

Council debates financing

by Paul Creelman

Students will vote in a referendum this spring to decide whether or not to allow CKDU radio to go FM, according to Gordon Owen, president of the Student Union.

"Last year, we had a plebiscite in which we asked the students if they wanted to accept the idea of CKDU going FM in principle", said Owen at the Council meeting last Sunday.

"The answer was a resounding 'yes', so we commissioned a study into the feasibility of the change. Now we're in a position to go back to the students and say, now you've decided you want an FM radio station, are you willing to pay the price for it?"

After a 66% majority vote in last year's plebiscite, Student Council commissioned Trans Canada Corporate Services to do a feasibility study on the FM proposal. The report outlined operating structure and personnel for an FM station, suggested methods of recovering the financial outlay, and specified equipment costs for the new FM station. It also proposed three packages for this initial capital outlay, for \$75,000, \$100,000, and \$150,000. The \$100,000 packages that the present cost calculations are based on would indicate an additional charge of \$6.84 in the Student Union fees to offset the cost of the outlay, although a pessimistic approximation could be as large as \$9.88.

The question of inaccuracies and omissions in the report became apparent after it was released, but Council members still see the report as important.

"There was a lot lacking in the report," said station manager Wile. "John Rude pointed out a number of technical inaccuracies, and there were a number of things left out or developed very sketchily in the report. But it is some meat to bite into, if you'll pardon the expression. For that reason, it is important. A lot of the material could have been gathered out of my own experience and the experience of various people at the station. However, it is an objective report, and that's important too."

The next step that the Student Council will be taking is one of education, according to Owen.

"What Council will have to work hard at now is publicizing the facts and figures so the students can make rational decisions. Also, it is going to be the councilors' responsibility to take this information back with them to their societies and talk to people there."

The process of education may be a painful one, however. The predominant area of concern that is being discussed is financial. As station manager Wile points out, it is not the quality of CKDU programming or the desire to have an FM station that seems to be at question. (Although these points are debated in Council meetings.) The predominant question is how and where to find the money to convert the station.

"We are looking at a number of options to offset the cost of the radio station," said Owen.

"We're looking for funding from the government, university administration, and first of all from the School of Journalism at King's, since they will be the prime benefactors by having this sort of an environment for their students to work in. Also, we are looking at private subscription by the general public and by anybody who would like to see this sort of a service provided by the university.

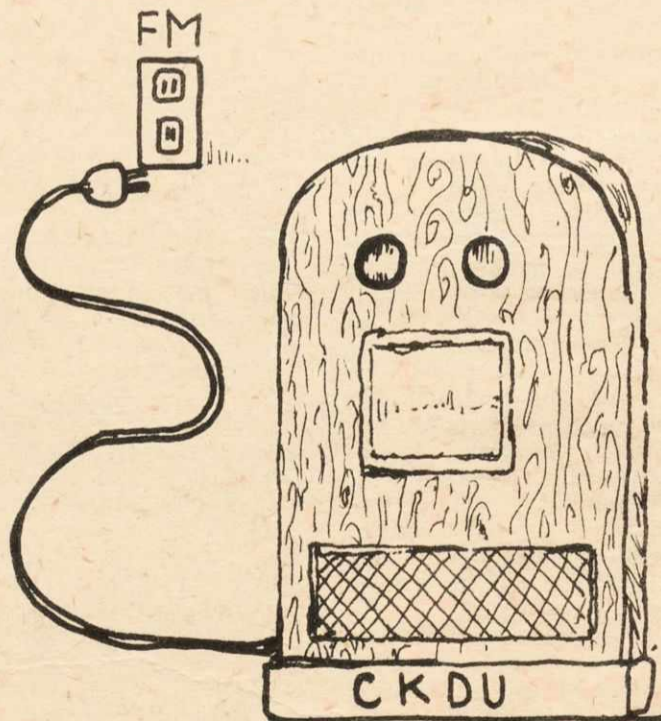
Here we should be talking about Dal alumni."

Not only is it necessary to raise a large amount of capital to outfit an FM station, but there is still uncertainty about precisely how much the station will cost.

John Rude, technical director of the Student Union, has pointed out that the prices which were used to base cost estimates on may be inaccurate.

"From what I can ascertain from the equipment list, they were quoting Canadian list prices. That's the same as the price they stick on the bumper of a car when you walk into a showroom somewhere to buy a car. Once you actually get down to the negotiating, you often end up paying quite a bit lower than list price. As a rule of thumb, we could probably get this equipment for 25-30% lower than list price. So if you took these prices and dropped them by 25 or 30% then a more realistic picture emerges."

Rude also notes that with this picture of the equipment cost in mind, it would be a better idea to choose the \$150,000 package to equip the station, since it will probably only cost about \$100,000, and is also manufactured by a Canadian rather than an American company.



Contract out on a professor

Cloak and dagger spy games like KAOS are popular on college campuses, but the trend has taken a sweet turn at Michigan State University.

Students at the university can put out a "contract" on

any professor who displeases them, and a clandestine mob will make a "hit" — with a pie on the prof's face. Members of an organization called "The Chefs" boast they have splattered 25 professors with fruit and cream pies this year

alone.

The pie throwers have eluded authorities so far, even though one attack was captured on videotape during a lecture that was being recorded.

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