

## Strike aversion remains goal for both sides

BY KAVERI GUPTA  
AND SHELLEY ROBINSON

A legal strike is within spitting distance after a report on the unsuccessful conciliation between faculty and administration was filed with the province.

The Department of Labour's Robert Durdan submitted his report on the conciliation talks between the faculty union and the Board of Governors on Mar. 10. After a two week cooling off period — during which negotiations are still possible — the faculty association is in a legal position to strike.

But both sides are still saying there is hope for settlement before the Mar. 24 deadline.

"Everyone's objective is to avert strike," said Dalhousie Faculty Association president Ismet Ugursal.

"I am seriously hoping that in a few days this will be unpleasant history for all of us."

University spokesperson Michelle Gallant agrees.

"Our interest is in avoiding a strike...and we're hopeful that there can be meaningful discussions," she said.

New talks have been tentatively scheduled for Mar. 12-13.

The conciliator's report was filed later than either side expected. But talk about it being stalled to avoid a strike during a provincial election campaign has been largely dismissed.

"That's fun speculation but I have no idea," said Michael Cross, chief negotiator for the faculty association.

"It seemed to me that the conciliator, Bob Durdan, has been pretty open and straight with us."

Durdan would not comment.

The two issues still on the table are professor's salaries and faculty complement. Complement is the number of faculty positions maintained by the university.

The board's latest offer to the association was a 9.5 per cent salary increase over 32 months. The offer, which included no change to the complement policy, was rejected by a strong majority of the faculty association.

Currently the university does not have to replace vacated positions, and the faculty union is trying to make sure they have to — at least until the end of this contract.

"[Complement] is the issue which most directly affects the quality of education and we simply have to have a breathing spell. We can't go on with this pattern of savaging the teaching ranks of the university," Cross said.

"We've always been prepared to be flexible but there are certain things that simply have to happen and doing something about the complement issue is one of them."

The faculty union is asking for a 13 per cent salary increase over the contract's 32 months, but while

both sides seem willing to be flexible about salary — complement is the line in the sand.

And given that the university is facing 46 early retirements in July, the issue is even more important.

But Michelle Gallant says full replacement of complement is just not possible.

"It is absolutely impractical, it's not feasible for the university to

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## DSU launches media campaign

*\$40,000 set aside for television and radio ads*

BY ANDREW SIMPSON

Although they may not know it, Dalhousie students are funding refrigerator breaks across the province.

The Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) has launched a media campaign — that could cost up to \$40,000 — which they say will promote education issues in the final two weeks of the provincial election.

A DSU commercial began airing on Mar. 10 on two local television stations. The campaign will expand into radio and possibly print advertising next week, says DSU president Chris Adams.

"None of the three [political] parties have put enough focus on education issues — this is a chance for us to jump at that," Adams said.

"We thought it was a feasible idea that would have an impact and we ran with it."

The commercial is airing on ATV and CBC and can be seen during shows such as *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, *The Simpsons*, *Hockey Night in Canada* and the *ATV News*. Produced by the CBC, it cost about \$1000.

"We wanted something that

would send a strong message as well as being very professional," Adams said.

The student council unanimously endorsed the ad.

"We wanted [the commercial] to start off talking about the problems university students have — debts, cuts to education...then we wanted to tie it in with a statistic that would affect everyone in Nova Scotia, which was that by the year 2000, 45 per cent of jobs created will require a university education," he said.

Council approved expenditures of up to \$40,000 for the media

campaign, but the DSU has already committed half of that to television advertising.

Adams says the message speaks to people across the province on behalf of all Dalhousie students, and that it is important to promote education issues to those outside of the post-secondary community. However he does not see education as being in competition with other election issues.

"Education is a part of all the other issues, it envelops all the issues," he said. "For example,

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PROSTITUTION: A feature article examines Halifax's most secret industry. (Photo by Ryan Lash)

## What do students really want?

BY NATALIE MACLELLAN

Tuition freeze. It's the all-powerful phrase provincial politicians are using in their attempt to capture the student vote. Unfortunately for them, this approach might be just a bit too simplistic.

Both the Nova Scotia Liberals and the New Democratic Party have promised a tuition freeze if elected, while the Progressive Conservative Party is talking job creation and debt

relief. Education has definitely become a high profile issue and this has many students encouraged, but still looking for more.

"[I'd like to see] at least a

tuition freeze. That's what's realistic, rather than what the ideal would be," said Megan Clare, a

student in the Foundation Year Program at King's College.

Job creation is also a concern for students, particularly for those who would like to remain in Nova Scotia after graduation.

"For me, I guess Sable Gas is the big issue. As a student I'm concerned about the future, and that's going to have a big effect on the future of Nova Scotia," said Michael Landry, a Dalhousie Political Science student.

Other students were worried that

the government might hide behind Sable oil when addressing the general problem of unemployment.

"If it wasn't for offshore [oil], the government would have nothing to say or propose [about unemployment]," said Karl von Holtzhausen, a BA student at Dalhousie.

However, in many respects, the politicians are right on the mark with their "pro-student" campaigns. When asked, the majority of

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—Grampa Simpson

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