

Residences to remain open in event of extended year

BY BRIANNE JOHNSTON

Residence students wondering where they would stay in the event of the strike extending beyond May are resting easy.

Many residence students were worried after rumours circulated suggesting they would have to find another place to stay since Dal residences are used as conference lodgings during the summer months.

According to these rumours, Conference Services had scheduled May 1 as the first conference date of the year.

Julie Cook, a resident at Shirreff

Hall, said that when she first heard the rumours she was a bit skeptical, but still worried.

"There were so many rumours flying around about what was going to happen it was hard to believe anyone, but when I heard that we might not be able to stay in residence, if the year was extended, I was concerned."

Melissa Doucette, another Dal student living in residence, had a different reaction to the rumours.

"I [would] not be very impressed, my parents [would] probably call and complain, and I [would] probably complain," Doucette said.

"I mean I've paid to stay in residence until my exams are done. It's Housing Services' job to house us, so I don't see how they could deny us a place to stay. I have no other place to go."

The associate director of Residence Life responded to the rumours by reassuring residence students that they would not be kicked out before the end of the school year — no matter when the year ends.

"Housing residence students will be our first priority," said Terry Gallivan, a spokesperson for Housing and Conference Services. Gallivan says residence students

will be accommodated, even though it could result in the postponement and possibly the cancellation of planned summer business.

"We will make every effort we can to look after students if the academic year is extended and that will be our priority," Gallivan added.

Should student need to be accommodated beyond May 1, Gallivan says that conference delays will cost the university an estimated \$10,000 per day.

Residence Life's reassurance that residence students would not have to find other accommodations

in an extended school year was a great relief to all residence students who were worried about what would happen to them.

Doucette adds that she was grateful to hear she will not have to worry about finding a place to stay if the year is extended.

"I'm happy and relieved. The only way I can properly finish my year is to stay in the comforts of my room and study. I'm also grateful because I know Conference Services will be losing a lot of business. Overall, I think it'll be a huge relief on all residence students."

Students weary of minority government

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operating — we have an adversarial system based on competition — so it's a big shift for them to move in the direction of more co-operation."

However he says that a minority government also has the ability to be beneficial for special interest groups — including student organizations like the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU).

"The two parties with 19 seats have both said they will institute a tuition cap, and we will continue to pressure [them] to fulfil their campaign promises," said Chris Adams, DSU president.

"All three parties... have failed to sufficiently address post-secondary education in this campaign... hopefully pushing for the tuition cap will translate into proper levels of funding."

But what students hope to get from their new government varies throughout the province. University College of Cape Breton Student Union president Sheldon Gillis says that he is worried a minority government will get bogged down trying to please everyone.

"You're going to have all different kinds of people lobbying and lobbying and lobbying, and

sometimes there's not that wiggle room anymore [for government] to make good decisions," he said.

Gillis also says that his student

responsibility to our students and our community... to make sure we are giving a clear perspective on all the issues."

Amy Cole, Nova Scotia chair of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), says that although her organization has not had time to thoroughly consider the implications of a minority government, she is nervous.

Cole says that the parties made substantial election promises, but that without a clear mandate, it is uncertain if any party will be able to keep its promises.

"My initial reaction was skepticism," she said. "I can foresee a lot of head-butting and a lot of lobbying to get important issues passed."

"It's going to mean a lot of running around... you look at every part of the public sector and everyone is clamouring for the attention and the funding they feel they deserve."

"I don't think it's a bad thing, it's just going to take a lot of leg work."

Chris Adams agrees.

"It's a continuous lobbying process. We just have to make sure our interests are represented with all three parties... it's about building bridges and getting your point across."

With files from Dave MacDonald



union doesn't necessarily have the same agenda as those in the rest of the province.

"Trying to get student leaders to agree is like herding cats," he said.

"Down here in Cape Breton jobs and the economy are also very important. Often the government pigeon-holes student leaders because our only agenda is education, but we also have a

Profs on strike indefinitely

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has not replaced 113 faculty positions.

The board's original offer of a 9.5 per cent salary hike and no guarantee of faculty complement was rejected by a faculty membership vote.

And the DFA's two proposals — a 13 per cent salary increase with full replacement guarantee of faculty and a concession to an 11.8 per cent salary raise and guarantee of faculty leaving through early retirement packages, have also both failed.

But complement has become a big issue as both sides deal with 46 early retirements on Jul. 1.

The administration says it can't afford to guarantee full replacement of all these positions, and the faculty association says it can't afford not to.

Cross says the board's latest

offer, which guaranteed to not eliminate, but not necessarily fill, the vacant positions is a step — but a small one.

"I suppose it's a recognition that there is a problem," he said. "[But] it doesn't put any people in classrooms."

Dr. Gunter Muecke, an Earth Sciences professor, agrees.

Muecke is one of the early retirees. He says he was on Wednesday's picket line to prove a point, even though he wouldn't benefit from any new settlement.

"I am walking because I see the programs in this university being threatened by the cutback in faculty," he said. "I am retiring 10 years before I have to [because]... I can no longer do for the students what I want to."

The board says their current offer would incur a debt of \$17-million.

But university spokesperson

Michelle Gallant says the board is committed to settling.

"We are ready to meet at any time," she said. "It's unfortunate the faculty adjourned the meetings to go on strike — we were making progress."

Talks, which broke off the morning of the strike after a full 24 hours, are tentatively scheduled for the afternoon of Mar. 26.

The provincial conciliator Robert Durdan is still mediating discussions.

But no one seems sure about where talks, or the strike, will go from here.

Cross is sure of only a few things.

"There are only a couple of weeks left in the term and people are going to graduate, we have to do something fast," he said.

"[But] we all need some sleep first."

NOTE TO STUDENTS:

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO HAND IN ANY WORK OR ATTEND ANY CLASSES DURING A STRIKE. IF YOUR PROFESSOR OR TEACHING ASSISTANT HAS MADE PLANS TO ACCEPT WORK OR HOLD INFORMAL CLASSES OFF THE DALHOUSIE PREMISES, UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL YOU BE PENALIZED FOR NOT ATTENDING.

THE FOLLOWING ARE QUOTES ON JUST WHOSE SIDE STUDENTS SHOULD BE TAKING IN THE STRIKE.

Chris Adams, president of the Dalhousie Student Union

"I was very disappointed and upset that we didn't get a chance to be at the negotiating table and see what is going on first hand. Both sides are using us as bargaining chips in the negotiation process — we've taken a pro-student stance."

"Students are getting bombarded with propaganda. It's important to get information out but a lot of the stuff has been biased and skewed."

Karyn Sullivan, third-year political science student

"We are saying students have to take one side or the other and we support the profs in their demands. Students have to take a stand if we want the strike to end quickly."

"We pay the highest tuition and the profs are paid the lowest. No matter what the administration says, there is something wrong about that."

Eric McKee, vice-president Student Services

"The fact of the matter is that the faculty association has 700 voices, and they're voices that are very close to students so that I can well understand that students find those voices very persuasive. On the other hand I think there are lots of students who take a neutral stance, which I think makes a lot of sense. To say to both parties 'Look, it's your responsibility to get together to provide us with an education, not with a strike and we're not taking sides, we're putting pressure on both of you to solve this.'"

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