

Vice-President (Student Services)

News Commentary
by Joe FitzPatrick
Co-News Editor

The Student Services portfolio is the newest of the Student Union Executive positions. 1996-97 will be only its third year of existence.

The position is most importantly involved with the Student Health Plan and the Help Centre and Resource Centres.

Health Plan issues plagued this year's Executive, as the Student Union's plan experienced some "growing pains." The opt-out rate crept to nearly 50%.

However, the Union successfully transferred its Health Plan from Sun Life to Blue Cross. The new arrangement for "quick-pay" seems to be appreciated by all involved.

There are still some tensions on campus about the perception that the opt-out procedure is confusing and complicated.

Davidson, who is quick to say the plan is not perfect, and LeTourneau, are both looking to change the procedure.

Indications are that this may be in place before the Fall, depending upon the response from the UNB Comptroller's Office.

Davidson carries some advantage, being only one of two people to ever serve as VP Student Services. But LeTourneau brings some interesting

ideas to the table – such as an opt-out during pre-registration.

High atop the list of priorities for Davidson are changes to the Help Centre and the Student Resource Centre. This change will likely be the focus of much attention, especially due to the presence of permanent staff.

Indications are that such restructuring is currently undergoing negotiations. It will be the test of the next administration to consider the delicacy and sensitivity necessary in this case.

Other areas of responsibility, such as student publications, appear high on the list of both candidates. Davidson, however, likely on account of her incumbency, has a clearer sense of direction for the student publications. She is very much an advocate of the Consumer's Guide Online project.

student services

SRC, Help Centre to be joined

The Vice-President (Student Services) shall:

- act as a liaison between the Union and the University Director of Student Services;
- be responsible for the services of the Union including, but not limited to the Help Centre, Student Publications, Legal Consultation, Volunteer Bureau, Sound System and the Student Health Plan;
- bring proposals for new services to Council and be responsible for implementing new services approved by the Council;
- present a report of activities undertaken on behalf of the Union at all regular meetings of Council;
- assume such duties as properly fall within the scope of these duties.

Ian LeTourneau – VP (Student Services)

by Gordon Loane
Brunswickan News



Ian LeTourneau is a second year Arts student who plans to major in Philosophy. He has been a resident of Aitken House for the past two years. He has been involved in House Activities and intramural sports.

What do you see as issues in this campaign, and what are your priorities, including any ideas for new services, for the next year? I think the union needs to set up a Sexual Assault Crisis Centre. I would like to improve services in general such as the Help Centre and student publications such as the Consumer's Guide and the Student Directory. I would like to get them published faster if possible and improve them in some way. I am a dedicated individual and once I'm situated I adjust quickly.

Do you intend to renew the Union's three year funding commitment to the College Hill Day Care? It's something that would have to be looked into not just by myself but by the SU Executive and Council.

There have been many concerns expressed about the opt-out procedure for the Student Union Health Plan - do you agree or disagree with this statement? As I understand the opt-out procedure, you pay for the health plan first and if you opt-out you can get your money back. But maybe something we could do is perhaps find out before students leave in April if they want to be a part of it. This might be a part of the pre-registration procedure, so then people who opt out will not have to pay in September and we could eliminate the current procedure. This would not apply to first year students, however.

What can the Student Union do in the future so that students don't feel that they have to write Letters to the Editor to receive a response which is, in their minds, satisfactory? Well, as a member of the executive, I feel you have to be accessible to students, or if not, do such things as leave a suggestion box - something as simple as that - if they are unable to find out right away. A big part of it is letting people know where you are, and where you can be found. I feel it's important to be accessible to students.

What could the Student Union do to improve the health plan? I'd have to look into this quite a bit more as I am not too familiar with this and what it contains. Most people I know, including myself, have opted-out.

What are your feelings about the credit card situation and the Student Union? The people responsible for the credit cards should be held accountable for whatever they use it for. It should only be used for important things anyway. I would look into using credit cards again, but only for use on items approved in advance by Student Council. It would be only for a specific conference or item.

What are your feelings about the Duncan Fulton situation? I don't know Fulton personally, but I think there should be set hours for all executive members, and they should keep to them as best you can. If I'm elected I will stick to the twenty hours a week requirement for Vice Presidents as stated in the SU Constitution.

Some have considered open government a problem, how do you feel? I've never really needed to contact a Student Union Executive member this year, so it is difficult for me to say whether they are available and open. But I know if I was elected you can be certain that I will be around the office as often as I could, as

they pertain to office hours.

What is the future of the Student Union Help Centre? It should be continued for sure as it provides a valuable service. Our main objective should be to let students know it exists, how to get in touch with the Help Centre, etc.

There is currently a full-time manager and several part-time students. What are your plans for future staffing? Again, this is something I'd have to look into to see what the hours are. I'd have to take a look at the Help Centre's Budget as well.

What is the future of the Student Resource Centre? Anything that is a potential help to students will get my full support. While I have not personally used their services, I understand that the Resource Centre is run by an all-volunteer staff. Again, I think it's important that people know about it. I intend to focus on making people aware of what the Resource Centre has to offer, if I'm elected.

We note that the Student Resource staff is volunteer and the Help Centre staff is all-paid. Do you see this as an area of concern? It very well could be an area of concern, but I can't be too sure until I look into both operations a little more closely and discuss it with other members of the executive.

What are your ideas about the internal re-structuring of the Student Union? Something obviously has to be done, given the lack of interest among students, and the general lack of candidates for certain council seats. We will have to see how many positions are actually filled. But if the trend continues in the fall, something will definitely have to happen. One idea to be considered is to reduce the size of Council and the number of representatives on Council in each faculty since no one seems interested in running for some seats. As far as the executive is concerned, if five team players are elected, we should be able to accomplish a lot of good things.

There have been discussions that the internal restructuring may include the elimination of VP Services. Do you support this? I would not support the elimination of VP Services because I feel it's an important job. People have to know that there are resources available and offered to them. How else would they know without someone being able to communicate that to the student community?

There has been some discussion of compensation levels for Executive members. Where do you stand on this issue? I think it is a job that demands a lot of time and work. There should be fair compensation but the job of VP Services should be kept part-time, with no restriction on course loads. We are students and hopefully we want an education, too. I don't think there is anything wrong with the salaries the current executive gets and they should not increase. I would not be looking for any more, if I'm elected. As far as the SU President is concerned, I realize it is more time-consuming than VP's jobs. I guess I don't have a definite position on this at the moment. I'd have to know more about the position before I could decide what should be done.

What steps do you intend to take to improve the media relations of the Student Union? Media relations don't seem that bad. The issues are treated as they are in the papers, and I don't see anything wrong with that. People should be accountable for their actions.

In the past, there have been well-publicized tensions between members of the Student Union and certain University Officials. What steps do you believe are necessary to improve or prevent such tensions? Communication is the first and primary step in such cases. Poor communication means nothing gets resolved. I guess you would have to handle a situation as it comes about. Tensions between SU Executive members and the Administration are inevitable on certain issues.