

Students demand their say in strike talks

BY SHELLEY ROBINSON

A rally outside a Board of Governors meeting gave Dalhousie students a chance to say what they thought of the possibility of a faculty strike.

And the word of choice was "bullshit".

More than 500 students marched from the Student Union Building to the MacDonald building on Mar. 17, to protest what they call being caught in the middle of faculty contract renegotiations.

The rally was a response to student frustration about stalled negotiations between the faculty and administration, and an attempt to call both sides back to the bargaining table.

The meeting was broadcast over a PA system to protesters outside, while students inside used walkie-talkies to let the crowd know who was speaking. Depending on who had the floor, rally organizers held up their signs — either "Yay" for the meeting's student presenters or "Boo" for the administration.

Discussing what he said were the university's three options — increased government funding, cutbacks to fit within the current budget, or increased tuition fees — Dalhousie president Tom Traves was drowned out by chants of "bullshit".

But he addressed the students' interruption.

"These problems will not magically go away. Shouting

'bullshit', shouting 'boo' does not make the problems we face go away — it would be nice but it doesn't work that way in the real world," he said.

At the rally, Brian Kellow, Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) executive vice-president elect, presented an alternative to Traves' plans.

"[The] fourth option is to allow students into the talks and allow us to take part...in determining our own future for Christ's sake."

DSU president Chris Adams wants a chance to sit in on the negotiations as a student observer.

"The faculty will be fighting for their interests, the administration will be fighting for their interests,"

Adams said. "Who's fighting for student issues? Without that seat there, student issues [are ignored]."

Currently all attempts at settlement have failed, and a faculty strike or university lock-out could legally happen as early as Mar. 25.

Dr. Ismet Ugursal, president of the Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA), says he supports the rally, and the students bid to sit-in on negotiations.

"It's brilliant," he said. "The students have to put their voice in this thing, [and] have to be heard...I'm on their side."

Despite both sides already rejecting the idea of students at the bargaining table, Ugursal says he

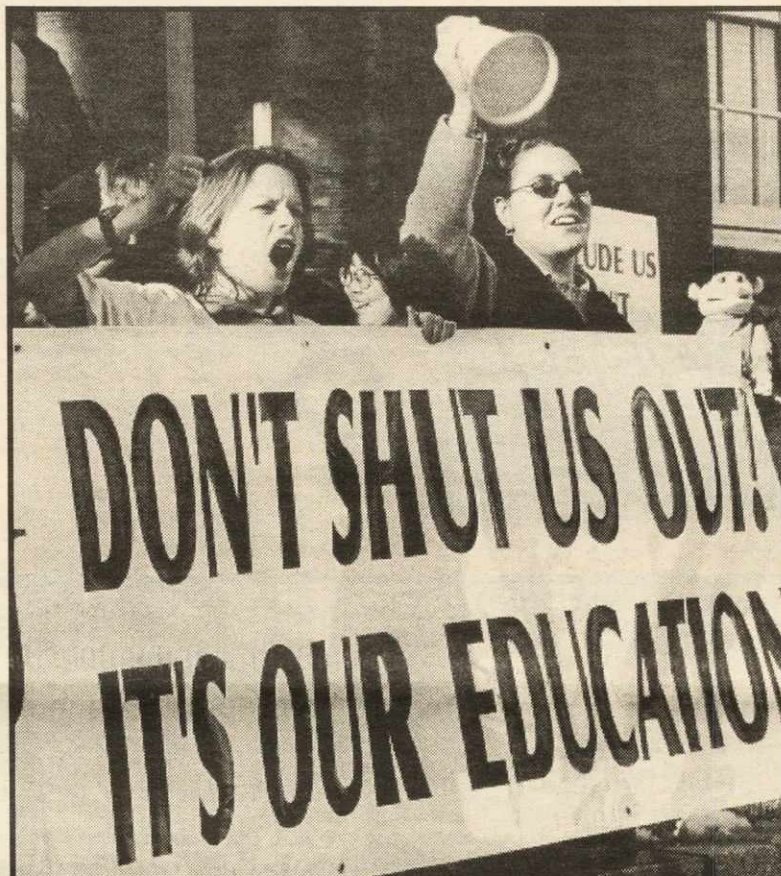
changed his mind, and has signed a DSU proposal to renew talks with a student observer present.

"In retrospect, it would have been better if we had a student observing the negotiations [from the beginning], because they would have first-hand information on how the Board stalled and...didn't cooperate."

Traves, who has not yet signed the proposal, has invited Adams to a meeting to discuss the possibility of further contract talks, and student observation at these talks.

At the rally, Kellow led the students in cheers and chants — the crowd's bongo drumming and sign-

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Students vocally protested their exclusion from faculty contract negotiations at a rally outside the MacDonald Building on Tuesday. (Photo by Ryan Lash)

Chiasson and Kellow win DSU elections

BY NATALIE MACLELLAN

Ted Chiasson and Brian Kellow are the new president and vice-president of the Dalhousie Student Union. They captured almost half of the 2,263 votes cast in the student union elections, beating Erin Trail and Gordon Hannah, their closest competitors, by 273 votes.

Voter turnout was disappointingly low, with only 16 per cent of Dalhousie students going to the polls.

"It would have been better if we'd had a higher voter turnout," Chiasson said. "But I think a lot of people don't realize even what the student union is and the significance that it has on student lives. So we'll have to try and work to make them more aware of it in the coming year and see a better turnout next year."

With all that has been going on at Dalhousie lately, the new executive has hardly had time to celebrate their wins before being thrown into work, particularly at Tuesday's strike rally.

"I'm flustered," admitted Chiasson. "There's this little strike thing, and the provincial election — both are really significant. All year we've been talking to politicians and representing student interests and at this point it's time to put our money where the mouth is."

"Politicians pay attention to people that vote, so we've got an election in the school year, and if we don't get a good turnout of

students in this riding, then I think the politicians will be able to say, 'Well students don't vote. I guess we don't have to pay attention to their issues anymore,' and we'll lose any voice we've got on any level of politics for a couple of years. It's put up or shut up time."

Kelly MacKenzie easily beat former Senate rep Jeff Myers to take on the position of vice-president student advocacy, formerly known as vp academic/external.

"I'm really excited and really happy. I just can't wait," MacKenzie said. "It's going to be a tough year I think...but it's going to be really rewarding I hope. I'm looking forward to helping the students out. I just want to make myself visible."

The vice-president community affairs race went to Dean Naugler.

"I'm very excited," Naugler said. "I won Friday night and Saturday I was already right into [the strike rally]. I haven't had any chance to really think about what I'm going to do. My first priority is definitely Shinerama — I want to get that on the go tomorrow."

Naugler stated in the Gazette two weeks ago that he would be going skydiving if he won the election, and he plans to keep that election promise at least.

"I'm probably going to be going in April sometime. I'll keep you guys posted...if anyone wants to come and watch."

There was a new vice-president position up for grabs in this year's

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Part-timers and TAs reach tentative agreement

BY PAUL MANSFIELD

A tentative agreement has been reached between Dalhousie part-time instructors/teaching assistants and the administration.

The agreement, finalized at close to 2am, Mar. 12, could end a three-year struggle between the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) local 3912 and the Dalhousie Administration.

According to Barbara Moore, president of CUPE 3912, obtaining this first set of contracts is a very important accomplishment.

"The biggest achievement is to firmly establish a collective

bargaining process," Moore said.

Dalhousie's public relations director, Michelle Gallant, says the university is very happy with the settlement.

"We are very pleased and relieved to have a resolution to this situation," she said.

Saint Mary's University (SMU) was the first of three universities represented by the union to reach a settlement. Since then, both Dalhousie and Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU) have reached tentative agreements, and are in the process of voting to approve the deal. Union members at Dalhousie vote Mar. 19 to accept or reject the

tentative deal with the university.

Moore is excited about the latest developments at all three universities, but realizes that there is much more to do.

"These agreements are just the beginning. Once our members have a chance to vote, we will begin preparations for the next round of bargaining two years from now. We have made a genuine start but we still have a long way to go," Moore said.

In the general terms of the agreement, Dalhousie recognizes the CUPE 3912 bargaining unit to include all those employed to teach,

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