

The Letters/Opinions section of the Gazette is meant as a campus forum for all Dalhousie students. The opinions expressed within may not necessarily be those of the Gazette staff or editorial board. We welcome all submissions, but reserve the right to edit for style and content. It is the Gazette's policy not to print racist, sexist or homophobic material.

# OPINIONS

## Dalhousie Integrated Science Program diverse and challenging Getting the full science experience at Dalhousie

Have you ever seen a large group of students walking together who looked extremely stressed out? It was probably the students from the Dalhousie Integrated Science Program (DISP) after writing a weekly quiz.

During the Symposium on Undergraduate Education in the fall of 1990, it was concluded that five courses at the first year level were not a sufficient introduction into university, that there was no integration within the different science courses, and that the students were unsure of what they expected from their classes. DISP was created to eliminate these concerns.

Dr. Staicer, who has been involved with DISP for the past three years and is this year's coordinator says, "DISP students find out what it is like to be a scientist, and they get a clearer

picture of science as a process. They get a basic background in all of the sciences." She believes that DISP is "an incredibly exciting program for those who have the background, the interest, and the time."

"You will be pushed to your limits and you will surprise yourself as you cope because you will get better at working, understanding, learning, organizing, and living," says David Wood, a student in this year's DISP class.

DISP is a full year, five-credit course, which is an alternative way for students to take their first year of a Bachelor of Science degree. It allows dedicated students to explore eight different fields of science, which is much more than the regular first year BSc. in DISP you will also take the required writing credit that is necessary for the first year. The nine subjects included in DISP are Chemistry, Earth Science,

Biology, Physics, Psychology, Calculus, Statistics, Computer Science, and Science in the Human Endeavour (which is the writing course).

In order to cross the nine disciplines in DISP, the subjects are integrated. If students are not quite sure what they want to study in the future, DISP is an excellent foundation year that can lead you into any science due to the integration of subjects and the acquired knowledge throughout the year.

Wood says he "always thought that being concentrated in one discipline was a total mistake and DISP was the only program I saw that let me spread my interests."

To make an easier transition from high school to university, DISP is an excellent choice. The DISP class size is small compared

to a regular first year science course. There can be no more than 80 students to have personal relationships with fellow students and professors, and since there are so few students, everyone knows each other and lasting friendships are made.

"The professors know all students individually. You can't hide in the back of the classroom; you won't be just a number. You have to participate," said Staicer.

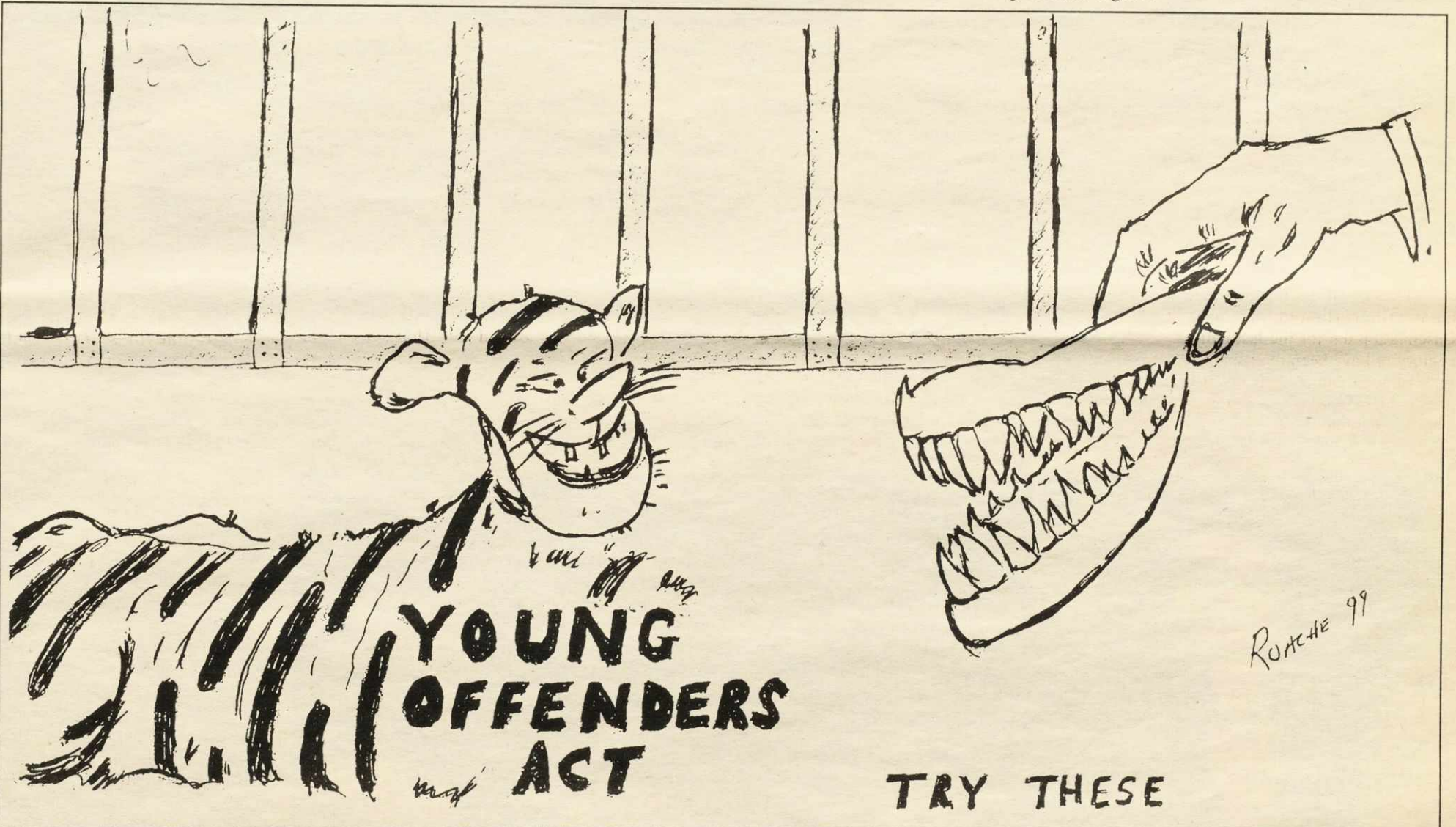
Wood, who came to Dalhousie from Ontario, said, "I had the opportunity to learn with a small group of people who also wanted to learn. I didn't come here to hide or be ignored. I came here to learn and to be seen."

The workload in DISP is extremely heavy, but is distributed evenly throughout the year. The students have weekly quizzes, numerous assignments, regular

assignments, regular field trip and lab reports, oral presentations and essays, and numerous drafts of projects. Since the students are constantly assessed, it is easier to be up to date with the information learned in lectures.

There are specific requirements in order to be accepted into DISP. You must have at least an 80 percent average when you finish high school with your lowest mark being a 70 percent in English. You must also have at least an 80 percent in Mathematics and one grade twelve science course. Since there are only 80 places in DISP each year, there could be competition for those applying.

**BETH MACDONALD  
ROSA MACDONALD**  
Two DISP students



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On Monday March 22nd the Gazette will hold elections for the following editorial positions:

- ARTS & CULTURE
- SPORTS
- SCIENCE & ENVIRONMENT
- FOCUS
- NATIONAL NEWS

To apply, come to the Gazette office (rm312 SUB) at 4:30pm on March 22nd.

**THE GAZETTE**

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