



Students will no longer enjoy playing Canada's truly national sport in their own backyard.

Curling rink put on ice as SU steps up cuts

by Greg Harris

The Students' Union operated curling rink in SUB is the latest SU service being phased out of existence, and some students are not pleased.

"They're trying to justify eliminating the curling rink by saying the area left over will provide a greater service to students," says Ann Sutherland, a student representative on Council.

Problems arose this fall when severe mechanical failures in the refrigeration equipment were discovered.

The SU executive received an estimate that the cost of repairing the machinery would be around \$20,000.

Elise Gaudet, v.p. finance and administration, says that while the curling rink does generate a \$17,000 to \$18,000 profit, "it's not clear if that is the best use for that space."

"Does it offer the best service to the most students?" she asks.

"We can rent portions to the bookstore and the bank...and we can get close to \$150,000 a year and still have room for student services," she says.

Dixon Wood, SU councillor and president of the University Athletic Board (UAB) argues that closing the curling rink is unjustified.

"Because of the current state of SU finance, councillors are

seeing nothing but dollar signs in many of their decisions. Thus, they are suggesting the elimination of a profitmaking service for the sake of a potential increase in revenue," says Wood.

"The curling rink has not contributed to the SU's financial problems," he says.

"Just because one year is being screwed up doesn't justify getting rid of a \$200,000 facility," adds Sutherland.

Gaudet points out that the 15,000 square feet in the curling rink sits unused for five months of the year. She adds that it is difficult to find other uses for it with such a limited rental period.

Student councillors who oppose the curling cuts add that the rink is a service to a large number of students.

"There are 350 people in the curling club this year, and 500 more use it in the intramural program," says Tracy David, SU councillor, and president of the Women's Athletic Association.

Gaudet says part of the curling rink space could be used to set up practice rooms for music students. As well, a plan is being considered to start up a printing centre.

The decision to close down the curling rink has not yet been finalized. It must be ratified at the November 10 council meeting.

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