

NEWS

News Editor: Jonathan Stone, Deadline: Wednesday Noon

New building at STU finally unveiled

by Stacey Barton

The grand opening of Saint Thomas' "Sir James Dunn Hall" took place last Friday.

Construction of the 41,000 square-foot building began in the summer of 1992 with a pricetag of \$5.6 million.

Dr. Daniel O'Brien, president of Saint Thomas, said he was pleased with the new building.

In his opening speech, he thanked many of the financial contributors to the building. However, the students of Saint Thomas were not among the contributors thanked.

Melanie White, the student council president, was not happy with the omission, although Dr. O'Brien said that he did mention the students a number of times in his speech.

O'Brien said he was speaking "extemporaneously" and therefore said it was difficult to remember to mention everyone involved.

"If I didn't say they (the students) were major contributors, I certainly made reference to them," he said.

O'Brien went on to say that he was extremely proud of the student contribution.

Beginning in the 1992 academic year, each student paid a levy of \$20 annually for a period of three years to help with building costs.

Any student not wishing to pledge the \$20 had the option of reimbursement by filling out a form to have their money returned.

However, only a small percentage of students did so. (Approximately 22% in 1992, and 12-15% this year).

STU students will have contributed approximately \$120,000 by the end of the 1994-1995 academic year, but O'Brien estimates that the actual figure will be around \$100,000 because of the refunds.

"The building adds 8,700 square feet of classroom space to the Saint Thomas campus," he said.

There are a total of eight classrooms of various sizes, a "Blackbox" theatre that seats 175-180 people, 92,000 square feet of flexible meeting and study space, and a very sizeable cafeteria for commuting students.

O'Brien also stated that a sizeable wing has been dedicated to computing labs.

The computing centre will house 50 computers which have yet to be installed. "Optimistically, the computers will be in by March Break, otherwise it will be by the end of the school year," O'Brien stated.

The type of computers to be installed is "still on the table", said O'Brien. The university is still trying to conclude an agreement with one of two unnamed companies. O'Brien did say that the computers

would probably be IBM or compatibles.

One welcome convenience to the building will be the installation of a Bank of Montreal banking machine. Four new photocopiers will also be placed in the building.

The building also contains four offices for student activities: one for the Student Union; one for counselling services and special outside interviews; one for the Director of Academic Computing; and one for the Director of Student Services—a position that has not yet been filled.

White said that the STU Student Union Executive will remain in the SUB, because the new space is too small. "The office is small, not a lot to work with."

Instead, they will use the space as a Help/Information centre where students can go for things like legal advice.

"It's too bad because students don't want to have to walk down the hill for any problems or questions they have. It would be much more convenient if we were right there," she said.

When asked if students can hope to get any more office space, White said that O'Brien is refusing to give other organizations any office space.

O'Brien denies that students were promised anything more than what they got.

"There was never any ambiguity towards what the building would be used for. People are free to form their own opinions...but we are not about to build another facility that we already share with UNB."

He feels that if STU tries to duplicate the SUB, they would essentially be destroying what makes Saint Thomas a campus designed not to have the characteristics of an independent university.

"We are not about to go building a gymnasium or a library when we already have these facilities available at our discretion," said O'Brien.

He said that the university widely consulted the student body and faculty to come up with a design.

"We would need about 120,000 square footage to put in everything the students requested they would like to see included in the building. Other than the residences, I don't know of another building that is more student-oriented."

White feels that there is a lot of wasted space in the new building, with too many study halls. "Students are kind of scared to use the building right now. Maybe in a little while they will be more comfortable with it."

O'Brien said "The interior compensates for the architectural confinement of the other buildings. We

wanted to open it up, and brighten it up. Give it more space."

White is afraid that Sir James Dunn Hall will make the problem of isolation between off-campus and on-campus students even greater.

"It will be harder for student politicians to make themselves known because it will almost be like dealing with two separate campuses."

Students say that the building is "nice", but not as practical as was hoped it would be.

The building was geared mainly as a facility for students to study, hold group meetings, and a place for off-campus students to congregate between classes.

Rumours that the new facility had leaked over the weekend were denied by O'Brien.

"Ice that had formed around the doors changed the grade and when the water began to run off, some came in around two of the doors." No damage was done to the building.

O'Brien added that this same occurrence happened in 12 other places around campus so it had nothing to do with any building faults.



Entering the front doors of the now completed Sir James Dunn Hall, the name remains to be affixed. Photo by Marc Landry

Student Union restructuring

by Gordon Loane

The UNB Student Council has decided to hire a full-time General Manager, a move intended to meet the demand for extra student services. Where the funds for the salary will come from is as yet unknown.

At the same time, the title and duties of one of the union's Vice-Presidents will be changed in a major office re-structuring.

A new Vice-President Student Services position is being created while Vice-Present Activities is being dropped.

Some duties like promotions and entertainment, normally handled by the VP Activities, will be re-shifted to a non-executive position to ensure continuity.

The VP Student Services would largely be responsible for the Help Centre, Student Publications, legal consultation, the volunteer bureau and the sound system.

But major new duties will be added this fall as the student union begins to administer its own CFS health plan. And pending final approvals, the "Pub in the SUB" will be another service offered in September.

The VP Student Services position will be filled along with other executive positions when students go to the polls in spring elections February 23 and 24.

The move is being applauded by at least one current SU executive member. "While the main reason for the re-structuring has quite a bit

to do with the expansion of student services, it's intended to clarify the duties of all four VP's and clear up some confusion," said Pat FitzPatrick, VP University Affairs.

"Student publications were shifted between two or three VP's in the last year and we just needed to clarify this," he continued. "In fact, there were a few other projects involving student services where the same problem occurred."

But while the new VP Student Services position will not add to the SU executive, currently set at five members, or add to salaries, the general manager will be hired at a certain extra cost.

"We're at the point where services are expanding and we need professional advice on a full time basis," said FitzPatrick. "While the General Manager is expected to earn a salary estimated in the \$30,000 range, we think it's well worth the price," he continued.

The General Manager would report to the SU executive. At least four full time employees would report to him/her including three current employees and a prospective manager for the Pub in the SUB.

While council must still approve the final job description, FitzPatrick said a tentative list of duties has been drawn up.

The General Manager would work with a student events director and handle concerts for entertainment events.

"We badly need continuity in this area from year to year," FitzPatrick

said.

"The administration of the health plan will be another big duty, and we want someone who can offer advice on the Pub operations from time to time, although that won't be a primary responsibility," FitzPatrick said.

"The person hired would be expected to deal with staff relations and public relations. Overall, the person we are looking for should have some business experience and see themselves as a resource person."

"We expect the general manager should be able to handle more of the detailed work leaving the executive to deal more with lobbying, policy and other matters as they come up," FitzPatrick continued.

"The General Manager should be hired quite soon," FitzPatrick said. "There will be an open competition and hopefully a May 1st start is not out of the question," he said.

Fitzpatrick is a little more vague about where the money for the new staff positions will come from.

"We may be able to find the money in our existing budget or free up money from other projects," he said. "We're going through the budget process now, so Council will have a decision to make."

Fitzpatrick is even more reluctant to discuss whether a student fee increase will be needed for next year given the addition of office staff and the opening of a new pub.

"Let's just say we'll have to see, but I'm not ruling it out."

ATTENTION: Because the residents of Bridges House were able to collect two tonnes of food on their food drive, Frederickton Mayor Brad Woodside will plunge into the Saint John River during the annual Bridges House Polar Dip on Saturday, February 5 at 2:00pm behind the Lord Beaverbrook Hotel. It's bound to be a splash!