if anyone had heard that "a whole bunch of deans are going to be axed".

For students in five academic programs, the rumours turned out to be true. While insisting that he did not intend to dictate to faculties how to spend their shrunken allotments of money, Clark made his case for the elimination of programs in theatre, costume studies, music and public administration. He also identified the School of Library and Information Studies as a probable target for phasing out.

If you missed the show, it was difficult to avoid perceiving a tremendous gulf between many in the crowded auditorium and the technocrats on stage. Allan Shaw, Chair of the Board of Governors, spoke sublimely of the "difficult times". He, Alasdair Sinclair and Clark praised the work of the BAC. Meanwhile, a substantial group of students in the audience were listening to their fields of study being wiped out of Dal's academic calendar, while professors were contemplating having to search for work elsewhere.

It is probably not worth harping on the way Clark lost his place in his speech when it came time to express his regret to people who would lose their jobs. Yes, it is infuriating to realize that human considerations were secondary in the drawing up of the latest round of 'tough financial decisions'. It is also outrageous to suggest that a particular degree program is somehow less worthwhile than another. Exhortations to support cut-backs for the greater glory of Dalhousie's mission somehow ring hollow.

But in the end, there is much more to it than Howard Clark and an insensitive administration. Government funding is drying up for post-secondary education, and when (if) the economy turns around, the considerations behind allocating money for universities will probably have changed beyond recognition. What that means, for example, is don't be surprised if once there's more money for everyone, costume studies isn't any more valued than it is now by the 'visionaries' of higher education.

And not all the news is out yet. The most recent rumours suggest that the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences still needs to cut more programs to meet its targeted budget reductions. Tuition fee increases will still have to pass the university's governing bodies and students who are sure to resist. The "improved financial performance" that the BAC report demands of units like the University Bookstore and Dalplex is certain to be translated into higher costs for students.

So it's going to be a long year, but if the attendance at Wednesday's presentation is any indication, the Dalhousie community will not take any of it lying down.

Ryan Stanley

The Dalhousie Gazette, in co-operation with the Lester Pearson Institute for International Development presents:

Words on the World

A feature-writing contest on development, human rights, the environment and social justice

This week's topic:

Dispelling the Myths: AIDS, Africa and Racism

Guidelines for submissions:

Articles should be well-researched, with quotations from sources, preferably local sources. Writers may choose to focus on a particular aspect of the topic. All articles are subject to editing for publication. Suggested length: 1200-1700 words.

The winning article will appear in the October 14 issue of the *Gazette*. An honorarium will be paid to winning writers. This contest will continue throughout the year, with 3 feature topics per term. All students, regardless of field of study, are encouraged to enter.

Deadline: Monday, October 11

Submissions may be dropped off at the *Gazette* office, Room 312, SUB.

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the Gazette

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LETTERS

Ad offensive

To the editor:

I was surprised by the recruiting ad on page 5 of September 9th's *Gazette* — "BE A JOURNALIST! (or just look like one.)" The illustration for this title of a white clean-cut male gives a very exclusive message to your readers. By using a white man as the model of what a journalist looks like you imply not only that that's what you're looking for as staff, but also that that is what all journalists are — which is a sexist and racist generalization. Watch what you print!

Barbara Leiterman

The Dalhousie *Gazette* welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should not exceed 300 words in length and should be typed and double-spaced. The deadline for letters is Monday noon before publication. Letters may be submitted on MacIntosh or IBM-compatible 3.5" disk.

*"Is anybody out there?"
Write letters to the
Gazette*

Founded in 1869 at Dalhousie College, *the Gazette* is Canada's oldest student newspaper. With a circulation of 10,000, *the Gazette* is published weekly by the Dalhousie Gazette Publishing Society, of which all Dalhousie University students are members. • *The Gazette* exercises full editorial autonomy and reserves the right to refuse or edit any material submitted. Editorial decisions are made by staff collectively. Individuals who contribute to three issues consecutively become voting staff members. Deadline for commentary, letters to the editor, and announcements is noon on Monday before publication (Thursday of each week). Submissions may be left at the SUB Enquiry Desk c/o *the Gazette*. • Commentary should not exceed 500 words. Letters should not exceed 300 words. No unsigned material will be accepted, but anonymity may be granted upon request. • Advertising copy deadline is noon on Monday before publication. • *The Gazette* offices are located on the third floor of the SUB, Room 312. The views expressed in *the Gazette* are not necessarily those of the Dalhousie Student Union, the editors or the collective staff.

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