

Determined Dal student gets a chance to vote

Orondé Walker and other Bermudian students appeal to Bermuda government for changes in voting process

BY AMY DURANT

Orondé Walker is going home to have his voice heard.

The government elections in his native Bermuda are the day after he arrives, and Walker wants a chance to vote.

"Everyone should be a part of the process," he said. "It's your right—I can't say that enough."

Walker and some other Bermudian students in Halifax have

been appealing to people back in Bermuda to help them get home to vote. And they have asked politicians as well as other Bermudian citizens for aid because they feel they have a right to vote, even though they are not physically in the country.

But Walker's main goal is to

achieve the proxy vote—the ability to vote through the mail.

"[The mail-in vote] hasn't been put in the constitution yet and this should be changed," he said.

Bermuda students have to get their higher education off the island because post-secondary education

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choices on the island are limited. As a result, Walker says students "are left out of the democratic process".

He'll be graduating in a few years and Walker says once he goes back, he's going to want a say in what the government does.

And Walker isn't alone.

Shawnee Basden is a first-

year Sciences student who says although students may be small in number, they are mighty.

"We're the ones who are going to go back to Bermuda in four to eight years to run the country," she said.

Kenisha Leverock, another first-year student at Dalhousie, agrees.

"We are all of age," she said. "We want to have a say."

But neither Basden nor Leverock are going home for this year's election. They do not have the money.

"It's not affordable... so it's

definitely a good idea to push for the proxy vote," Kenisha said.

But Bermudian James Cooke wouldn't vote even if he could.

"The political system back home is really weird and confusing. I don't know all of the facts, so I wouldn't vote," said the first-year student at Boston's Emerson College.

But there are people who feel strongly enough about exercising their right to vote to fly home just for the election.

The push for voting and efforts to get proxy votes has largely been driven by the Bermuda

Triangle Association. And they held a telephone press conference to voice their concerns and ideas in Bermuda.

The last election in Bermuda was close. With 40 seats in total, the Conservative government has 21 seats to the opposition Labour Party's 19. And Walker predicts the coming election will be just as close.

But he isn't pulling for any one party in his bid for votes, he only wants people voting.

"Vote for any party, [just] go back and have your say in the democratic process."

Management program shelved

Time constraints prevented Dalhousie program from being launched this year

BY JANET FRENCH

Dal's newest undergraduate program, set to start this past September, was delayed a year because of bureaucratic wrangling and fear of a new program offering the same old information.

The proposed Bachelor of Management program was intended to begin in September of 1998.

Mireille Duguay is the director of Research and Academic for the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission, the body responsible for program approval at all maritime post-secondary institutions.

And Duguay says two issues stopped the commission from approving Dalhousie's proposal unconditionally right away.

"The proposal that we got was relatively vague," she said. "[But] it was appropriate to give Dalhousie some leeway."

The commission also said there was some confusion on the use of the term 'management'.

"At the same time we had an application from St. Mary's University for a Ph.D program in 'Management Studies'" she said. "[It had] somewhat different programs and somewhat different disciplines. So that's why at the

time the approval was conditional on discussion occurring within metro Halifax regarding the use of the term management."

Ron Stubbart, director of Dalhousie's Masters in Business Administration and Information Technology programs, says these discussions did occur at the Metro Consortia, a group formed to allow Halifax Regional universities to co-operate, but it was a time consuming process.

"All these things take time," he said. "What we ended up with was something that was being stalled to the point where you couldn't do effective advertising, promotion and recruitment of students."

"There's no point announcing in September that we're offering a new degree program."

At the meetings among Halifax schools, there was debate about how a Bachelor in Management program may be too similar to existing Bachelor in Commerce degrees.

And Paul Dixon, dean of Commerce at Saint Mary's University (SMU), says he is still sceptical about the necessity of the proposed program.

"If you examined it, you would find that a significant

proportion of students that graduate from Dalhousie with a Bachelor of Commerce degree go into the not-for-profit or public sector," he said. "It is not until other schools see the specifics on all the courses that we can really judge how different it is from a traditional business program."

SMU officially replied to Dal's proposal by saying they didn't feel the new program was necessary.

When asked if he viewed the proposal as a threat to SMU's Commerce program, Dixon says he isn't threatened by the program because SMU offers a wider variety of undergraduate business courses than Dal.

But he also says the new management program is a positive step towards making business studies more accessible to Dalhousie students in other disciplines.

"I think these are good moves for Dal," he said.

After everything, Sam Scully, Dalhousie's vice-president Academic and Research, says things are on track for the program to start this coming September.

"The process is complete, the program is approved, and will be up and running next fall."

Tuition freeze

"I spend over \$6,000 a year on tuition and books. I am only given \$10,000 a year [in] student loans.

That money is supposed to cover tuition, books, rent, and food. If tuition fees are too high then education will only be available for the rich."

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O'Connell says they're sticking to it.

"We have always said that universities should not only be for those with money, but for everyone with the ability and who wants to go. Education should be accessible for all Canadians."

But while there is an increase in funding over the next three years, students worry the government suggestion that universities keep fees down may not be enough.

"If you legislate a tuition freeze then universities are by law required to keep tuition fees at the same level," said Kelly MacKenzie, Dalhousie Student Union vice-president student advocacy.

"Without legislation there is no guarantee that universities will not increase fees."

Dr. Sam Scully, Dalhousie's vice-president academic and research, says the school could freeze tuition fees—but they'd have to cut corners to make up for it.

"It is always possible to freeze tuition. But then you have to look at the costs, in terms of

student services such as class accessibility, class size, and teaching," he said.

Scully says universities are expected not to increase tuition by large amounts, if at all, but that even with the increase in funding to universities, Dalhousie "would still have to cut the budget if a tuition freeze were brought in".

The DSU's MacKenzie agrees a tuition freeze without a subsequent increase in funding may not be the answer.

"Without [more] funding the university has to cut internally such as increasing enrollment or cutting professors," she said.

The University of British Columbia (UBC) has faced these same problems in the three years since a provincial tuition freeze was legislated there.

The government did give a small increase in funding, but implemented a mandatory two percent increase in enrollment every year since the freeze.

"There have been classes cancelled, larger classes, and longer waiting lists for classes. There are a lot more sessional professors and less full-time faculty," said Ryan Marshall, external affairs coordinator at UBC. "I've heard of second-year core Science courses having waiting lists."

But for Joel Simourd, a third-year Dalhousie Nursing student, a tuition freeze could only be a blessing.

"I spend over \$6,000 a year on tuition and books. I am only given \$10,000 a year [in] student loans. That money is supposed to cover tuition, books, rent, and food," he said. "If tuition fees are too high then education will only be available for the rich."

"Tuition is too high now—I can barely afford it. There should be a tuition freeze."

Bachelor of Management program to link all faculties

BY JANET FRENCH

The undergraduate management program was created because the university says it received pressure to do so from a variety of sources. The degree, a typical 20-credit, four-year program, will be run through the Faculty of Management, which includes Dalhousie's school of business.

Ron Stubbart, director of Dalhousie's Masters in Business Administration and Information Technology programs, says the

program will be a welcome addition to the department.

"The Bachelor of Management gives those students who are interested in Management, but not interested specifically in a Business co-op degree, the opportunity to study," he said.

"A Management degree [focuses on] managing people, managing information, managing resources," he said.

Currently, the faculty offers primarily graduate programs, with the exception of the Bachelor of Commerce undergraduate degree.

But the primary difference between the proposed Management degree and the existing Commerce degree is that the Management degree will be geared specifically towards management of non-profit organizations.

The other impetus for the creation of the program was that no program that focuses on the non-profit sector currently exists at a Halifax university.

Stubbart says another advantage of the program is that Dalhousie students in other disciplines may also wish to gain knowledge and experience in management.

"Throughout the university, primarily from the arts, science and health professions faculties, there was a desire to link undergraduate programs with the management program, but we didn't have one available," he said.

An example of such a program which will be offered come next September is the five-year Bachelor of Recreation-Bachelor of Management dual degree.

"[Recreation] students predominantly get hired into community recreation departments, where they end up running recreational programs," said Stubbart. "Having management training as well is very helpful for them."

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<http://is2.dal.ca/~gazette>