

# Fee hike funds co-op officer

by Tom Legrady

The future of Dalhousie's Cooperative Education Program was assured at a meeting last week when, by a vote of 23 to one, the students of co-op approved a fee increase. The fee, which will rise to \$350 for each of four work terms, will be used primarily to finance the search for student placements.

Students in the co-op program, all of whom must take an advanced major or an honours degree, alternate work terms with the four school terms of third and fourth year.

Until last year, the program was run in conjunction with Mount Saint Vincent University, with funding from the federal government. When the funding ran out, the agreement between

the universities went with it. Dalhousie provided temporary funding, which has been used to hire a placement officer. By the end of the summer, however, that funding will have run out, and expenses will be covered by the placement fee.

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Students expressed a variety of concerns at the meeting. Physics students were disappointed by the limited number of interesting positions, especially in the first

and second placement. They pointed out that many physics courses run the whole year, making it difficult to schedule a work term.

Much discussion centred on the greater variety of placements available in the fall and winter terms, when most students are back in school. A work term in the winter means a study term in the summer, when only a limited number of courses are offered.

Computing science is offering three very general first year half courses this summer, and physics only two first year full credit courses. None of these are appropriate for third and fourth year students. The situation is somewhat better in mathematics and in statistics, but even here most courses are on the first and second year levels.

An advanced co-op student spending summer studying at Dal can take one of two courses in

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May and June (one is a prerequisite for the other), and one in July and August. If that student is not interested in differential equations or graph theory, they might as well spend the summer at the beach.

Part of the problem is that Henson College needs at least ten students to schedule a course. Their break-even point is actually about twice that number, so they are taking a loss on the smaller classes.

Dr. A. E. Sedgwick of the Department of Maths, Statistics and Computer Science, noted that departments taking part in co-op are being urged to schedule more courses during the summer. Since many math courses are common to the sciences, a plan is being considered whereby third year students will satisfy much of their math requirements during the summer term. As well, the university intends to expand the co-op option.

Both these moves would increase the numbers of students studying during the summer, making it feasible to schedule advanced courses. As well, increased revenues from placement fees would be used to drum up support from the business community and generate a greater number of placements.

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