

## To Graduate Student Members of the Dalhousie Student Union

The Student Union has been seriously misrepresented by DAGS Council information regarding the DAGS Council referendum. For example, the Student Union proposal, for increased Major Society funding, supported by representatives of other Societies, has not even been mentioned in the DAGS handouts. In this vote, DAGS Council has a responsibility to its constituents to have the issue represented fairly and this responsibility has not been met.

### What is the Student Union's proposal?

Plain and simply, the Student Union cannot afford, in principle and practically, to remit a contractual amount of ten dollars per capita to DAGS. Similar consideration would be necessary for other Societies, pushing the cost up to a neighborhood of \$50,000. This cannot be afforded without cutting key Union endeavors such as **GAZETTE**, speakers programs, CKDU, and other activities of variable cost. More importantly, the role of the Union as an objective optimizer of benefits to all students of the campus, would be destroyed. However, recognizing the needs of active Major Societies, the Student Union has proposed to provide a Major Societies Budget, of approximately \$15,000 annual size, to provide shared-cost funding for specific and / or expensive projects planned by particular Major Societies. (This is in addition to the present Grants Budget and non-SUB capital projects fund from which Major Societies can receive financial aid.) Such a shared cost Budget recognizes that funding for specific benefits to specific student sectors of the student body, is a joint responsibility of that student sector and the Student Union. It is emphasized that such a fund can provide long-term assistance over several years for necessary projects.

### Why this proposal?

The shared-cost element of this proposal ensures that funds of both the particular Society and the Student Union will be expended conscientiously, to optimize benefit for all concerned. Furthermore, in a situation where Society fees fluctuate (by Society choice e.g. Society fees range from \$50 for one Society to \$1.50 for two others), this seems to be the most equitable way for the primary representative student government, the Student Union, to provide meaningful Society support. Through long-term agreements, the fund can be used to support projects of over several years duration. The desire for Graduate teaching union certification is an example of how such funding could be used.

Incidentally, this proposal is favoured by other Major Societies, who supported it when passed by the Dalhousie Students' Council on 30 November.

### Student Union relationship with major societies

The Student Union and Major Societies form a two-tier governmental structure and the analogy is similar to a federal-provincial one, except that there are no BNA Acts to constitutionally restrict fields of activity. Representatives of other Major Societies have generally indicated satisfaction with the Student Union's sometimes slow but usually adequate responses to their needs. As a rule, these are the Societies that have an active and interested representation on the Dalhousie Students' Council.

n.b. Except for Arts reps (3) and Science reps (4), Graduate Students have the largest representation (2) of any student group, to the Dalhousie Students' Council.

### What is going on?

No meaningful negotiation is possible with a group that daily delivers demands and ultimatums. A further example of representative irresponsibility is the fact that the President of the Student Union was denied (for "financial and technical reasons") the opportunity to explain the Student Union's proposal in the DAGS **Newsletter**, even after the Student Union had agreed to pay the cost of the submission. An eloquent example of misrepresentation is offered by the non-objective ballot that graduate students will be given to vote on.

In closing, all the Student Union asks, is that for those who plan to vote in this referendum at all, that they simply make an objective effort to understand the entire situation.