

Graduate Society under fire

Charges pending as a result of firing

BY MONICA GILLIS

The Dalhousie Association of Graduates Students is facing a potential lawsuit by former Graduate House manger Zdena Cerny.

The lawsuit stems from her claim of wrongful dismissal by the board of management over employee policies at the university, and a contract dispute.

The board of management consists of Fred Redden, president of the Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students (DAGS); Eric McKee, Dalhousie vice-president of student services; and Brad MacKay, Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) president.

At a staff training meeting on November 1, the board of management informed the Grad House staff of Cerny's dismissal. The

board (with Katherine Hannah, DSU vice-president, acting in MacKay's place) told the staff that the dismissal of Cerny was due to a policy at the university that states it is a conflict of interest for a university employee to be working for the university while filing a legal suit against a department of the university.

"The policy was enunciated through McKee to Redden, but the policy for the university does not exist," Cerny's lawyer John O'Neil said. The policy can also not be found by the Nova Scotia Labour Board, or Nova Scotia Labour Standard.

"The people who have to do the talking are the executive elected officials," McKee said in response to the allegations.

"It is not appropriate to talk about employee matters."

When first accepting the job at the Grad House, Cerny said that she signed a two-year contract. The contract, which was accepted by Cerny on September 25, was negotiated through DAGS accountant Jan Kay. According to Cerny, Kay was acting under the authority of Redden, making the contract legal.

On November 5, DAGS President Redden said that the first contract was not valid because it was, in fact, only a proposal of employment, not an official contract.

DAGS has since offered Cerny a second proposal. This proposal offers Cerny one year of employment with four weeks notice on dismissal.

"This violates everyone's civil rights," Cerny lawyer O'Neil said. Yesterday, O'Neil made DAGS

aware of a pending lawsuit unless DAGS reinstates Cerny to her former position with \$2,500 for back pay and lawyer fees.

If DAGS does not reinstate Cerny, it could face an \$80,000 lawsuit from Cerny. The suit has

the potential to bankrupt the society and close the Grad House.

When asked about Cerny's dismissal, Mark MacCarthy, vice-president of DAGS, said, "We (the DAGS executive) are not prepared to make a comment at this time."



The Agony of Defeat. Dal Soccer's Natalie Lindthaler writhes in pain during AUA championship semi-final action vs. St. FX

Charges pending as a result of firing

Fraud charges laid against former Dal employee

BY DANIEL CLARK

The woman accused of scamming more than \$100,000 from Dalhousie University has been charged following a police investigation.

The woman in question was identified as Linda Hill by Constable Gary Martin of the Halifax Regional Police Department. Hill, who was a financial services clerk at the university, was terminated from her position when the \$100,000 discrepancy was found by an internal audit, says University Vice-President (Finance and Administration) Bryan Mason.

"It all started last summer when a minor discrepancy appeared in some figures," Mason said.

"We started to investigate. Within just one day we had uncovered the full extent of the fraud."

The matter was then turned over to an external team of forensic auditors who, after a two month investigation, confirmed the results of the university's internal audit.

Apparently, a phony firm was

created in Saint John, New Brunswick that sent invoices to the University, which Dalhousie payed. Among other things, the bogus firm billed the University for travel expenses to Saint John.

"This has never happened before. In anyone's living memory, no one can remember anything like this ever happening," Mason said.

Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) Vice-President (Academic/External) Chris Lydon, concurred with Mason.

"Mr. Mason has done a lot of good work, and has kept his people on top of this," Lydon said.

"Though it's crappy that it happened, it's good that it was caught. Hats off."

Ms. Hill has been charged with "Fraud of over \$5000" by the police, but has not yet been arraigned before a judge. Her arraignment should occur within the next few weeks.

Vice-President Mason has made assurances that the University is fully insured against the loss, and that changes have been made so that a similar fraudulent will not occur.

"It is unfortunate that this has

happened. However, it's great to hear that the University was on the ball to find it, track it, and hopefully the police will bring about justice in the name of Dalhousie," Lydon said on behalf of the DSU.

Grad council under investigation

The federal government is conducting an audit of the Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students.

The audit involves the alleged improper distribution of funds by a member of Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students (DAGS) council. The money in question was received by DAGS in the form of a federal grant for employee salaries.

A "Fresh Start" with Preston Manning

BY MONICA GILLIS AND NATALIE MACLELLAN

The Reform Party is calling for reduced taxes, more jobs, and smaller government.

Reform Leader Preston Manning set forth these and other goals at a Fresh Start breakfast Tuesday morning at the Sheraton Hotel in Halifax. This was one of a series of stops in Eastern Canada to promote the Reform Party's new platform, "A Fresh Start for Canadians".

Manning began his address by summarizing the past thirty years of Liberal/Tory government, what he called "an expensive central government resulting in higher taxes." He questioned where these past governments have led us.

"Our view is that the Liberal/Tory vision of Canada simply doesn't work and it is time for a fresh initiative — a fresh start," Manning said.

Through a complete overhaul of government operations, the Reform Party predicts they could save \$15 billion a year. This money will be "given back" to Canadians in the form of tax relief. Reformers believe this extra money in consumers' pockets will lead to increased spending and investment, "which is a direct boost to job creation."

Manning believes his party's platform targets a young generation of voters. The party plans to redirect \$4 billion towards health

and education, and make a \$10 billion down payment on the federal debt. Manning endeavours to restore young people's confidence in government and encourages youth to demand four basic tools from any candidate, Reform or not, before they vote. These four demands are: a free vote in parliament, the right to recall an MP, the right to a referendum on important social issues, and a citizens' initiative to demand a referendum.

The Reform Party also has a "Fresh Start" platform for families, claiming they will make families a priority and ensure government policies are family-friendly. While party policy states that spousal benefits will increase significantly, it also states that "a Reform Government will maintain the current federal definition of marriage as a union of a man and a woman...and define a family as individuals related by blood, marriage or adoption."

When questioned on what implications these definitions would have on homosexual couples and their families, Manning responded, "Reform wants to put the focus on the family form that represents the vast majority of Canadians."

Manning held a short media scrum before flying out to Fredericton on Tuesday morning. Manning did not make a stop at Dalhousie, but he did meet with students at the University of New Brunswick.