

Tuition Fees

An extraordinary tuition fee increase averaging \$500 will thump Dalhousie students in September, and many are casting about for a person to blame. Enter DSU President Ralph Cochrane.

"I was the President when it [the tuition increase] went through. That's the roll of the dice," Cochrane calmly responded to this search for a scapegoat.

The DSU President said the process had begun well before his term began and, while the DSU tried a variety of different proposals, he admitted they were "new to the process" and could not get the administration and the Board of Governors to budge from the proposed 24 per cent increase in tuition revenue.

To be fair, one-year student leaders have a difficult task. The Administration and the various levels of government that they must work with are staffed by professionals who were here before and will remain after they leave.

Nevertheless, students at Dal will begin paying amongst the highest fees in Canada in September. In Law, for example, tuition fees will rise from \$2,025 to \$2,575. Meanwhile, the faculty discusses cutting the highly-regarded legal clinic, as the shrinking budget and the increasing faculty-student ratio have made even the clinic a target for those in search of fiscal relief. The decline in the quality of education continues, and the cost increases.

While campaigning for the presidency last year, Cochrane dismissed claims by other student leaders

that a 20 per cent was a real possibility. Contradicting this earlier criticism, he now claims that "nobody thought last year it would go up as much as 20 per cent."

Indeed, one cannot help but see the contradictions inherent in the logic that Cochrane employs in defence of his team's record in office.

- While calling for a new, less militant leadership style during the campaign, he acknowledges when it came to negotiating with the university heads they were unable to get the Administration to budge from the massive proposed increase in tuition. The new bursary program is cited as evidence of the success of the collegial approach Cochrane prefers, but it will be difficult to convince potential new students not to worry because, once they pay their tuition and register, they may be eligible for some new assistance or a campus job.

- While calling for greater student participation in the campaign to stop the tuition increase, he was at a loss to explain what means, other than a forum and the rally, were employed to achieve this admirable goal. Cochrane admitted the rally "didn't go very well."

- While claiming that "on a personal level" he was assured by members of the Board of Governors that this increase was "it, the big one," he admitted that no such agreement was achieved by he and the DSU, and when they approached the Board of Governors for a formal agreement to this effect, they "didn't seem interested."

Most disturbing, however was Cochrane's inability

to provide any coherent advice to his successors on what to do should the tuition issue raise its ugly head again. After a long pause, Cochrane admitted that giving advice to his successors "isn't easy, but it should be." He did reiterate the importance of keeping students and Board of Governors informed of the issues, but one is struck by just how entirely vapid a response this is, considering that his term is coming to an end.

Is it fair, then, to lay the blame for the tuition hike on Cochrane and his team? No, it isn't.

Doing so would let the administration, the provincial and federal Progressive Conservative governments and you and I, the students at Dalhousie, off the hook. Whether by active budget cutting or passive submission to the decisions of others, we each contributed to the result and must accept some of the blame.

Nevertheless, Cochrane asked students to elect him based on certain ideas and approaches that he believed to be a formula for success, and the DSU was certainly not successful in regard to their campaign statements. And, assessing Cochrane and his team on the basis of these self-made standards, one is struck by how disappointing the results of their efforts have been with respect to this issue. C.

Matt Certosimo

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Women

Why do some women fear to promote things that would make their lives easier? Usually, it's because it means change and the equalist view of life is that women are allowed on board as long as they don't change anything.

Patti Dow is the highest-ranking woman in the DSU and she bristles at the word feminist. For her it conjures up visions of special favours, undermining women's achievement, and irritants such as the women-only Take Back the Night March last October which she was personally opposed to. Excluding men tells them they are bad, says Dow, and we should be including men to educate them.

But that's just exactly where the DSU is falling down, says Chris Bellon, of the Dal Women's Group. And despite rah-rah campus spirit promises by Dow and running mate Cochrane to dramatically boost student involvement in the union, Bellon says she senses DSU recruitment of women is zip. The women's group, a B society, got a \$500 start-up grant, but the DSU has been otherwise been lukewarm to it and women's interests in general.

Christine Schmidt, of Dal Women and the Law, blanks out at first when asked to say what the DSU has done for women, but eventually lists lack of action on everything from daycare to walk-home programs for late-night female students to fighting tuition hikes in order to allow women, traditionally lower wage-earners, access to education.

Coincidentally, the DSU has done zip for women's concerns in an administration where women council members are outnumbered almost 3 to 1 by men (13 to 33). There could be 99 per cent men there for all I care - as long as women's concerns were being listened to. But somehow that never seems to be the case, and really, never can be.

The only person who deals with women's issues is VP External Lynn MacMicheal - and that only as a personal interest, not a DSU duty, says Dow, who adds that she herself does not think about women's issues.

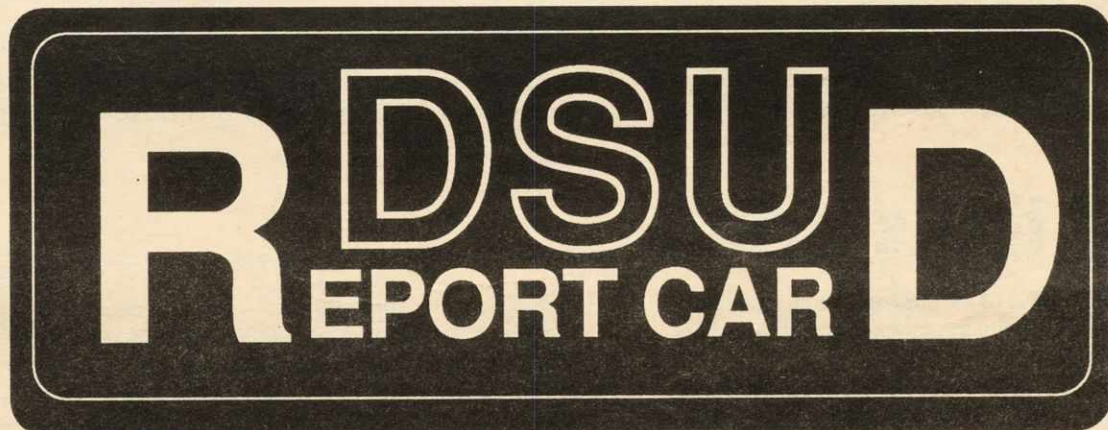
In fact, the women-only march violated the DSU constitution which prohibits discrimination on the basis of, among other things, sex. The old reverse discrimination bullshit. While some interpret the clause to aid women, the DSU uses it to fight women's events and appease wounded men. Grade "F".

Heather Hueston

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Volunteer at CKDU

Feminist



Entertainment

The Dalhousie Student Union seems to be doing a good job of entertaining students through campus activities this year.

Scott MacIntyre, director of Campus Activities said he is "trying to spend Student Union money better".

Orientation Week was "the best orientation they had in years" said MacIntyre. All the shows sold out and there was a big turnout of students. MacIntyre felt the it was important to the campus because it set the tone for the rest of the year.

Winter Carnival is coming up this semester. For anyone who has been here in the past, Carnival has not created any large interest from the student body. This year it will be scaled down to three days. MacIntyre said it will be "short and sweet, and we're not spending a million dollars".

Another activity is the Speaker Series. There have been three speakers so far and there will be two more this semester. MacIntyre feels these lectures are focused at different students than most of the other activities. The turnout for these has not been impressive (except for the Morgentaler lecture). "I don't think that you can evaluate [the series] on numbers" said MacIntyre, even though he would like to see better attendance. He feels this is one of the educational things that Campus Activities is doing.

One of the biggest centers for activities is the Grawood. Debbie Brown, manager of the Grawood said "this is one of the better years".

They have bands regularly without any cover charge and the Grawood has been working with CKDU to

promote the shows. Student turnout has been excellent.

Other activities to get students into the Grawood have been: Sunday movie night for students of all ages, and Saturday society night, when societies book the Grawood for their own activities. Both these have been extremely successful.

You may notice that there aren't Super Subs anymore. MacIntyre has re-organized the structure of those evenings to include just one big name band. Out of the ten top recording acts in Canada, he feels Dalhousie has seen about six of them. He thinks he might do Super Subs again but not as frequently as before.

MacIntyre feels he should "program to more target groups". He will be trying Coffee Houses this semester and would like to see more non-alcoholic activities organized.

Campus Activities could be focusing a little more on student entertainment by students. Comedy night has student comedians, and there has been a Jazz band from the Music department. However there has been no interaction with the Theatre department, which could lead to all kinds of possibilities.

The activities organized so far have been cheap and entertaining.

D.S.U. gets an A.

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