

# NEWS

THE BRUNS ONLINE: <http://www.unb.ca/web/bruns>

## Council Watch

JOSEPH FITZPATRICK

THE BRUNSWICKAN

"Student are using a lot more drugs," said Trish Davidson, Vice-President (Student Services) commenting on the UNBSU Health Plan at this week's council meeting. Davidson is not confident that the fee will stay the same next year since the "loss ratio" (amount of claims vs. amount of premiums) is nearly 100%, much to the dissatisfaction of Blue Cross. The result may mean either a fee increase or a reduction in the number of services offered.

This year's enrollment in the Health Plan stood at 4,081 up 4% from last year's 3,811. Currently 58% of UNB undergraduates are enrolled in the SU health plan. Davidson also noted that in 1995-96, only 8% of students were issued a reimbursement cheque, the remaining students received a credit to their UNB account. This could mean "considerable administrative savings" according to Davidson. Negotiations for next year are already underway.

The UNB Senate Student Services Committee will be meeting soon. Davidson, who sits on the committee, requested that any students with concerns about student services at UNB contact her. She also noted that an external review of student services commissioned by former UNB President Robin Armstrong has made its report to the new UNB President Elizabeth Parr-Johnston, and that the Student Services Committee will be considering the document soon. Until the committee meets, Davidson said she has been asked by Dean of Students Tom Austin not to discuss its contents.

Davidson circulated a report detailing the prices at the Paper Trail following the implementation of the Harmonized Sales Tax on April 1. There was some concern expressed by members of Council that the Paper Trail was not competitive with Graphic Services. Davidson pointed out that the Paper Trail gets its material at full retail from Graphic Services, and, as such, cannot compete with its supplier. This prompted a question by Vice-President Finance & Administration, Monique Scholten: "If services at the Paper Trail can be done at other places on campus for cheaper, how do you justify spend \$25,000 on the Paper Trail?" Davidson deflected this question by replying, "I'm not going to argue philosophy. I never took a philosophy course." Matt Hanrahan, Business Rep, questioned the motives of the VP Finance, adding that the question seemed to "come out of left field."

In her own report, Scholten said that the Finance Committee had met twice, once for 3 hours, and once for 9 hours. During those meetings, they met with a substantial portion of the organizations funded by the SU. "It's not as boring as it may seem," Scholten said, pointing out that it was good to meet all of these people and find out what they wanted to do.

Scholten was given leave by Council to spend up to \$3,000 on an audit of Brunswickan Publishing Incorporated, the company which oversees the operation of *The Brunswickan*. Concern about the internal workings of the paper has been growing, according to Scholten, especially in the area of revenue controls. The audit proposal was supported by the Editorial Board and accepted by the Board of Directors of Brunswickan Publishing Inc. last Thursday.

Anoushka Courage, VP (University Affairs), reported on the last meeting of the UNB Senate. The Nominating Committee of Senate, which recommends membership and terms of references for Senate Committees has recommended that a seat for a part-time student be added. Courage also added that Winter Carnival was a great success and thanked Engineering Representative Darren Thompson for all his hard work. Courage also noted that the winners of the Rowdy Bowl were the Oromocto Blues High School Team. To the victor goes the prize: a keg party for Oromocto High's football team.

Vice-President (External) Anthony Knight just got back from the launch of CASA's "Education Builds the Nation" campaign in Ottawa. Knight commented that he took part in his first press scrum at Parliament Hill. "I dug it," he said. Knight presented Council with samples of material that the Union could purchase as part of this campaign, including CASA Mints. At the CASA meeting in Montreal, the Bylaws & Policies of the organization came under scrutiny. One of the recommendations coming out of the meeting was that the National Director be given a two-year term. Knight also attended a New Brunswick Student Alliance Conference over the weekend. The NBSA heard presentations from experts on financial aid. The weekend also saw a discussion of the NBSA policy paper, "Open Doors, Open Minds." Knight circulated his preliminary response to UNB's Tuition Policy Task Force. After some discussion it was passed. Knight brought forward a motion to empower the External Committee to organize a rally in opposition of the UNB Tuition Policy recommendations.

President Jolie Hellmeister reported that the Employee evaluations have been completed and that Financial Awareness Week went well. The Festival of Cultural Diversity's first event was poorly attended, but it went really well. Hellmeister went to Fredericton High School as part of "FHS Day" recruitment efforts by UNB. She also noted that the SUB Advisory Board is still reviewing lease applications. The UNB Administration is looking for 2 students to sit on the Commencement Committee for next year.

Forestry Representative Blair Saulnier revealed that the Search Committee for the Dean of Forestry and Environmental Management has made its recommendation for an external candidate.

Two new organizations were recognized by the UNBSU. The Campus Responders will provide training for a team of students who will provide advanced first aid at any event. The SU also recognized the Rock and Ice Climbing Club, which will promote awareness of climbing and mountaineering in New Brunswick and Canada.

Five hundred dollars was granted to fund the UNB delegation to the North American Model United Nations conference. The total cost of the conference is \$6,000. A sum of \$450 was granted to the UNB Debating Team to attend the National Debating Championships at Dalhousie University. Scholten noted that the Grants Committee had given the Albert Ross Memorial English Society a grant of \$100 to help in the organization of their year-end banquet. A grant of \$463 was given to the Board of International Students to cover the cost of a phone bill on the condition that the phone be disconnected. According to Scholten, a new President has come forward and was surprised to find the bill for a phone of which he was unaware. Debate raged between Matt Hanrahan (Business) and Scholten over whether the Union should pay for the poor management of a society.

Mark Morgan has resigned as student-at-large on the UNB SU Finance Committee. Scholten is looking for another non-Councilor who is willing to take the position. Robert Prince resigned as Chair of Council because of his candidacy for Vice-President (External) in the upcoming SU elections. He was replaced by Chief Returning Officer and Deputy Chair Matt Tingley.

By the end of the meeting, Council usually winds up for the Announcement of Councilors. However, at this meeting Engineering Representative Darren Thompson sprung a proposal for a non-binding plebiscite to be included on the ballot in the 1997 elections. The proposal, which passed, would ask students whether the Union has served their needs and which services they have used.

## UNB-SJ's Baron will print again

AARON MAC EACHERN

THE BRUNSWICKAN

The UNBSJ campus student newspaper, *The Baron*, will print again.

Editor-in-Chief Jan Sorenson, is re-assured in knowing that the paper will print at least three more issues on a tri-weekly basis. "We've raised enough money to do at least three more issues. We raised our ad prices by about 30 or 40 percent and people bid, they took."

Talk of the paper's shutdown stemmed from earlier discussions about budget overspending. *The Baron* spent 90% of their \$9500 budget in half the allotted time frame. The newspaper knew of the tight budgeting to be done this year by the Student Representative Council, as did all clubs and organizations. SRC Vice-President of Finance Derrick Bishop informed all groups of the tight budget in a meeting held at the beginning of the year.

"This is your budget and once you spend it we are not giving you any more." Bishop and the SRC did not give *The Baron* any more money. Instead, they were given a two-week "grace" period in which to raise sufficient revenues to cover the cost of printing. The paper's staff worked to raise enough funds to send the paper to print. "In three days, we had raised \$800 by calling people we had not contacted before," noted Sorenson.

Sorenson looked to the future with confidence saying, "The future looks good."

## External review of student services recommends

# Dean's office to be split in two

GORDON LOANE

THE BRUNSWICKAN

UNB President Dr. Elizabeth Parr-Johnston has accepted several recommendations contained in a recent review of the Student Services Department.

Chief among them is the President's decision to split the job of the Dean of Students, who acts as both the overall administrator of the Student Services Department and as an ombudsperson.

A Dean of Student Affairs and Services would administer the department which looks after such areas as the Financial Aid Office, Counselling Services, Health Services, the International Student Advisor, Residences, Campus Ministries, Students with Disabilities and Student Placement Services.

The Ombudsperson would be separated from the Dean's office.

Just what role and function the Ombudsperson would perform is still under review.

A three person external review team, which concluded its work last Summer, found that the dual role performed by the Dean of Students creates "unnecessary conflict."

"The expectations and possible effectiveness of the position of Dean of Students is presently compromised by the dual role," said the written report, a copy of which has been obtained by *The Brunswickan*.

"The ability of the Dean, for example, to fulfil the administrative responsibilities of the residences are, without question, affected by the dual role," the report noted.

The Review Team noted that the Ombudsperson could serve at "arms length" from the university to investigate and report on matters where students are not treated fairly or justly.

Presumably the Ombudsperson would be appointed and report directly to the University's Board of Governors.

Currently, the Dean of Students acting

as Ombudsperson "appears to act as a student advocate and works to solve problem situations in the best interests of the student," the review report said.

The current Dean of Students reports directly to the President.

The External Review Report recommended that the new Dean of Student Affairs and Services be upgraded to Assistant Vice-President, but that



Dr. Tom Austin, Dean of Students and Dr. Elizabeth Parr-Johnston, UNB President.

external review report.

"We further accept in principle that greater centralization and possibly a facility for 'one-stop shopping' is an ideal with which we agree and one to which we wish to move over time," the President wrote.

But that decision must await a longer term campus plan which will involve a strategic look at currently available and

The President's response to the external reviewers concerns about understaffing and underfunding are interesting.

She shares the concern that resources available to Student Services are "thin" and that staff are sometimes "overwhelmed by the numbers of students requesting, requiring and in some cases demanding services and support."

But the President is holding out little hope that the situation will change much in the foreseeable future.

"Resources are and will continue to be very limited for the foreseeable future, even if an increase is recommended by the UNB Fredericton Budget Committee for the 1997 fiscal year and beyond," the President notes.

The President does note that a strong recommendation has been forwarded to the Budget Committee that additional resources be made available for Student Services in 1997-98, especially for Student Counselling.

The Student Services department appears to have a strong case for that increase.

Statistics supplied by the Dean of Students in his response to the External Review Committee report note that enrollment on the Fredericton Campus has increased steadily from 5,046 in 1980-81 to 6,947 in 1995-96. During this period the number of staff allocated to Student Services has declined from 26 positions in 1981-82 to 19.93 full-time equivalent positions last year.

The Dean also notes that UNB has continued to allocate a lower proportion of its resources to supporting students than most other comprehensive universities in the MacLean's Annual Survey.

"UNB has consistently scored very low in Student Services (as a percentage of the overall budget) with rankings of 10th of 12 in 1992, 8th of 13 in 1993, 6th of 7 in 1994, 9th of 9 in 1995," Dean of Students Tom Austin wrote.

## UNB SU responds to tuition paper

GORDON LOANE

THE BRUNSWICKAN

UNB students are calling the proposed per course tuition fee policy a "revenue grab" designed by the Administration as an alternative measure to recover the two per cent decrease in the university's provincial operating grant for 1997-98.

The comment came this week from the Student Unions on the Fredericton and Saint John campuses in a joint written brief to UNB's Task Force on Tuition and Other Student Fee Policies.

The Task Force proposals, if adopted, would see tuition increase by as much as 34.5 per cent in some faculties on the Fredericton campus and by 24.2 per cent for some programs on the Saint John campus in the upcoming academic year.

Students are worried about financial stress and the impact on a student from a lesser socio-economic background who may decide not to attend a higher costing program because of the

significant difference in cost between various faculties.

"We think it irresponsible that the decision of choosing to study a discipline could be based on the cost of the program," the students said in their written submission.

Students also contend that the Task Force has not studied the proposed change in tuition fee policy "with the proper understanding of the potential implications of such a system."

Students urge the Task Force to await the results of a Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) study currently underway before submitting a final report to the UNB Board of Governors.

The MPHEC study, to be released later this Spring, will look at rising tuition levels and its effects on accessibility to post-secondary education.

The Student Unions believe UNB officials should find alternative measures of generating revenue other than increasing student tuition fees. Just how UNB would do this is not mentioned

in the student submission.

Students also feel that the UNB Administration could be doing more to cushion the impact of any proposed tuition fee increases and the total cost of obtaining a post-secondary education.

They believe UNB should work with the federal and provincial governments to adopt work-study programs similar to those now in place in the United States, Ontario and British Columbia.

"These programs provide matching dollar value wage subsidies for students engaged in academically or career-oriented work on campus, but which do not displace existing support," the student report said.

"These programs provide valuable work experience and provide non-repayable aid to students with high financial need," the brief notes.

Students also want the Administration to expand the availability of repayable loans for students from low-income families.

The service, now available through

UNB's Financial Aid office, helps needy students with a maximum \$800 repayable loan with interest at one per cent plus prime.

The students are clearly worried about debt loads and about retaining first year students who come to UNB but who may be overwhelmed by the cost of a year in a post-secondary program and contemplate leaving their studies.

"There is also concern in the post-secondary world that the loan limits government Student Aid programs provide, federally and provincially, are not sufficient living allowances for students and therefore constitutes the need for alternative low-interest options," the report stated.

Reiterating comments made earlier, the Student Unions indicated their extreme displeasure that a student was not named as a member of the Task Force. The Student Unions from Fredericton and Saint John, together with the Graduate Students Association, plan a joint appearance before the Task Force just as soon as a schedule can be arranged.

## McConnell Hall caf: the walls are alive!

AARON MAC EACHERN

THE BRUNSWICKAN

With well over 2,000 students eating at McConnell Hall each day, things are bound to get messy from time to time.

However, students and faculty members who dine at McConnell, one of the University's four meal halls, often overlook the dirt throughout the hall.

However, when examined closely, one can see the unsanitary nature of some portions of the hall. Potato sculptures along the underside of the wooden dining tables to stains of whipped cream and ketchup on the paintings that adorn the walls of the cafeteria are a few of the examples and the frequenters of this establishment see it all.

Much of this is the result of students and their creative minds, while still a large amount is unpreventable dirt caused by the cafeteria's daily use.

The extent of the sludge and grime in the building goes far beyond the small portion of student creations. Cobwebs can be found in many corners of the building, while the mammoth glass windows are similarly stained with dust and dirt.

On the other hand, many parts of



Just tell me: are these guys on the meal plan?

AARON MAC EACHERN PHOTO

the cafeteria are spotless and receive continual cleaning before, during, and after each meal, such as the salad bar, sandwich bar, and beverage island. The floors throughout the building are mopped during the day, and the glass windows at the entrance to the hall are spotless, with the exception of a few

fingerprints.

How would the New Brunswick Department of Public Health services react if such a situation were reported to them? "We would call and ask them to clean up the mess. Then we would do a full inspection to make sure that the establishment is keeping its entire

operation sanitary," said a Department representative.

The sooner this problem is solved, the sooner students and faculty can eat in a clean, sanitary environment, without the worry of Charlotte coming out of her web, and down into their ice cream.