



Letters to the Editor cont'd

GRADS WANT MORE!!!

Editors,

May I make use of your columns to amplify certain points that I made during the Student Council debate of October 20th respecting the proposed increase in student union fees. As Grad Rep I tried to express what I believe to be feelings widespread among the Graduate student body, though I can't be sure that I have interpreted those feelings correctly.

I should say immediately what I did not say on Sunday night, namely that personally I strongly support the Student Union, and that I feel that any withdrawal of support (moral or otherwise) from any campus group prejudices our chances of building a strong and happy university community here. I also believe personally that the Union must expand its services or stagnate.

Nonetheless, as I said on Sunday night, it is undoubtedly true that certain groups -- particularly grad students and students from the Lower Campus -- have strong reservations about supporting the Union.

The reasons for this should be well known to everybody. Many grad students and students from the Lower Campus do not live on campus and scarcely ever visit the SUB. They therefore benefit relatively little from the social life centered on the entertainment programme, are not exposed to student supported ventures like Dal radio, and are not in a position to take advantage of the relatively low costs of food and recreation provided in the cafeteria and the games room. In other words they have relatively little to show for their student interest fee.

Grad students in the past have tended to discount, if they have been aware of, the intangible benefits that follow from membership in the Union. Opinions to the contrary notwithstanding, these are not insignificant. The Union has had a real effect on the housing situation in the city. By fostering the Student Housing Society (and thus playing a significant role in the construction of the Wellington Street Apartment Tower), and by purchasing Fenwick Place and providing apartments at lower than the market rate, the union has helped to increase supply and reduce demand for housing, and thus has affected the general rent levels in the city. The Union has also been extensively involved in lobbying for better loan and scholarship programmes, and in establishing necessary services for graduate students such as

Day-Care. Most important of all, the Union is the individual's best -- if not altogether adequate -- protector in case of grievance, and the students' only effective organized body capable of putting up resistance in the case of major injustices, for example unreasonable increase in tuition fees or a government decision to significantly cut back university services.

Improved communications may succeed in putting the union's case across more effectively than has been the case in the past. But I do not think that this will be enough. Disadvantaged groups -- such as grad students and students from the Lower Campus -- need some focal points for their communal life, some real and tangible evidence that their money is being well spent.

At the present time, most of the Student Interest fees (except the large amount allotted to the Prescription Drug Service) is spent on activities that centre in the SUB. Most of this money is spent on paying off the cost of the building (\$60,000 a year), and in paying salaries connected with SUB activities (well over \$100,000 a year).

These activities do, it is true, extend beyond the building itself, but on not nearly large enough a scale. If the Union is to deserve support for its much needed fee increases from the disadvantaged groups on Campus, it must decide on two things. It must resolve to hold the line on expenditures on activities that are confined to the SUB. And it must resolve to provide real support of every kind to activities that centre elsewhere.

What is needed most of all is a change of attitude. It must be recognized that groups of all kinds, but especially the large and major groups need places to provide them with a communal focus, although these are only part of what they need. Because of the outdated laissez-faire liberalism that is still clung to in certain influential administrative circles, the responsibility for building a community within the university has largely (though not entirely) been left to the Students' Union. I support the Students' Council stand for a fee increase of \$12 and preferably \$17 because I believe that this money is needed to help the Union to work on this responsibility.

Students from the groups that I have mentioned (myself included) will, however, very much regret supporting the increase if in the event that it is approved, the officials of

the Union do not faithfully support what such approval implies, namely the requirement to provide better decentralized services, and a determination to get things going.

Yours Etc,
Martin Ware,
Grad Rep,
Student Council

PLEASE

Editor(s);

This coming Wednesday an event of very great importance is going to take place on Dal campus-one which will affect the academic and social lives of all the students. By now people should be aware of the fact that a fee referendum is being held on the thirtieth.

Now of course, few people will be keen and enthusiastic on voluntarily boosting their student union fees by \$10.00 or \$15.00 without having a darn good reason for such. Perhaps I can briefly outline a few of the more pertinent reasons

why we should vote for a sizeable increase;

1. If an increase of over seven dollars is not accepted by Dal students then we can look forward to certainly no more than the same unexciting programs that we have had at Dal during the past two years. Due to inflation and the recent implementation of several different organizations and committees a severe financial strain is being felt within the student union, and an increase of nearly \$7.00 is required merely to continue to present the present programme.

2. A strong unified student voice supporting an increased union will serve to force the Dal Administration to pay more attention to the requests of students on campus. Students will have a greater bargaining power to enforce their views, and to have more say in the dictation of policy.

3. Thirdly, and more importantly to me - a financial input will mean a better Dal Radio that we can appreciate - a Gazette

that has improved coverage and printing-better informative communication to help bind together graduate students, med. students, Carleton Campus students, into a single well functioning unit.

Sounds good in theory, but it can never come to pass at Dal unless we vote to accept a fee increase of over \$7.00 (proposal B on the referendum). For the cost of a couple cases of beer, one occasion per year, the increased benefits in entertainment, student services, campus unity, quality of Gazette, Dal radio, etc, will greatly increase the quality of student life here at Dal.

Please, please come out and vote for the referendum--and vote for proposal B or C, let's get 100% participation at Dal this time. Now is the opportunity for all the outspoken critics out there to give their beefs a chance at implementation.

Phillip Hicks
B Sc. 3
Science Representative

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