

Kelly Lamrock – BOG Representative

by Gordon Loane
Brunswickan News

Kelly Lamrock, currently President of the UNB Student Union, is seeking re-election to a second term as student representative on the University's Board of Governor's.

What do you see as the issues in this campaign and what are your priorities for next year? One of the biggest is getting the University budget opened up so students can see it, and see the kinds of details there. I want to particularly go after things like administrative expenses. So, I'm expecting some degree of assistance from the government in the months ahead, but I think we have to push it at the university level as well. I'm very concerned about what's happened at Neill House. At the upcoming Board meeting we will be pushing for an inquiry into Residence Disciplinary Procedures. A third priority will be keeping tuition hikes and ancillary fees and extra fees down to a minimum.

Do you support an open book policy for UNB? What about open meetings of the Board of Governors? I support both, actually. I think a closed session should not be something that we assume is going to happen every Board meeting. If they want to vote in-camera then let's have a vote on that! I would not only make the minutes public, I would make the budgets public.

Given the fact that you will be ex-officio members of the SU Council, what communication links do you intend to establish with the Council? Will this include written reports to the Council after every meeting of the Board of Governors? Board members should behave as if they were Councilors. It hasn't been a problem this year. Next year I won't be holding the office of SU President, so we will report to Council and hold a few public meetings. Other than that on a day to day basis. Council is the most representative body and I would bring things from the Board back to them and would allow them to direct me, if they feel they should. Written reports are an option which I will leave to the discretion of Council.

Do you support entrenching student positions on the Joint Nominating Committee for President and Vice President Search Committees? I already have a motion before the BOG to do that. We are again told that the Joint Nomination Committee will recommend a permanent seat for a student. As I wrote my motion it would include everything under section 21(1) of the UNB Act - everyone, Presidents, Vice Presidents or any committee struck under the same terms. So, the next step after this, if I am back for a second year, is going to be taking a look at the Finance Committee where we are currently under-represented. We have no seats on the Finance Committee, so that is the next big battle. We are looking for at least one seat for students.

A UNB faculty member has suggested that a method by which the university could contain expenditures would be a salary cap for faculty. Do you support this? I think we could look at capping the overall amount. I would put a caveat on that. I think the faculty here are certainly entitled to inflationary increases and those kinds of things. In the next while, I think, to be honest, that around the university, all sectors are going to take a hit. There are students here who don't have the money to come back, and before we drive them out, I think you have to look at the fact that faculty is living better than most New Brunswickers. I would be more sympathetic to this kind of cap than going after support staff.

Given the recent drop in graduate student enrollment, how tuition-price sensitive do you think UNB should be in this area? I think graduate fees should be contained the same way as undergraduate fees. It is one of the things I have been quite vocal about this year. We should never repeat the differential fee mistake we made with Law, for instance, a couple of years ago. So, I think we need to be competitive with other universities in all areas. I think we are losing a lot of qualified students to Saint Thomas. There is a lot of price sensitivity in the market as far as graduate studies are concerned, especially because of the length of time in school for some of them as they accumulate a large debt load. The number and value of graduate assistantships and rising tuition fees have combined maybe to decrease graduate enrollment. The quality of graduate teaching assistantships at UNB has, especially in Engineering and Science, had an effect on the quality of undergraduate education as well.

Should the sale of university lands be used, in whole or in part, to increase the number and value of graduate assistantships? It is an option that has to be looked at. They missed an opportunity with the changeover at the President's House to get some money there. Obviously, as government resources decline, we need to look at our capital assets. I'm not yet going to say which parts should be carved up and parceled out, but I think everything has to be on the table including those things that we have held for a long time.

Do you support an investigation into the University's Residence Disciplinary Code and the appeals procedure? I will be moving a motion at the next Board meeting to force that. I think there should be one set of rules for all UNB students regardless. What has happened at Neill House is simply not within the bounds of fair play. It's not a tribunal that's fair and it's creating, when I talk to the folks at Neill House and other residences, a real climate that isn't healthy for people to live in. Whether I'm re-elected or not, I'll get a crack at this one before my current term is up.

What efforts do you intend to make, at the Board of Governors level, to facilitate and expedite the SUB Expansion project? The outgoing President of UNB is already on the record as saying that once all the partners are in place we are going to sit down and start putting a plan in place to get this thing done. We are going to hold them to that. Students here have contributed money for several years in good faith and that loan guarantee has to be forthcoming. We have been pushing on the issue of how much we are getting out of the Venture Campaign. That is still undetermined, but I think our bottom line is, look, this building is going to be built whether the private sector donations are there or not. Students did it, and they had a pretty clear promise from both the Administration and the Student Union that it was going to be done.

Will you ask the Board of Governors to set up a special committee to help students finance SUB Expansion? I think one way or the other, we have to get the University at the table. I think that has been one of the biggest problems so far. The process has been slow because of it. As you can imagine, when you want to plan a building and want to talk about what can be done, what can't be done, that's a pretty critical partner. Whether we like it or not, the University makes a lot of these calls. A Board of Governors committee is one way to show a commitment to the project. That would be fantastic. I look around the Board and there are people there like Richard Tingley who would be just fantastic to have involved with the project.

Do you feel that the BOG should actively encourage the participation of CAMPUS and the GSA in SUB Expansion? I think by all means they should encourage it. I wouldn't be in favour of imposing it on people. As far as CAMPUS is concerned, I think there will be a contribution announced before my term of office as SU President ends. CAMPUS is interested in some space for their activities, I know that! As far as the Graduate Students Association (GSA) goes I know it's tougher. I know they've really wanted to pursue the issue of a Grad House. I know the university's reaction to us has been it is not going to happen. I wish them



well if that's what they prefer. If not, I would certainly be happy to sit down and talk with [the GSA] and I'm sure whoever is in this office of SU President next year would be willing to do the same.

Will you support a no-cuts policy regarding the university libraries? I think we have to be concerned about the lack of acquisitions that have been going on there. I think we can certainly afford a no-cuts policy in the current climate. I can think of a lot of places where the size of the cut from government can be absorbed without touching the libraries. I think certainly, given what is currently happening with the government, the library is one of the last places we should cut.

Given that the Federal Government will cut CHST payments to New Brunswick by 100 million next year, what do you think the University tuition policy should be? Are ancillary fees an option? What about a half Student Union fee for satellite campuses in Moncton and Bathurst? I think the first thing that needs to be done is the university has got to be more active than it has been in pushing government to come up with some sort of funding mechanisms. I think one of the big disappointments of the last two years has been while faculty and students have been very active in talking about alternative funding mechanisms, the university has really been pretty quiet. There has been a surprising lack of creativity and collaboration from the university community. I would like to see the Board of Governors take leadership on that by getting the stake holders from around the province to sit down and actually come up with a plan ourselves that can be taken to government. I think that is the first step. I also think tuition policy has first of all to be linked to what Student Aid is. Again, this is another area where the university should be taking a lead in proposing models that people can live with, not sitting back and reacting which I think they have done. I think tuition hikes really should be the last resort, not only because students are at the breaking point as far as debt goes, but because we are losing the price war right here in New Brunswick, particularly on our own campus. There are areas, again, I look at administrative expenses. I look at even one of the positions of UNB Vice President which I think is gratuitous. I think the other thing they should be doing is signing an agreement with the Student Union to start devolving some of the services because we can do them cheaper.

On the question of ancillary fees, we need a policy that would link tuition and ancillary fees, so basically we see the overall package. We need better communication, so what happened with the Nursing Students getting hit late in the school year for a large extra fee that they should have been told about last September, won't happen again. I also think one of the important things about having a representative on the Board of Governors who is experienced is you need someone who can catch the Administration when they try and down load onto the other operations.

I want to talk with the students in Bathurst and Moncton and see what we are actually doing for them, but we intend to recommend a half Student Union fee for them next year. Clearly, I know getting them on the health plan and keeping them there is a high priority for these students in the Nursing faculty. Is the current \$102 fee too high? I think we can adjust that. Certainly, it is true that while some of our services are open to them, and I think there are trunk lines that could be setup, there is the issue of how much would actually be accessible to them. The fee for next year will have to be set by the Board of Governors, but we will propose a reduction in the SU fees. Another thing we need to address will be the SU fee charged for Co-op students. We may look at some sort of opt-out fee or staggered fee.

What do you believe are the top priorities of UNB's new President after July 1? On the academic front, I would like to see us take a look at the degree programs and job training. We should be looking at applied arts or something similar to those begun at Saint Thomas, and create liaisons with the Community College Sector, especially in Science and Engineering. We should talk about transitions to employment programs including employment counseling and job hunting skills. A new President needs to revisit the curriculum to make sure UNB is doing things that make students employable. A new President should undertake a quality of student life study as Saint Thomas did a couple of years ago. Now is the time with SUB Expansion coming up and the budget climate we find ourselves in. It would allow for a healthy consultation process and an openness in the university administration that really has not been perceived among the student body.

Do you support a merger between UNB's part-time Student Association (CAMPUS) and the full-time Student Association (UNBSU)? I certainly would not want to impose one on the students of CAMPUS. They have an elected leadership and I've worked pretty well with them. The issue might be whether we could do more together and I think we could, if we had some sort of structure. It is tough when the leadership of both organizations have different schedules and we don't always get things done as collaboratively as we could. Maybe we could coordinate our efforts better on lobbying, internal university issues and student services overlap.

What is your opinion of the current parking fees on campus? The fee has been \$55 a year for several years running now. I think it's high. It shouldn't be used as a way to simply drag more money out of students. \$55 for the level of service provided is not the best deal going let's put it that way. There should be a different parking fee for students and faculty/staff not only because of ability to pay, but because of availability of space.