

Editorial

In our last editorial we attempted to illustrate the essentially symbolic and ineffective nature of the supposed political action engaged in by the SRC, while supposedly pursuing the interests of students. We feel that little is to be gained by belabouring this point, however, what does concern us is why such conditions should develop, the consequences of this condition and what positive measures can be adopted to alter the situation.

It is our contention that this condition is a consequence of the discrepancy that exists between the functions the SRC was originally designed to perform and the functions it presently performs.

The rationale underlying the creation of the SRC was that some type of organization was required to represent or promote the interests of students. Consequently the SRC was established initially, "to represent the interests of students" and secondly "to conduct, promote and direct non-athletic student activities," thirdly to serve as a medium between students and the university, the government and the general public, and finally, "to budget and control" all monies it received.

In effect, the SRC was to assume triple roles of formulating policies designed to enhance the position of students; pursuing such policies and finally administering these policies and other student activities. While the university remains small and compact the SRC could discharge, with relative ease, various tasks which arose in these areas without tending to over-emphasize one aspect of their role at the cost of the others.

However, as a result of the huge increases in the student population during the sixties and seventies and the mushrooming of student activities and interests as accompanied this growth, the task of the SRC has become increasingly complex and demanding. We suggest that the combined effect of these developments has been the tendency in recent years for the SRC to emphasize the administrative aspect of their role, while neglecting their responsibilities in the areas of formulation and pursuit of policy favourable to students.

The SRC has in effect become a glorified student civil service and in that capacity it has acquired many of the more odious characteristics traditionally associated with such bureaucratic institutions. What are the implications of this situation for students and for the SRC? If the present trend continues and the existing institutions remain unaltered the SRC will be forced to assume an ever increasing burden of administrative responsibilities so that any capacity for political action it does possess will disappear in a mire of bureaucratic red tape. Political action by students will tend to bypass the SRC in much the same manner that political action by the general public tends to bypass the civil service.

Indeed there are already signs that the SRC, as an institution has forfeited the functions of promoting and pursuing the interests of students. The first of these indications is the Students Association of Political Science. SAPS has entered into direct negotiations with the Political Science department with the aim of affecting fundamental alterations in the present structure and functioning of that department. In the process they intend to acquire a greater control and influence over departmental affairs for students in political science.

A second indication of this trend is the action of two members of the present SRC who called an open meeting of Arts students for the purpose of determining the nature

and extent of student grievances and desires. One consequence of this action as recorded in the minutes, Item 8 in the November 21st meeting of the SRC. That this particular item appears in the minutes is due to the independent action and initiative of specific SRC members and is not a product of a specific SRC policy to hold meetings of this type.

If the SRC hopes to retain and successfully fulfill the role of leadership within the student community, then the entire concept of SRC responsibility will have to be overhauled. Initially the present methods of dealing with administrative affairs will have to be extensively altered and streamlined. More effective use will have to be made of committees with new mechanisms being created when necessary to relieve the administrative burden. Similarly greater efforts will have to be extended to recruit students with expertise in certain areas. Secondly, the SRC will have to concentrate on more direct forms of determining immediate and future needs of students, e.g. open meeting of Arts students. Thirdly, the SRC will have to adopt a more rigorous approach to any issue involving students.

According to the constitution the SRC is to serve as the recognized medium in activities between the student body and the university, the government, and the general public. If the SRC seriously wishes to reassume responsibilities of student leadership we can suggest three items we feel require their immediate attention.

Initially with respect to the university administration the "University of New Brunswick Act" requires immediate attention. All that one really need say about the "Act" is that as an embodiment of democratic principles this particular document is frightfully reminiscent and remarkably similar to the War Measures Act. Section 74, subsection 1 concerning the appointment of students to the Board of Governors is of particular interest to students. It seems that the other members of the Board can determine if a student is to be elected or appointed, the class of student, the conditions for eligibility, the time of election, manner of conduct and even appears to suggest that the student representative shall not in fact be a STUDENT! Surely the students of this university desire a greater measure of control.

Secondly, with respect to government activities, the injustices and inadequacies of the present Student Loan program are painfully familiar to all students. We feel that the arbitrary and autocratic manner of dispersal deserves immediate attention. What are the criteria and guidelines according to which Mr. Mills dispenses student loans? Why do students not exercise a greater control over this process?

The third area of concern is the housing situation which plagues students every year. It is similar to the weather, everybody talks about it, but few do anything to rectify the situation.

There is, however a Tenants Association that recently has been formed. It was initiated outside the realm of the SRC.

We assume that positive results could be achieved in regard to aiding the newly formed association. Rather than perform surveys, direct action could possibly be made through constant pressure on the municipal and provincial governments to improve the standards of accommodations of Fredericton dwellings. While long range planning is necessary discussions concerning the feasibility of future housing projects to little to alleviate the immediate problem.

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One hundred and fifth year of publication. Canada's Oldest Official Student Publication. A member of Canadian University Press. The Brunswickan is published weekly at the Fredericton campus of the University of New Brunswick. Opinions expressed in this newspaper are not necessarily those of the Student Representative Council or the Administration of the University. The Brunswickan office is located in the Student Union Building, College Hill, Fredericton, N.B. Printed at Bugle Publishing Limited, Woodstock, N.B. Subscriptions, \$3 year. Postage paid in cash at the Third Class Rate, Permit No.7.

FEEDBACKFEEDBAC

All letters to the feedback section will be printed, provided we know the author's name and the letter does not exceed 500 words. The Editor

Sir:

I don't know Jeff Davies. Allow me to introduce myself, Jeff. I'm Steve (although I've been called a lot worse.)

Before your time, I presume, I was the guy who swathed himself in the "Freedom of the Press" panoply so I could tell everyone through the monopolistic student press that the SRC was a sandbox.

I didn't have any of your cool phrases and I never agreed with the personal style of journalism (in case you don't know the term, Jeff, you write personal journalism).

I relied on the facts. So heavily, in fact, that I made up whatever was necessary to fill in the gaps.

I even convinced myself that any retarded goatherd from Ethiopia, to use your

phrase, could run the SRC better than any of the presidents I covered (Wayne Beach, Lawson Hunter, Dave Cox, A-lastair Robertson and Mike Start, in case any of those names ring a bell).

Believe me, Jeff, I know all about poor SRC presidents, and I was the worst. I was so bad I blew it even without bad publicity. I can't remember ever being criticized in the Brunswick.

Bob tries. He assumes responsibilities I never touched. For that he gets called a "big power freak." He's candid and he's fair. Obviously he talks quite freely to you, or you wouldn't have had the opportunity to violate his confidences and sour the admin contacts

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