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STEVE PATTINGALE

## Dig deeper: Tuition hike on the way

BY GINA STACK

It is all but official — students at Dalhousie will be handed another large increase in tuition fees this September.

"I think that two years ago — when they talked about that next four years of tuition increases — the university had talked about 10 per cent increases per year, so I think students are prepared for a 10 per cent, an eight per cent increase in tuition," said Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) President Brad MacKay.

MacKay made his comments after Monday's senate meeting. The main topic on the agenda was the Senate Academic Priorities and Budget Committee's (SAPBC) response to the president's Budget Advisory Committee's tenth report (BAC X).

BAC X was released in November 1996. The report is a discussion paper on Dalhousie's financial outlook for the next three years.

According to BAC X, Dalhousie will face close to a three per cent decrease in government grants for the 1997-98 school year. In order for the university to continue running at its current level, funding must be made up from other sources.

In its response to the report, SAPBC stated that three important factors had not been taken into account. Tuition increases, salary increases and budget cuts were not included in the report. These three factors will play a crucial role in the balancing of the 1997-98 budget.

BAC Chair Gil Winham said that it will not be easy to decide where to find the money.

"It is interesting to examine the budgets of the last three years in preparing for this year's budget," Winham said.

"We have faced a shortfall of about \$10 million in government grants and the cost of running

the university has rose by about \$8 million. These challenges have been met by an increase in tuition fees by about \$10 million in the last three years, cutbacks to the university budget amounting to about \$8 million and faculty and staff received a three per cent salary rollback and a salary freeze since 1994. All three groups are in a position to feel grieved about the budget for the last three years."

In response to these facts, SAPBC suggested that with elections likely to be held in the next year at both the provincial and federal levels, post-secondary education could be made a political issue. SAPBC further suggested that "universities lobby extensively, but need help from active students and parents, to give vocal support for enhanced post-secondary funding." In addition, the SAPBC strongly encouraged BAC to "design a campaign that would encourage such activism."

There was general agreement among the senators that lobbying the government was a good idea, but no motion was put forward with regard to this issue.

SAPBC member Norman Pereira said that in the absence of increased government funding, tuition increases, salary cuts and the maintenance of academic programs had to be discussed. Pereira said that the maintenance of academic programs was dearest to the committee members.

Senators also acknowledged that salaries are out of their control. This November, the current provincial government-imposed wage restraint legislation (1994-97) will end. For the first time in six years the university will enter into collective bargaining with its various employee groups. Since labour represents about 80 per cent of the university's expenditures, the outcome of these talks will have a profound

impact on university spending.

Student representative Dan Clark made a plea on behalf of Dalhousie students to keep tuition levels steady. He stated that many students could not withstand another 10 per cent increase in tuition fees.

"By increasing tuition fees you are basically tapping a well that is dry," Clark said.

Senator Ruth Bleasdale also argued against tuition increases.

"We can't forget that students are the reason we are here," said Bleasdale. "We must keep tuition as low as possible."

Pereira raised the issue of making vertical instead of horizontal cuts to university programs. This would mean drastically cutting or eliminating certain programs instead of distributing cuts equally amongst departments.

"Let's set our priorities; set a hit list. What programs are more important? Why not address it here [in senate]? This is the place," said Pereira.

Winham argued that vertical cuts were too difficult for BAC to address.

"They are too divisive," said Winham. "Different cuts take a lot of data and in this case we faced bigger concerns than fine tuning among programs."

"We are now relying more on student tuition for our operating budget."

DSU President MacKay said that students cannot be expected to fix budgetary problems.

"I think that it has to be realized that solutions can't continuously come from rises in tuition fees," MacKay said.

"That's not to say that students don't have some sympathy for the position that faculties are in and the position that the Deans are in trying to maintain a certain level of budgets for their programs and maintain a certain level of quality and that's why at the end of this month Chris Lydon

(DSU vice-president academic) and I are off to Ottawa to meet with other members of CASA (Canadian Alliance of Student Associations) and to launch our national education campaign to try to increase the amount of funding that is coming from government."

The meeting was adjourned with general discontentment surrounding the university's options for a balanced 1997-98 budget.

Tomorrow, BAC will release its 11<sup>th</sup> report. This report will lay out actual cuts to programs and tuition increases for the next school year.

## Improvements delayed and denied

BY TIM COVERT

Delay and disorder were the order of the day at Sunday's Dalhousie Student Union council meeting.

The budget of the Dalhousie Student Union (DSU) was presented one month late at the meeting and a proposed amendment to the document — presented to councillors minutes before the session began — was met with out of order discussion and at least one inappropriate comment. It was finally tabled so that it could be reviewed by the Budget and Finance Committee (B&F).

"They've already reviewed the budget that was presented at council and now they have to review those amendments," said DSU treasurer Michael Murphy.

A second controversial motion requiring a greater number of councillors to be present during discussion of crucial issues was defeated despite the acknowledgement of many councillors of its good intentions.

When Board of Governor's representative Curtis Cartmill

presented his six-page budget amendment proposal, he and Murphy engaged in a great deal of out of order discussion.

Cartmill was twice called out of order by council chair Jessica Berry. He protested the intervention of executive vice-president Katherine Hannah, who seemed to be instructing the chair.

Hannah said that Berry simply asked a question about whether a part of the debate was correct.

The VP was one of those who voted to table Cartmill's motion, an action which further delays a completed budget. She said she wasn't opposed to the budget amendments but thought that they should be reviewed by B&F and the Treasurer.

"I was concerned about some of the departmental amendments because Curtis didn't actually speak to any of the department heads," said Hannah.

Murphy had some trouble seeing how Cartmill settled upon the changes he proposed.

"I would have appreciated some time to look behind the

cont. on p. 3: "denied"