

CROSSCANADA

CFS debate stifled at UBC

VANCOUVER (CUP) — Join a club! Meet new people, have fun, share your interests — but don't interfere with the Alma Mater Society, the University of British Columbia's student council.

That is the message from Roger Watts, the council's director of administration, who oversees UBC's student clubs. Members of several clubs have been promoting a referendum which would ask students if they want UBC to join the Canadian Federation of Students.

But Watts said he will not allow clubs to criticize the council's position, which opposes CFS membership. If they do, he says he will punish clubs by removing their recruitment table privileges or shutting them down.

"A club, while it should be promoting student issues and awareness of issues, should not be used as an internal political vehicle to promote change within the AMS," he said.

"Don't get me wrong," Watts added, "if somebody has a beef about what the AMS is saying or doing or a problem with AMS policy, by all means say something about it, but the club is not the appropriate place to do it... That's what elected officials are for."

In September, students tried to organize a club which would lobby in support of CFS membership. Their application was rejected by the council.

"That was on the basis that what they were doing would interfere with internal AMS policies," Watts said.

Critics of the council say the AMS is being anti-democratic and stifling debate over an issue with which the council disagrees. "There's no policy anywhere saying a club can't be active in the internal politics of the AMS," said Jeff West, a member of the campus NDP and a supporter of the referendum campaign.

"This is an arbitrary move on the part of SAC to try and shut down the campaign, because of a lack of understanding of the campaign and some paranoia that we're going to strip [the AMS of their] sacred powers," West said.

Council representatives delivered a letter to clubs displaying CFS-related literature at their tables. The letter threatened to remove the clubs' tables from the university's Clubs Days if they did not remove the material.

Med students out of joint

WINNIPEG (CUP) — Medical students at the University of Manitoba are upset because the sign on their new cafe, the Hip Joint, is anatomically incorrect.

The bone on the sign is not a hip joint, but a femur. Med student Sunil Sinha said he and several colleagues are "annoyed and perturbed" with the sign.

"Approximately \$75,000 of the diner's business is brought in through medicine," Sinha explained. "The least they could do is put up an appropriate sign."

The Hip Joint was opened by the university's student council after the administration shut down the only food service on the university's Bannatyne campus, blaming poor sales.

According to Brenda MacDonald, the council's business manager, the sign cost about \$40 and was produced on very short notice. MacDonald said the council "will be looking at doing a new sign as soon as possible."

Although he admitted that the issue is not exceedingly important, Sinha said the sign is a matter of class pride.

Med students have a "collective class spirit," he said, and the anatomically incorrect sign just "doesn't give them a good image."

GST on text challenged

VICTORIA (CUP) — Tax on textbooks will be an issue in the Oct. 25 federal election.

Organizers of the Don't Tax Reading Coalition want students to question candidates about their opinion of the Goods and Services Tax being applied to reading materials. Until the GST was introduced, books in Canada were tax-free.

Over two million letters and postcards protesting the GST on reading material have been sent to the federal government, but the issue has still not been genuinely addressed, says Jacqueline Hushion, chair of the coalition.

"Students have been hit hard by the new reading tax," said Hushion. "Students aren't free to opt out of book purchases, as many Canadians unfortunately have done, without harming their education."

Aside from the direct effects of the tax on students when they take textbooks to the sales counter, there is a more indirect effect as their libraries struggle with limited funds and greater demands.

The University of Victoria library has just completed a project asking departments to cut \$130,000 of journals, trying to work with the annual loss of \$64,000 due to the GST.

"We have had to cut back on the service provided to the students," said head librarian Marnie Swanson. "We can't buy as many books and we certainly can't buy duplicates."

The National Party of Canada, the federal Liberal Party and the federal NDP have all promised in writing to remove the GST from reading material if they form the next government.

PIRG pushes fair trade

by Karim Mukhida

When you open your cupboard and see the happy peasant 'Juan Valdez' leading his coffee-laden mule through a rich tropical rain forest, rest assured it's a dream.

Such is the myth behind Juan Valdez, as explained by Dalhousie's Economic Justice Working Group through its Just Coffee campaign. One of several units funded by the Nova Scotia Public Interest Research Group (NS-PIRG), the group has been engaged in the marketing of Bridgehead coffees.

Bridgehead buys coffee at prices set by growers, ones that reflect the real

costs of labour and production. As the working group's pamphlet explains, "These fair prices enable small-scale farmers and cooperatives to maintain their own health and education programs and social services."

The group supports Bridgehead coffee on the Dal campus by selling it both to departments and individual consumers. However, the coffee campaign is only one of a variety of issues tackled by the group.

The Economic Justice Working Group was started last spring, largely due to the work of students Eleanor Russell and David Pringle. Addressing issues such as economic injustice found in present economic systems, the group

works to maintain fair prices and to find irregularities in the economic structure.

One of the main objectives of the group is "to change consume behaviour and habits through education," says Pringle. In addition to the Just Coffee campaign, the group is involved in addressing issues of gender equality, the promotion of non-destructive economic processes, and published *perspective* magazine, which dealt with the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement. In essence, Pringle says the group "tries to pave alternatives to mainstream economic thought and policies".

"We want to be really action-oriented", says Russell when describing the methods of campaigning the group uses. She explains that any campaigning done will not simply involve handing out brochures, but will be tied into a specific action.

In order to make people rethink their economic practices, such as buying a particular brand of coffee out of habit, the group intends to be very visible. "It's a good link between students, the Halifax community and the international one," Pringle explains.

The Working Group has focused most of its efforts on the Just Coffee campaign, which was started in response to a new awareness of the plight of common coffee growers. A handful of multinational corporations own 60% of the coffee trade, and their goal is to maximize profits, often without considering its effects on workers and farmers.

As a result, the group has been trying to persuade people to put their money in a coffee which will give a fair price to the producer, rather than filling the pockets of a large corporation. Although the group is experiencing some success, Russell says they have not been as successful convincing people to buy the Bridgehead coffee in the first place.

Although Bridgehead products may be slightly more expensive than other coffees, Pringle assures that "the moral gains are greater than the financial sacrifice". In addition, all profits gained from sales are being put into a fund to support a project in Latin America.

The group hopes to expand to the Halifax community in the future. It meets every two weeks and according to Russell and Pringle, is eager to have new members to join the organization and bring new ideas for future projects.

Somber reunion

by Tamara Dinelle

"Extending ourselves in mind, body and spirit" was the motto that encapsulated the Dalhousie Alumni Weekend, which ran from October 1 through October 3. Its function was to bring together former Dalhousie students to reflect back on their time spent at Dalhousie and to observe the university at present.

Unfortunately for the returning alumni of the Music, Theatre and Costume Studies Departments in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Dalhousie that greeted them last weekend was one that carried a grim and somber expression. Last month's recommendation by President Howard

Clark to phase out these programs brought into focus the dubious future of these departments, which ironically are celebrating the 25th anniversary of their recognition by the university as independent programs in 1968.

In light of the Alumni Weekend, the Arts Centre put on two presentations: 18th Century Music, Costume and Art, and Indigena: Contemporary Native Perspectives over 500 Years. On Friday evening Greg Servant, a

professor in the Department of Music and an alumni of the program, performed live at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium.

Servant, like most of the present staff members, students and alumni of the applied arts programs, is incensed with the proposal. "The basic issue is fundamental," he said in an interview Saturday. "If this proposal goes into effect, it will not only create many personal tragedies, but will destroy the soul of the university." He said that "it

is sad the arts are made to justify their existence," and that without these programs "universities could turn into high-tech vocational schools."

Servant acknowledges that Dr. Clark's decision "has lowered the morale of the Arts Centre to an extent," but the

three departments are "determined to fight these cuts all the way."

Mike Cowlie, a fourth-year theatre student and President of the Theatre Student Society, encourages all students who object to the cuts to write Dr. Clark and the provincial government to express their complaints: "The more pressure we keep on the university and the government, the better the chances they will not carry out the proposal."

"It is sad the arts are made to justify their existence"

Program cuts and tuition hikes affect
everybody.
Where else can they cut?

The *Gazette* wants to know what you know and think about the state of Dal's finances. Phone your hot tips and ideas (anonymously, if you wish) to 494-2507. Better yet, write about it.

The *Gazette* ph: (902) 494-2507. Fax 494-1280.
Third floor, Student Union Building,
Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS. B3H 4J2