

OPINIONS

One last manifesto

The time has come...I'm leaving on a jet plane...say you, say me...we are the world...

But, I cannot leave this school which has given me so much, without taking one last look at what Dalhousie is taking.

Dalhousie — you've lost your way. I'm not sure when it happened, although I suspect it was a federal-Liberal-dictatorship-thing. While you raise IT partnerships, computer-building-gray-boxes, business-management-terrorists, you are killing the liberal arts. While money steadily declines to arts faculties, it sores like the extinct Avro Arrow to everyone else.

"But you're getting a new building." Yes, and I'm impressed this one actually has more than 5 windows. But, isn't it convenient that rather than a faculty spread out over the campus like secure barnacles, you will collect them into a small clump, easy to stamp out with the foot of the Board of Governors. Last year, rumour had it you wanted to change the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, to the Department of A&SS. Build bigger classrooms, add more power, have more digital professors, more cubicles, more compartmentalized departmentals, more white walls, less student societies, less will to fight and to oppose.

Dalhousie, like every other university in this country, will have to decide what future they wish to write for themselves. The status of "university" is dependent on the existence of strong liberal arts — it is designed to inspire good citizens. Yes, this is the historic origins, but

to change the definition is not sufficient. If you want to make money, if you want students who will return alumni money, simply so you can maintain a liberal arts department to clutch onto your status as a university, then perhaps you should just change your status to a community college. "Community College of Canada — Dalhousie Campus." There is nothing wrong with the community college, but they have their type of training and we have ours. Either you want to produce good citizens or exploitative business persons. You are trying to produce both which is fine, so long as each side doesn't hate, despise, and disrespect the other at every turn. Maybe you have been inspired by Harris-ites who would rather have a society of automaton-taxpayers, rather than thinking individuals. People think in business, but do they know the history of the country they are funding, the culture, the philosophy that has led to now and that influence now, despite the denial of these.

If you kill liberal arts, you kill any future for this country. We will never get rid of the narcissistic, self-absorbed, individual-identity-crises that permeates every politician in the country to worry about me, me, me, not Canada, Canada, Canada.

I am leaving. I'm flying the coop. When I return, someday, to this country, I expect liberal arts will be one more department like the "Trojan Dept. for the Sexual Reproduction of Computer Circuits." All we really need to teach children is to surf the net, and that's all you need for a modern society — plug

yourself in, turn yourself on, turn everyone else off. Information is not knowledge and knowledge, understanding, and wisdom is what this country needs. It is the job of the university to produce and inspire these.

On that point, I do want to leave on a positive note. Not to discount my criticisms of this institution, but I want to thank every pro-

fessor I've ever had, all the ones who put up with my changing degree ideas, the ones who inspired, the ones who let me talk, the ones that didn't, Howe Hall, Bronson House and all the people who lived there during my years, the ones I appreciated, the ones I didn't, those who appreciated me, and those who didn't, the DSU which was always good for a laugh (and usually little else), the admin-

istration who always tried but never had the resources to do very much, even *the Gazette* and my various editors, and all the little people, anyone and everyone who crossed paths with me and made these the most interesting, exciting, entertaining four years out of my 21 yet.

Thanks to all. Play hard, learn harder, live hardest.

Tristan Stewart-Robertson

I ride my bicycle...

Watching Cirque de Soleil on Sunday night, I began to ponder exercise bicycles and energy use. I don't know if everyone has seen these performances, but they are the most amazing example of human creativity, dexterity and athletic ability that I have ever witnessed. After watching the performance, I truly felt that I could train, prepare and fortify myself towards any goal that I wished to complete. For lack of better words, it was inspirational.

How does this relate to energy use and exercise bicycles? I simply believe that a lot of the drive and energy exhibited by the general population here in America has the potential to be applied in more efficient ways. The Cirque de Soleil performers give you such a visual feast that it can be compared to a great work of art, a testament of the greatness of humankind.

For a moment consider the regime of an avid exercise biker: I have biked for one hour a day, say three days a week, for about two years at a speed of 10 to 15 kilometres an hour. This is really not a horribly intense regime for some nice leg. The total distance covered would have been 4000 km! This is the equivalent to the distance from one coast of Australia to the other, or from Great Britain to Newfoundland. Of course, you would have to account for the efficiency of a pedal powered ocean vessel, water resistance and storms in the case of the trans-Atlantic distance, so hypo-

thetically you would have to add in another year. On the same note, imagine the mountains one may have climbed if the steps taken on a 'stepmaster' had been applied to climbing up your favourite mountain.

This is not by any means a direct attack on stationary exercisers. I am the most firm proponent of strong calves and believe in break-neck speed cardiovascular capacity for keeping fit and training for the sports I game. At the same time, I have never been an advocate of excessive energy use, whether it be in the sense of personal activity or in the sense of our planet's quickly depleting resources such as fossil fuels, water or food.

Now consider if you had an exercise bicycle connected to your central heating system, whereby all the energy generated from exam anxiety pedalling was collected and put towards your heating or electrical needs. I'm almost positive that our bills would be lower. And look! We've just avoided using x-amount of fossil fuels that we really shouldn't be wasting on keeping the lights on so it looks like someone is home.

I find it somewhat comical, yet horribly sad that all these bicyclists are cycling away to nowhere. At least if I was on a real ten-speed, madly pedalling towards the horizon it would be more poetic. But convenience reigns king and people continue to use exercise bikes,

because hell, they're right there.

Gas prices are rising because we've used up a lot of this resource, water is dirty because we've used up all the clean stuff, and people in developing countries are dying from hunger and malnutrition, while people in developed countries are dying from obesity. Not to try to sound like a raging environmentalist, which I may be considering a career in, but it seems that folks in developed countries such as our own are choking in our own decadence. I am not asking you to solve all these problems that have been and are presently accumulating, but I do ask you to question your self and your lifestyle. My example is probably not an idea that will be realized, at least not until I form my private army of do-gooders, but I do hope that you will consider some of the ways I which you use and apply your energy.

Now I know I've asked you to use your imagination many a time already, but for one last moment consider how much energy is generated by all the exercise bicycles at the Dalplex and the TUNS gym. I would say that the force generated from about a decade of stationary energy from those pumping legs could have provided the energy to move the Killam library from its place on Dalhousie campus into the murky depths of Halifax harbour, where most of us think it belongs right now.

Jason Kun

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