

## NEWS

# Student Loan Program gets bad reviews

BY MARIE MACPHERSON

The recent meeting of the national executive of the Canadian Federation of Students revealed that some tough times are yet to come for over 17 000 university students currently receiving student loans in Nova Scotia.

The Canada Student Loans Program, which has not raised its maximums since the 1983-84 university year, is currently under review by the federal government. After hearing submissions from the CFS and other organizations, the Secretary of State has set the end of February as a date for solid government proposals.

What are some of the issues? Kristine Anderson, the Nova Scotia representative of the CFS, cites the income contingency repayment scheme as a big area of concern. Anderson describes the system in which the "student, upon graduating, pays back the loan on scale determined by the amount of money you are making." In other words, the higher paying your job is, the higher the percentage of your loan that you pay off.

While there is no official proposal in writing for this scheme, researchers in the federal government are preparing a paper on it, using information from a similar program in

Australia.

"CFS has a policy strongly against income contingency, and believes that students should receive grants, and not loans," said Anderson.

In addition, the three per cent surtax on loans was discussed. Anderson said, "the lobbying certainly seems to have paid off; the government is thinking about tacking the three per cent on the end of the loan period, not at the beginning of each year." While this was not exactly what the CFS had hoped for — a complete removal of the tax — it would give students a chance to pay the tax after they graduate and are employed.

The 80 per cent enrolment clause is another area making students' lives more difficult. The clause, proposed by a consultant's firm states students must be registered for 4.0 courses, or an 80 per cent course load, in order to even be eligible for a student loan.

"This policy, if implemented, would really affect non-traditional students, students who don't have the time commitment for a full course load, and people who just don't have the money," said Scott McCrossin, Chair of the Students Union of Nova Scotia. "The academic future of students who are forced to hold a part-time job and can only handle three courses will be jeopardized."

Anderson urges students to write their MPs, and let them know how inequitable such recommendations are.

The bright side is the recommendations for the 80 per cent enrolment clause, threatening as they may be, are still only recommendations. Nothing has been implemented yet. However, McCrossin expresses disappointment in the commission's report saying "there are some really bad signs there. The Student Loan Program is completely inadequate as is, and we would hope a consultant's report would look at correcting it, as opposed to further demolishing any remnants of what's left."

## Dal goes on display

BY GAYLE HEINRICH

"Hopefully it is a true representation of what Dalhousie was and what Dal will continue to be," said Peter Pottier at the Feb. 6 unveiling of the Wall of Nostalgia.

The grand unveiling of the Wall of Nostalgia was the latest in a series of events to commemorate the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Dalhousie's Student Union. The glassed-in case on the second floor of the SUB contains a collection of photos, artifacts and memorabilia from Dalhousie's history.

Pottier sees the Wall making a threefold contribution to the Dalhousie community. It serves as a commemoration to those who attended Dal, reminds present students of the reputation they have to uphold, and finally, has the potential to act as a yardstick of success for Dal's future students.

Some controversy does exist over the funding of the Wall. It is only one of several 125th Anniversary events planned for the entire year.

DSU Treasurer Joanne Smyth explained that earlier in the school year money allocated to a contingency fund with the Administration was returned to the DSU when no Administration project was initiated.

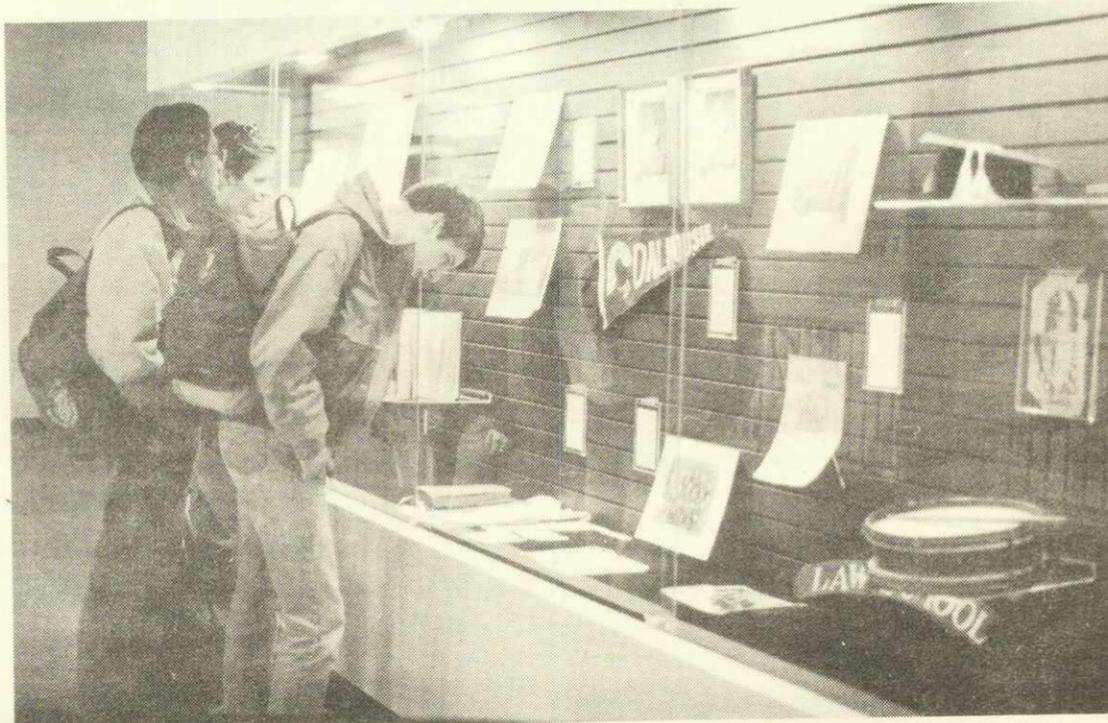
Of this return, \$12,000 was set aside for all of the Anniversary events. Some money for the Wall also came from corporate sponsorships, and a donation from the Physical Plant. None of the money required for the Anniversary events came directly from the DSU's budget.

Former student leader and alumnus, Susan MacIntyre, had words of praise for this commemoration of Dal and the DSU.

"The DSU works independently and with the community," she said. "I made a lot of friends here at Dal. It was a time that I will always remember."

Dalhousie President Howard Clark also gave tribute to the DSU for founding the Wall.

"It is a splendid idea and a great accomplishment," he said. "The Wall of Nostalgia will serve to remind us



DAL PHOTO: MARIA PATRIQUIN

*Hey that looks like my mom.*

all of the contributions many people have made to Dalhousie over many, many years."

Not everyone was excited about the Wall. Several people reserved comment and one student commented that the Wall is "complete bullshit." However, when the cur-

tain was rolled back with much applause, at least one spectator commented. "It's excellent!"

There are plenty of other artifacts that could find room on the Wall of Nostalgia. Pottier intends to change its contents throughout the year. Different themes that directly relate

to Dalhousie's present will be highlighted in the glow of Dalhousie's past.

When asked what he thought of the Wall, one student commented, "Is that what this is for? Alex [Boston] said we are paying for this, so I came down for the food."

# Biological diversity victim of funding cuts

BY BRUCE GILCHRIST

For the 1992 summer school program the beleaguered biology department has cut the number of courses offered from three last year to possibly one, and even that course is not completely on the go ahead.

Student concerns have been raised at the lack of courses offered this summer for the biggest department on campus.

Usually three courses are offered through Henson College's summer school program: Biology 1000, 2001, and 2002. But this summer only 2001 has a realistic chance of going ahead. Biology 2001 which has a professor and lab instructor to teach it, was originally meant to be offered as

"Marine Diversity in Bermuda," but has now been cut to the regular program because of a lack of departmental funds.

Biology 1000, the foundation year course required for higher level biology courses, has been cut because there is no professor or lab instructor willing to teach it. The regular year lab instructor declined to teach the course because the department could not guarantee him a place in next year's department complement. Once again lack of funds is the reason.

Biology 2002, a terrestrial diversity course, has been placed in the summer school calendar but as of yet there is neither a professor nor a lab instructor willing to take on the obligation. Biology Chair Martin

Willison says it is in a "possible" state right now.

Willison says there are many reasons for the shortfall of courses offered and financial concerns are not the main reason for the shortfall.

He says summer school courses, primarily of interest to students who need them to make up courses for graduation, have "never been popular because the faculty are usually performing research." The biology department's graduate program is the biggest on campus with over 125 graduate students, and the faculty feels their biggest obligation is "to work with their graduate students in the summer."

"In an ideal world the department would offer first, second, and third

year courses, but it has never been easy to get professors to teach summer school," says Willison.

Other departments sometimes hire sessional professors to teach summer school, but Willison says "classes taught by sessional professors are not always equal to regular classes" and "might not adequately prepare the students for higher level courses." He says this with direct respect to Biology 1000, the intensive first year foundation course.

Complement reduction, the Faculty of Science's plan to reduce the number of operating professors, has not "directly contributed" to the lack of available professors, he says.

Regardless of cause, the outcome hurts students who wish to make up

courses, or need biology courses to graduate. The Dalhousie Association of Biology Students President Jeffery Arsenault says the lack of courses offered "sets a dangerous precedent when the largest department on campus cannot allocate one professor to teach the most essential Biology course (Biology 1000R)."

"It clearly indicates a lack of concern for any students who are relying on the availability of summer courses in biology to make up classes for graduation. It also represents flagrant mismanagement and incompetence not solely within the biology department, but consistent with the university's 'educational' policies," says Arsenault.