



Robbie Shaw let the boom fall at the April 3 council meeting where he gave an "optimistic" scenario of cutbacks coming next year.

Dal goes chopping for bargains

Dalhousie is getting domestic. President Andrew MacKay and Robbie Shaw, the Vice President of Finance and Administration, rolled up their sleeves and pushed out their shopping cart. They're going shopping, but they'll both admit that it's not very much fun. Robbie and Andy have a shopping list handy with various "savings" they might have to pick up for Dalhousie in case of a very rainy day.

That rainy day might happen next week. And what they're shopping for is cutbacks.

Dalhousie hopes the Nova Scotia government will announce funding levels for universities next week. Preparing for the worst, Robbie Shaw offered student council a glimpse of his shopping list last Sunday evening.

He mentioned such things as "saving" \$1 million in academic salaries, increasing tuition, removing the night nurse on call at Student Health Services, slicing a bit more from the Dalplex, increasing residence and Fenwick fees and squeezing dollars from investment changes.

Shaw handed out an information sheet outlining a university budget in a hypothetical scenario of a nine per cent increase in government funding. He is looking at cuts totaling \$4.5 million, he said.

Some students complained that a lot of information was missing, referring to it as the "laundered document." Shaw said in a later interview, he wanted to give students an idea of what was going on, but he didn't think it was fair to "scare the pants off people" before the cuts were found necessary.

Dalhousie is faced with the fact it will not break even this year as planned.

Shaw predicts a \$1.9 million deficit this year, on Dal's budget of \$98 million. Over the last four years, its deficit accumulated from zero to \$10.5 million; \$4.8 million in 81/82 alone. Skyrocketing interest rates on repayments for building construction in the past decade are cited as a major cause of the predicament, plus less than strict budget control. But now it's time to tame the Tiger.

Dalhousie's goal again for next year: to break even.

In an interview with the Gazette, MacKay and Shaw talked about the options for cuts in the budget, stressing that all items are still under discussion.

The shopping list:

- increasing tuition — up 12 per cent, MacKay thinks
- increasing tuition for resident and intern medical students from \$285 to \$1500 (see article)
- \$1,000,000 in academic teaching salaries
- \$100-200,000 in ancillary operations — increasing residence and Fenwick fees, housing rents, and Beaver Foods prices
- \$150,000 from the Dalplex — to include cutting one or more Varsity Sports (see article)
- \$75-80,000 through "innovative options" at the Dal Arts Centre — Shaw would not elaborate (see article)
- Student Health — elimination of the night nurse (see article)
- \$300,000 investment income — changes to short term investments for a higher annual yield
- Institute of Public Affairs — restructuring (see article)
- \$700,000 Killam Residue fund — transferring money earmarked for special projects into the general operating budget

These savings total roughly \$3.5 million. Further cuts are necessary to save \$4.5 million in the nine per cent scenario, and another few more million if the government's increase is much less.

As Shaw puts it, "I emphatically feel we have to balance the budget or we will be on a merry go round into never-never land."

Non-replacement of faculty because of retirement, leaves of absence, or end of term-appointments, would affect departments fairly equally across the board, MacKay said. Select departments, such as computer science, would not be touched.

This year 35 faculty positions in Arts and Science became vacant, and 13 were replaced. There were 820 members of the Dalhousie Faculty Association this year.

Along with announcing general funding levels, Dalhousie is hoping the government will reinstate two important special funds. One is the promised support for the new school of Occupational Therapy. Dalhousie provided \$150,000 for the new program MacKay would not say whether support would continue if the government does not pick up the tab.

The other is \$365,000 normally granted to the medical school by the Department of Health, until this year, when funding was cut off.

MacKay is hopeful that a fund-raising campaign will find success. He would not say how much is targeted, but said a campaign would possibly begin in the fall "at least quietly."

Tell us more, Robbie

Once Student Council President at Dalhousie himself, Robbie Shaw, now Dal's Vice President of Finance and Administration, could remember happier days. In 1966, Shaw signed incorporation papers for the union, and witnessed the construction of the Student Union Building.

The years have passed, as Shaw sat before student council with dim news last Sunday evening. He talked about the clouded outlook ahead for Dalhousie, an age of retention and retraction, instead of growth.

And his message of cutbacks to the tune of \$4.5 million was not met without criticism.

"You have just outlined less than \$2 million in savings. Where is the other \$2.5 million?" Atul Sharma, Board of Governors rep, asked Shaw at the council meeting. The Gazette later tallied cuts totaling \$3.5 million.

"I'm not going into details because it is not in the interests of the university as a whole," said Shaw, who said he was bothered by the necessity for secrecy. The amount and areas for cutbacks is an academic exercise at this point, Shaw said, since it depends on government funding which could increase anywhere from zero to 10 per cent.

The university expected to know what levels of funding were coming down by February 7. This date was pushed back to

the end of February, and then the end of March, at which time the administration would have released definite information on cutbacks, Shaw said. It's now April and Dal is still waiting for its budget.

Councillors complained it was already too late for students to voice their opinions on the areas where cutbacks should take place, as students are already immersed in studying for exams.

"I'm just as bothered as you are" Shaw said. "The problem is not the university administration. The problem is the system of how grants are decided upon that prevents students from participating (in debating cutbacks). I don't think it's our fault."

Shaw said he was worried about the media distorting the situation when he did not know for sure what cutbacks would actually be necessary.

"I'd be concerned about what the media would do (with the information) especially the Daily News and Chronicle Herald, not necessarily the Gazette," he said.

"The university should publicize the implications of cutbacks, Student President Peter Rans said, to foster public support.

"If we don't put public political pressure on, then we won't get support," Rans said. "You can't just lie down and take what they (the government) give you. Not releasing the informa-

tion is playing into the government's hands. It's too late after they are committed to the budget." Rans said Dalhousie should take out a newspaper ad outlining the areas of cuts to the university.

But Shaw warned against "embarrassing the government" and said a more effective way to influence the government was to work over the longer term with the media.

When contacted about the upcoming funding announcements, the assistant to the Minister of Education sounded coy. "I can't hazard a guess" Dr. Peter Butler said, "although I'm privy to the secret. I must be responsible to my job."

"I expect most students have a fair idea of what will happen" he added cryptically.

Gov't funding down

The government funding picture is bleak.

The federal government said March 8 transfers to the provinces for health and post secondary education were limited to the six and five program. This means Nova Scotia must find other sources of revenue if it gives universities more than a six per cent increase.

While the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission said in January a 12 per cent increase was necessary to maintain current

operations at universities, Dalhousie has already indicated it does not expect that much. President MacKay said Feb. 22 that nine or ten per cent increases were "acceptable," even though "cutbacks are inevitable."

Students now know that a cutback of \$4.5 million is that (acceptable) figure.

"Likely next week" is when the Nova Scotia government will announce its funding levels, according to assistant to the Minister of Education, Dr. Peter Butler.