

Maclean's law school ranking no good

JENNIFER LAMONT

The *Maclean's* law school rankings are a misleading and superficial resource says Dawn Russell, dean of the Dalhousie Law School.

Maclean's ranked Canada's 16 law schools in a variety of different categories; including anything from library holdings (Dalhousie placed ninth), to percentage of students who receive bursaries (Dalhousie was second).

"The survey is flawed," said Steve Boyce, a third-year law student. The survey asked 'recent graduates' and 'seasoned professionals' for their opinions. Boyce says that there was a great deal of discrepancy between how each school was ranked by the 'recent graduates' compared with the 'seasoned professionals'.

Of the 'recent graduates' rankings, five of the eight top universities were smaller schools.

"We should be quite encouraged that among professionals, we finished in the top four," Boyce said, explaining that when looking for a school, "you must examine why you are going to law school."

The more close-knit environment at smaller schools may account for their higher rankings by 'recent graduates'.

"The older schools [like Dalhousie] can offer a good reputation and many top-notch professors," he said.

Russell believes it is wrong to ask recent graduates which law school is the best.

"Students are not good judges of curriculum at another school," explained the Dean. "But by placing

recent graduates rankings at the very beginning [of the article], it gives the impression that their results represent an overall ranking."

Russell suggests that to make the survey more helpful, "scholarship of faculty and a comparative study of the placement of graduates in jobs should have been considered.

"The survey does not show where to go for specifics."

Russell further commented that the magazine should have considered the different course offerings in detail.

Unlike their study of university undergraduate programs, *Maclean's* did not create an overall ranking from the data that they gathered

about the various schools.

Despite the disputes over the rankings of the schools by different groups, there are many categories that do not require much discussion: Dalhousie Law School received 1,157 applications last year and sent out 387 acceptances; of those accepted, about 40 per cent decided to attend Dalhousie.

Dalhousie ranked sixth in the student-to-faculty ratio. Although Dalhousie has the fifth-highest first-year class sizes, it has the fourth-lowest class sizes after first-year.

At \$5,331, Dalhousie has the highest tuition of any law school, which may account for the large number of bursaries given out each year.

This was the first professional school ranking that *Maclean's* has done.

Funding falling into place

Dal has \$10-million towards new Arts and Social Sciences building

BY DONALD DERRICK

Dalhousie University has raised \$4-million of the \$6-million needed from the private sector for a new Arts and Social Sciences Building.

The Nova Scotia government has agreed to cost-share up to \$6-million more.

Ann Vessey, the development officer for the Capitol Campaign office, attributes much of Dalhousie's success to the \$1-million Dalhousie students agreed to contribute last year. The decision was made by referendum, and will be donated through student fees paid to the Dalhousie Student Union.

Vessey has been able to use the student support to show private businesses how important this new building is to the University and its students.

The new Arts and Social Science Building (ASSB) is slated for completion in the year 2000, and

will be built over the Cohn parking lot, and the land where the French department is now housed.

Replacing the current Arts and Administration Building along with many smaller department offices, the building will bring the Arts and Social Science faculties into one building. The ASSB will provide more space for classes ranging from 10-30 students in seminars, to 300-500 in first and second-year classes.

The building will also help save maintenance costs which range annually from 5 to 6 dollars per square foot in the current faculty houses, and will be reduced to two-and-a-half to three dollars per square foot in the new building.

The project is being directed by several committees, including a capitol campaign fund to raise the money needed, and a steering committee to advise the architects on the design of the building.

"There are three advisory

committees, one of which is the Faculty of Arts and Social Science...[another is] the building subcommittee [while] the third committee is to deal with accessibility and the environment," said Bill Lord, director of Facilities Management.

Lord says that students are represented on every committee.

The steering committee has included a lot of student input and Cris Adams, Dalhousie Student Union president and the student rep on the committee, says student members have been quite satisfied with the process.

Many faculty departments are currently inaccessible to students with physical disabilities. As a result, the ASSB's seven-member environment and accessibility committee includes at least one member with a physical disability.

Lord says the students and professors have been most

interested in making sure faculty are not isolated from the students, that the building is accessible to people with disabilities, and that the food services in the new building do not compete with the services in the Student Union Building (SUB).

Students have also raised concerns about the lost parking spaces. No plan has been finalized, but Lord and other sources have suggested that the new building will have underground parking. The architects will be holding their first conceptual meetings during the last week of October, and will attempt to incorporate all of these needs into the design of the building.

Michelle Gallant, director of Dalhousie public relations, says that the steering committee, responsible for advising on the construction of the building, appreciates any student suggestions about the construction and design of the arts building. Written suggestions can be dropped off in room 222 of the SUB.

Booze is out, hugs are in

BY LAURA GRAY

Consuming large quantities of alcohol is all part of being in a fraternity, right? Wrong. As of last September, alcohol is no longer allowed in the fraternity house of the Dalhousie chapter of Phi Delta Theta.

The ban is part of a challenge to ban alcohol from all chapters of Phi Delta Theta by 2000.

The action is the result of bad public relations. According to the chapter president Dave Colquhoun, the fraternity has to take into consideration their liability for parties which occur at their house, located on Seymour Street.

Colquhoun says that there are 10 or 12 chapters of Phi Delta Theta in Canada, and about 180 in the United States. For a group this large "insurance premiums are ridiculous".

Colquhoun adds that the fraternity is not only legally responsible for its members, but it has to take into consideration accidents that occur at parties, or parties that could get "completely out of hand".

"I can't believe we got away with it [serving alcohol] as long as we did," says Colquhoun.

Fraternity heads are stressing basic principles of "friendship, sound learning and moral rectitude" instead of drinking.

He says that the Dalhousie chapter has very specific reasons for banning alcohol three years before the deadline. The head office of Phi Delta

Theta in Ohio offers incentives to chapters who agree to the ban early. These incentives include money for educational and life-safety purposes. The current renovations on the Seymour Street house are an example of these "rewards".

Dalhousie will also serve as a "test chapter" and, as the 2000 deadline approaches, other chapters across North America will examine the results.

Colquhoun says that banning alcohol and emphasizing friendship instead of partying is indicative of other changes taking place amongst North American fraternities. He acknowledges that fraternities have developed a poor reputation. A reputation born in films such as *Animal House*, and not helped by the two recent alcohol-related deaths of fraternity members at MIT and Louisiana State. He says that changes being made by chapters like Dalhousie's Phi Delta Theta are "setting a new trend".

To an outside member, this type of rule may seem like the kiss of death for the fraternity. Colquhoun disagrees. He says that the response of prospective members has been comparable to that of preceding years.

Colquhoun says banning alcohol from the fraternity house is not the same as forbidding the drinking of alcohol. They still go to bars as a group, but that's where the drinking stops.

Meeting to discuss future of Grad House

continued from page 1...

contin close, it will remain open at least until the end of the current academic year.

"People have been calling concerned about their Christmas party bookings. We are still open. Whatever decision gets made on Nov. 18 will take some time to implement," said Leigh. "We can't let this become a self-fulfilling prophecy."

With regards to the upcoming decision, "people also have to keep in mind that there are serious underlying issues that are not seen on a daily basis," says Andjelic.

"My main concern is that we are facing some very difficult problems, not just financial. There has to be some institutional changes to prevent these problems from happening again," added Andjelic, citing past abuses in the way the Grad House was run. "Funds have been mismanaged, and we have to change the political processes that has allowed this to happen in the first place."

One of the main financial issues facing DAGS is a grant they receive from the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU).

"Currently, DAGS receives a grant from the DSU which helps pay for the manager's salary. This grant was set up as a temporary measure, and will dry up in April," said Mike Leigh, Manager of the Grad House.

"We're not expected to get a grant from the DSU for next year," said Andjelic, adding that DAGS has "a very good relationship with the DSU."

According to Chris Adams, DSU President, the DSU will not have money to give such a grant next year.

"We just can't afford to give them the money next year. It was understood that the grant was just meant for this year," Adams said.

Despite the challenges, DAGS is still keeping a positive outlook according to Andjelic.

"We have seen a real resurgence of

loyalty to the Grad House, and increased awareness of what DAGS is doing," said Andjelic. She stressed the importance of students getting involved. "Read the assessment, check out the web page and catch up on the minutes of past meetings, come and ask questions."

NEWS-IN-BRIEF

EARNING AND LEARNING IN NOVA SCOTIA SCHOOLS

Nova Scotia wants its schools to be earning centres as well as learning centres according to *The Globe and Mail*. The province is negotiating to lease three new buildings that have been built by private developers. Education Minister Robbie Harrison said he is hoping the high-tech classrooms and facilities can be rented out during off hours.

Harrison says the province's lease payment on the schools would drop depending on how much outside business each building generated.

ACADIA GRAD FIGHTS BACK

Despite fighting against a serious illness throughout her undergraduate degree, a recent Acadia grad will be heading to medical school.

Natasha Chow has Crohn's disease, a painful and serious intestinal disorder. As a result of time missed due to her illness, Chow graduated last Saturday.

Chow is now in medical school at Dalhousie.

HARRIS TO FIGHT BACK

Ontario premier Mike Harris has vowed to force striking Ontario school teachers back into classrooms with a court injunction. The three-day-old strike has shut most of the province's 2.1 million students out of their classrooms.

Harris says a court injunction is the fastest way to put an end to the strike that has crippled Ontario's education system.