

News

Editors: Janice McConnell and Mary Rogal-Black

Visentin could arrive under dark cloud

By Gordon Loane
Brunswickan News

The short-listing of Louis Visentin for the position of VP Academic at UNB could become contentious as past controversies he was involved in at Mount Allison come to light.

An English Professor who served on the Search Committee that recommended the appointment of Louis Visentin as Vice-President Academic at Mount Allison University says he made the mistake of his life.

Michael Thorpe, who holds the Joseph Allison Chair in English on the Sackville campus says he would not wish Visentin on UNB on hearing that he is one of the two finalists for VP Academic in Fredericton.

"He is part of an administration which takes as little advice as possible and ignores protest," Thorpe asserted.

Visentin has been one of three administrators at the centre of a dispute over a decision not to appoint Elin Elgaard as Mount Allison's writer-in-residence. Funding for the position was cut after the administration had earlier allowed an appointment process to proceed.

Visentin cited problems with the selection procedure, but Professor Thorpe has his own suspicions.

Thorpe, who is married to Elgaard, believes the appointment was nixed because he is an outspoken critic of the administration led by President Ian Newbould.

"I have seen no convincing explanation from the administration for this decision," said Thorpe, who now says his wife has taken the entire matter to the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission for investigation.

Students who have sought answers about the cuts to the writer-in-residence at Mount A have fared no better, according to a recent article in the *Telegraph Journal*.

Meanwhile, the Managing Editor of *The Argosy Weekly*, Mitchell Brown, gives Visentin credit for some of the things he has undertaken since his appointment as VP Academic in 1993.

"He introduced a lot of things that were long overdue including curriculum and departmental reviews," said Brown.

"Computer facilities have been improved and the library has been given some new resources."

Visentin has also been a part of an administration which has wiped out Mount Allison's accumulated debt, Brown added.

"But there is an overwhelming view among students that all is not right at

Mount A."

"The administration thinks it knows best. There is a lack of consultation and a lack of appreciation for other points of view," Brown said.

Brown says relations continue to be strained between the administration and students because of the Elgaard affair and a decision in January to turn Trueman House from an all male to a co-ed residence next fall.

"The Trueman House decision was made unilaterally," said Brown.

Brown said relations between the administration and the faculty association continue to be tense following a seven-week strike last winter. Brown cites the Elgaard affair and two other cases as proof.

One of these cases involved a Dr. Marion Scholmeijer, who was denied a full-time position in the Department of English. Another dispute arose when R. Rita Egan was denied a tenure track position in Education despite a recommendation by a selection committee in her favour.

Egan has since taken her complaint to the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission, citing gender bias, according to *The Argosy Weekly*.

Hans Van Der Leest, president of the Mount Allison Faculty Association agreed that the relationship between

faculty and the administration has not been smooth.

"The faculty association had these problems before Visentin's arrival and things have not improved since," he said.

But Van Der Leest admits it is difficult to say how much leeway Visentin has to act independently of President Newbould.

Overall, Van Der Leest said the biggest complaint from faculty members about the administration is the lack of attention to detail.

"This might not be such a problem at a larger university where top administrators leave Deans to look after the details but at Mount Allison this is a problem because of our smaller size."

Van Der Leest said Visentin is certainly open to speaking with various members of the university community, attends various social events and is certainly not isolated from faculty, staff or students.

"But it depends who you talk to among faculty to get a reaction about Visentin", said Van Der Leest.

"Some find his manner off-putting while some get on with him well."

"It's fair to say that it's a mixed bag," he concluded.

Danielle White, VP External of the Stu-

dent Administrative Council (SAC) said the relationship with the administration has been quite frustrating.

"It's one of alienation rather than active antagonism," said White, who describes relations between the faculty association and the administration as more tense.

One difficult problem to resolve to students' satisfaction occurred at Christmas exam time and concerned a psychology professor, according to White.

"Students complained to Visentin but the problem wasn't satisfactorily resolved until complaints were launched with the Board of Regents," White said.

Ross Marshall, SAC VP Internal admits the administration could have handled many of the problems that have publicly come to light in a more effective manner.

But Marshall, who said he deals with Visentin quite a bit, has a healthy respect for him.

"He is quite approachable, articulate in a meeting and a very good person generally."

"His character demands a certain degree of respect," Marshall admitted.

Visentin has introduced a number of much-needed changes at Mount Allison since his arrival, according to Marshall.

SU passes next year's budget

By Gordon Loane
Brunswickan News

Student fees will increase two dollars to \$102 per student next fall following approval this week of the SU's 1995-96 operating budget.

Council expects to spend just over \$718,000 for all activities beginning in May.

Some of the largest spending increases are very close to council's home base. SU President Paul Estabrooks said a receptionist will join the SU's four other regular full-time employees by September.

A secretary/bookkeeper will be added to the staff three days a week for the summer months, in addition to maintaining full-time employment during the academic year.

The SU also employs a general administrator, a bookkeeper and a help centre manager.

The increase of two staffers in as many years reflects an increase in work load and council activities, according to Estabrooks.

Council plans to open a new Student Advocacy Centre in the SUB by September at a cost of \$5,500.

Conference and travel expenses will rise some \$3,600 next year over what was budgeted in 1994-95.

VP External-elect Pat FitzPatrick plans to spend just over \$1600 more than his predecessors.

Increased activity at the SU-operated Help Centre in the SUB has necessitated a \$7,000 increase in the budget of a year ago.

The Student Support Centre, which opened in the SUB in January, will get a \$1,400 increase in budget in anticipation of a full year of operation.

There have been some budget cuts to the movie series, alcohol education, the Comedy Series, Live Entertainment, Varsity Mania, and the Grad Class. Council will add \$1,000 for next year's Festival of Cultural Diversity while cutting funding entirely for the Speaker Series.

CHSR-FM has received a \$3,000 increase in its budget from a year ago, while The Brunswickan has received an extra \$4,000 to reflect increased equip-

ment costs and an expected increase in the price of newsprint.

Other SU-owned and operated publications will see budget reductions from a year ago, reflecting a new agreement which the SU is about to conclude with the Canadian Campus Business Consortium.

For a yearly membership fee of some \$2,700, the SU could realize significant savings in several areas, but the full impact will not be known for at least a year.

An immediate impact is expected when the Beaverbook goes to the printer later this summer.

The Student Directory will cost some \$4,000 less, reflecting increased advertising revenue and lower printing costs.

In contrast, the Consumer's Guide to UNB has received a \$3,000 increase in budget from a year ago.

The SU-owned and operated pub "The Cellar" has received a \$14,000 budget to cover summer rental costs and cash flow over the next year.

Sixty-five faculty clubs, special interest and cultural groups will receive nearly \$92,000 from the SU in 1995-96.

Dalhousie to redo elections

By Greg Moore
Brunswickan News

Dalhousie University's general election, held last week, has been declared invalid after a petition was brought forward complaining that there was inadequate accessibility for the visually impaired.

According to Judy Reid, an editor at the *Dalhousie Gazette*, a student had approached the Dalhousie Student Union on the first day of elections with concerns over the lack of secret balloting facilities for visually impaired students. The day after the issue was raised, Braille and large print ballots were produced, along with the suggestion that friends complete the ballot for them.

This was not good enough, according to one per cent of the Dalhousie population, about 100 students, who signed the petition. They maintained

that polling clerks were not familiar with the process involved and that campaign speeches were not translated into Braille.

The matter was brought before the Judicial Board, a committee of three law students, who decided that the election would be rebaloted, but that no campaigning would be permitted.

The Student Union has estimated that the rebaloting will cost between \$2000 and \$5000. Union by-laws state that the election must be complete by the end of April.

One of the questions to be decided is a referendum for a \$4 levy on student fees to make the Dalhousie student newspaper autonomous. After a hotly contested campaign, the resolution was won 1040 votes to 443. Editor Judy Reid says that she is meeting with a lawyer to examine their options in the face of a rebaloting.

Groups to look at VP candidates

By Gordon Loane
Brunswickan News

Two major interest groups in the university community are taking a cautious "wait and see" attitude following the announcement last week that Ed Biden and Louis Visentin are the finalists for VP Academic.

Meetings have been scheduled with each candidate today and Wednesday. But for now, the President of AUNBT, which represents faculty members and librarians on both the Fredericton and Saint John campus is saying very little.

"It would be premature to comment at this point," said Jack Van DerLinde of the faculty association.

"We may have more to say later once meeting with both candidates have been held," said Van DerLinde.

Meanwhile, the President of the UNB Student Union is taking the same approach.

"I'm not too familiar with either candidate so I don't want to voice an opinion yet," said SU President Paul Estabrooks.

Estabrooks does say the SU Executive will be getting together after meeting with both candidates and providing feedback to the selection committee by the April 12th deadline.

"We will obviously be seeking answers to several questions," said Estabrooks, while declining to be more specific for now.

Co-op program successful in computer age

By Sarah Estabrooks
Brunswickan News

The city of Fredericton is moving to become one of the nation's leaders in computer technology. The computer Science Co-op program at UNB is supporting growth in this industry by graduating skilled students.

The co-op is a 5 year undergraduate program. It prepares students to become part of the world of computers through academic training and work experience. Students alternate between 4 month terms in school and working

at a computer related job. By the completion of their degree, students have completed 5-6 work terms.

Work experience is a major bonus for a university graduate. The co-op program provides students with a good academic background plus an impressive resume. Their chances of getting employed increase and in many cases they may begin work higher up the pay scale.

In previous years virtually 100% of students seeking work after graduation from the co-op have succeeded in finding a job. Within 6 months, all gradu-

ates of the 1994 class were employed or furthering their studies in graduate school.

Professor Rouse, director of the computer science co-op, seems optimistic for the grads of '95. He expects the hiring rate to be very high for this year. The rate does not seem to be following a downward curve, things look promising for the 180 students enrolled in the program.

Some say that the way of the future is in computer technology. For those graduating from UNB's computer science co-op, the future looks bright!