

Uphill battle for graduate association

BY GINA STACK

Repairing a damaged reputation and getting graduate students active on campus this year is keeping the executive's hands full at the Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students.

"Some societies that fall under DAGS [Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students] don't even know it exists," says DAGS vice-president Chris Horvath.

DAGS president Naomi Andjelic agrees.

"Some things need to change — they have to change. We want to run a very open council [this year]," says Andjelic.

Last year's executive (none of which have returned to DAGS) was plagued by controversy. The three main issues were: a lawsuit by a former manager of the Grad House; a complaint of not being rehired by a Grad House employee; and the misuse of a federal grant.

Andjelic says that last year's executive re-paid the \$1,800 grant that was improperly used, and this year's executive is in the process of closing the remaining issues.

Former Grad House manager, Zdena Cerny, is suing DAGS over a contractual dispute. Because the lawsuit is ongoing, Andjelic says that the executive is unable to comment on the issue.

She did say that the case was still in the preliminary stages, and it may not progress to court.

The dispute with Grad House employee Mary Hamblin is being dealt with in a different manner. Hamblin worked for the Grad House during the 1995-96 academic year. She was not rehired last year because she was in the law year of a combined MBA/LLB degree. The Grad House has a policy of employing only graduate students and because Hamblin is in a combined graduate/undergraduate program she was not eligible to continue work at the Grad House last year. Hamblin contested that she should have been allowed to continue working since she was still considered a graduate student by Dalhousie. She contended that she was wrongfully not rehired, and that the Grad House pay her wages plus tips for the 1996-97 academic year.

Hamblin has been rehired by the Grad House again this year. Horvath says that a non-prejudicial offer of an undisclosed amount has been offered to Hamblin, and she is expected to take the offer.

"I anticipate that all will be settled," says Horvath.

Andjelic says that offer was made because the complaint was handled in a less than expedient manner.

"We realize that she shouldn't have been kept on a limb," says

Tuition

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well as similar tuition for varying course loads.

Currently, three and a half credits count as a full-time course load, with full-time tuition.

A per class tuition system would eliminate this problem.

A new software system will be in place by September 1999, enabling the proposal's implementation.

Andjelic.

Andjelic headed a house committee that was set up last year to deal with the issue of MBA/LLB students working for the Grad House. The committee determined that in the future, students in the law year of their program would be able to retain their jobs at the Grad House.

Past issues aside, Andjelic says the DAGS executive is busy getting the association back on track. She says that she and Horvath have gone through all the files in the DAGS office (located on the third floor of the Grad House) and have sent in a request to the Dalhousie Student Union to have an external audit conducted.

"We are doing this to determine any inconsistency in the past, or to say that none exist and wipe things clean," says Andjelic.

In addition to an external audit, Andjelic is busy preparing a DAGS

assessment, while Horvath is conducting a Grad House assessment.

The aim of the assessment is to find a way to make DAGS run more efficiently. This will include an entire new constitution to be drawn up and voted on in November by referendum.

"We've pinpointed a few problems and we want to implement some changes. We want to be more active in departments, orientation week, seminars, ombuds, academic issues and teaching assistants' issues," says Andjelic.

"We are refocusing to give us direction and a better mandate."

Horvath says that DAGS will also be deciding what direction that Grad House will be taking. He says that there are three options: the coffee house could expand its role offering space to graduate societies and hosting guest speakers; it could

be run by third-party management; or it could remain as is.

Horvath says a decision must be made by the general meeting to be held 23 October.

"We have tough decisions to make and not a lot of time to make them," says Horvath.

Andjelic says once DAGS has settled past issues and established a new direction, it will focus all its energy on becoming more visible on campus. The association is also trying to be more accessible to students. One way is through its website (<http://is2.dal.ca/-dags>) which holds the minutes from council meetings.

Last year, all DAGS's executive positions were acclaimed. There are 15 council members, and empty seats that will need to be filled after the ratification of the new constitution in November.

Daltech merger running smoothly

BY LAURA DAVIS

The amalgamation between Dalhousie and the former Technical University of Nova Scotia is running quite smoothly according to the Dalhousie Student Union president.

Chris Adams has a lot of positive things to say about the merger and says that, since the school year has started, many problems have been ironed out.

Despite his positive outlook, Adams says there are a few kinks that have yet to be sorted out.

One problem is poor scheduling of classes between the two campuses. A proposed shuttle-bus program with Metro-Transit involving reduced rates for affected students is in the works, but the issue remains unresolved.

A second obstacle involves the structuring of the condensed

programs, particularly the electrical engineering program. The engineering and computer science programs have been reduced from five-year to three-year programs. One less year means fewer electives which will in turn bring some students back to school for a fifth year, regardless of changes in programming.

In January, second and third year classes will be merged, leaving second-year students at a disadvantage because they will have taken fewer courses.

Despite these wrinkles, feedback is overwhelmingly positive.

Daltech students are getting the best of both worlds; they get all the benefits of a larger university (access to more facilities), while at the same time enjoying shorter line-ups at registration, easier access to campus services and other benefits of a smaller school.

"It's hard to judge the benefits until a couple of years down the road," says Tim Covert a Daltech student who sees the advantages in the current situation.

Covert added that there seems to be a "general sense of pessimism" among Daltech students as to how long the current situation will last.

Negotiations regarding everything from the future of Daltech's administration to student union make it difficult for students as well as administrators to speculate.

"[Students have made] a fairly good transition," said Adams. "Attitudes seem to be changing."

Past bad feelings between the two schools are being mended says Adams, who believes that it might have been just a few people, in the past, misrepresenting the feeling of the majority of Daltech students towards Dalhousie.

AIDS walk raises awareness

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The "changing faces" refers to some startling new statistics. The reality is that the number of women contacting the HIV virus is higher than ever. Also, the average age of infection is now at its lowest. In a recent studies it is estimated that 54,000 Canadians have been infected with HIV. Each year alone as many as 5,000 more people are infected, half of them 23 years of age or younger.

Burzynski attributes these

statistics to the fact that young people quite often feel that they are invincible.

The large presence of young people in this year's AIDS Walk gives a slight indication that awareness may be growing. The walk was also a good chance for all participants to join together and raise money and awareness, as well as an excellent way to kick off this year's National AIDS Awareness Week.

AIDS Walk 1997 took place in over 60 cities across Canada followed nationally with AIDS

Awareness Week.

Here in Halifax, various events have been taking place. Today, there is an open house at the AIDS Coalition from 3 to 6 p.m. This weekend's events continue with a Condom Blitz in local bars on Saturday and a Prevention retreat over the weekend.

The events will come to an end on Sunday, but that does not mean AIDS awareness ends there too. The AIDS Walk was a success, but there is still no cure for the AIDS/HIV virus.

NEWS-IN-BRIEF

CONSTRUCTION AT THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Scaffolding on Dalhousie's School of Business will soon be coming off as construction to the outside of the building nears completion.

The school, located on Coburg Road, has been partially covered with scaffolding while old, crumbling brick is replaced with new brick.

Manager of projects at Facilities Management, Alex Walker, says that deterioration of the brick was causing leakage and other problems inside the building.

In addition to replacing brick, Walker says that the old Saint Andrews Hall (located by the back parking lot) is being re-roofed, and windows are being replaced.

Walker says that re-roofing should be completed shortly, and it is hoped that the brick work will be finished by mid-October.

Once the exterior work is completed, workers will move inside to repair weather damage caused by leakage.

VOLUNTEERS RECRUITED AT DAL

BY JENNIFER LAMONT

"More longer term volunteers are women in the community," said Tara Lewis, the coordinator of "womyn", a volunteer organization.

Despite this concession, on September 24, over fifty volunteer organizations convened in the Student Union Building with the hope of finding Dalhousie students willing to donate their time.

"We have a large student population that we depend on, in return we can offer them great opportunities, and something for [their] resumes," said Berni Duda, a volunteer coordinator at Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre.

Duda was one of many recruiters from various organizations who seemed happy about the turnout to the fair.

Third year sociology student Krista Beaton, who was working at the Ronald McDonald house stall, said that "quite a few students inquired, and filled out applications".

There was a wide range of organizations represented with many different positions available. Students looking to volunteer at environmental organizations, in an office setting, with the young or old, or even teaching science could find an organization for them.

For students concerned about the time commitment, many organizations do not force students to commit a certain amount of time. Instead, many are willing to work around students' schedules.

Diran Aksefer, a student at Mount St. Vincent who volunteers almost every day, understands that, "many students feel they need to choose between volunteering and social things." But he explains that after a year of volunteering it has become part of his social life.

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