

# The other side: a dean speaks out

In an article in your March 19 edition, Professor Andrew Wainwright is quoted as saying, "Management aren't in the classroom. They don't teach...they manage money". Or, as he implied, they "mismanage" money.

I would like to point out that, while I am dean of Arts and Social Sciences, I also teach a history class — one of the largest undergraduate classes in the university. Virtually all of the other deans and associate deans also teach. The Academic Vice President co-teaches a class in biology. So it is simply not true to say that "management don't teach".

I have not used my classroom as an opportunity to advance the "management" view of current collective bargaining with the Dalhousie Faculty Association, although I have always been willing to respond to questions or comments from students on these issues, inside or outside class. I think it would be inappropriate to take up class time discussing these issues. But I am prepared to meet with any students who may wish to do so to discuss my perspective on these issues. I can be reached at 494-1439.

I am concerned that many students are only hearing one side of the story, and I would like to make several points that relate to views I have heard expressed by students and some faculty members as well.

In another story in the March 19 edition, Professor Michael Cross, who is the DFA's chief negotiator, is quoted as saying, "Why is there a mania for downsizing?...It's the managerial philosophy of the day". This statement implies that the university's administration is deliberately reducing full-time faculty numbers in keeping with some kind of "management strategy". This too is simply not the case. I have spent the past six months seeking to design a budget strategy that would enable my faculty (Arts and Social Sciences) to make eight new appointments over the next two to three years; we will have eight early retirements this year.

My great fear is that the salary

settlement will be so large that we may not be able to make the faculty appointments we want, and may need. Other cuts may also be necessary. This is not because of some "grand design"; it is simply because we will not have the money to avoid making cuts. In the last four years I have had to reduce our budget by close to \$1-million. Even with the supposedly "inadequate" salary offer of the Board of Governors, I am looking at cuts that are almost that large unless government funding levels (or student tuition fees) are substantially increased.

The real "strategy" of the university is embodied in the much-misunderstood "Strategic Decisions" document that we developed with President Tom Traves. Contrary to the mythology, this strategy does not propose to "transform" the university.

I am a third year student at the University of King's College, enrolled in the Honours English program at Dalhousie. I write the following out of a profound sense of concern for the state of affairs at Dalhousie today.

On St. Patrick's Day, hundreds of students from Dalhousie, Daltech, and King's marched in mass protest of the current state of labour talks between the Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA) and the University's Board of Governor's (BoG). This protest was an important event, the implications of which stretch far beyond the campus grounds, so I hope that you will hear me out.

I went into the rally with a sense of hope; finally the students of this institution were going to slough off their oft-maligned apathy and make some noise. Although by no means an activist by nature, nor so naive as to think that a group of students can change the world (or even a university) in an afternoon, I was nevertheless encouraged. I helped make signs and marched at the front of the King's contingent to the Student Union Building (SUB) and then to the

Rather it proposes to find new kinds of revenue so that we can rebuild the central parts of the university, and most particularly, to rebuild the faculty in the Arts and Sciences.

At the Board of Governors meeting last Tuesday, several students complained of overcrowded class, long waiting lists for classes, cancelled classes, etc. Then they urged the board to increase faculty salaries to the levels demanded by the DFA. Now, I support increasing faculty salaries; we have all had to deal with salary freezes and rollbacks (imposed by government, not the university) over the past several years. But, as I noted above, if salary increases exceed your ability to pay them, we may not be able to make new appointments and may have to make even deeper cuts.

In that case, classes would become

even more crowded and there would be even fewer classes available. It seems to me students should support a salary settlement that is reasonable and enables us to maintain the faculty and classes that we need to meet students' needs.

Some students also urged the board to accept the DFA demand to guarantee faculty replacement appointments. But without substantial and permanent increases in revenues, this would create an impossible situation. Over 80 per cent of the university budget is committed to full-time faculty salaries. We would have to forego repairs to buildings, reduce part-time faculty and support staff. The library would have to further reduce purchases of new books or journals. Labs and computer facilities would suffer. No university could function effectively in these

circumstances.

Some students at the board meeting wondered why the university could not choose to increase faculty salaries rather than build new buildings. President Traves has explained that the new buildings, including the Arts and Social Sciences building, are only possible because we raised funds from the government (and students) and private donors specifically for that purpose. We cannot choose to spend that money on salaries; and it is unlikely we could persuade donors to give us money for salaries. The money is not available for that purpose.

But I want to also point out that we desperately need new buildings. The houses in which many of the Arts departments are located now are deteriorating. They provide limited

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## Self-absorption at Dalhousie

Arts and Administration Building (sic), where the BoG was meeting to hear the opinions of students.

The events which followed on that chilly March day soon soured my perception of what we were doing at the SUB — a group of student politicians addressed the crowd from the balcony, whipping up their fervour and uttering repeated platitudes and gratitudes. Purple pamphlets were handed out, carrying the chants that were to be shouted at the BoG meeting:

"Our choice is voice

We pay, we say,

No strike! No hike!"

"Cut the jargon, let us bargain!"

"Stuck between a BoG and a hard place!"

"If there is no us, there is no U!"

"Include us, don't exclude us!"

"Stop shutting us out!"

"Do the right thing. No walkout, no lockout!"

"Flog the BoG!"

"Hey, hey, ho, ho, this strike thing has got to go!"

Most of these I found deeply disturbing. What they indicate is the fence-sitting position that the Dalhousie

Student Union (DSU) executive, and by extension the student body as a whole, has adopted in response to the labour situation. The only difference now from past weeks was that it was very loud. Loud ignorance is an extremely dangerous thing, one need only look at a crowd in Nazi Germany for proof of this assertion.

If you don't buy my argument, consider the following. The prime concern of students who spoke at the rally, both publicly and anonymously, was that the school year would be extended, and/or credit would be lost. The result of this admittedly unattractive scenario would be the extension of apartment leases, loss of credits, loss of revenue from summer jobs, and the breaching of employment contracts by graduating students. I could go on, but I'm sure all these thoughts have been running through everyone else's minds during the course of this crisis. The only problem with approaching the situation from this angle is that it is completely unrealistic. As I'm quite sure future events will demonstrate, the academic year will not be extended; credits and money will not

be lost. It simply doesn't make any kind of sense, be it business, education, or just plain good sense.

By focusing their collective attention on these non-issues, students went a long way towards undermining democracy and impoverishing the future of education in this school and in this country. The right to strike is fundamental in a modern democratic society such as ours. In taking the position that it did, the DSU, however unintentionally, said, "We're not interested in democracy". They blindly allied themselves with the BoG and turned themselves into the very bargaining chips that they claimed they did not want to be.

Many would attribute this stance to what has been called the prevailing neo-conservative mood of our generation. I don't think that this is so. This is not to say that there does not exist any sort of conservative mood, but simply that it does not deserve any of the credit or blame for the events of March 17. To attribute any ideological basis to the non-position of the DSU is pure wishful thinking, as it would imply that there was at work a belief or thought that quite simply did not, and does not, exist. What was at work was emotion untrammelled by reason, self-interest unmitigated by good sense or any understanding of the common good and long-term implications.

The only exception to this that I noticed was the speech delivered by Penny McCall-Howard (President of the King's Student Union) to the BoG. Penny was the only student to speak who demonstrated a sense of perspective and well-reasoned thought. Her speech was eloquent and intelligent (a sharp contrast to the would-be pithy wit of the slogan engineers). It was emotional, but the emotive aspect of it was well-balanced by lucid thought. To me this was encouraging, if only because it told me that I was not the only one who saw things this way. Unfortunately, I got the impression that the weight of her speech was lost on the crowd, many of whom seemed more interested in hot dogs and cocoa than in the issues at hand.

The rally on St. Patrick's Day was not a demonstration of public social action. It was a display of mass individual self-absorption. So this is the form that social action takes at Dalhousie in 1998. You can call me a cynic, but I merely observe.

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