

Job for women's union?

Make the men feel welcome

MONTREAL (CUP) — McGill University's women's group will have to stop alienating students with its "strong lesbian views" or it could face further cuts to its budget, says the council's vice president.

"The Women's Union has alienated a lot of women on campus because of its strong lesbian views," said Titi Nguyen, student council vice president, finance. "It is a small clique of about 30 people. We can't spend that much money on so few people."

McGill student council's budget committee cut the group's

funding by 13 per cent this year, to \$4,500. It had originally recommended the allocation go down to \$2000 because the union was "not serving the entire community."

But Women's Union co-ordinator Gwen Burrows said the attitude is misguided.

"Why are we running a birth control co-op if we have these 'strong lesbian views'?" she said. "And what business is it of his anyway?"

"This is a way of undermining what we're trying to do here. No matter who is running it, the

Women's Union deals with issues that affect all women at McGill — sexual harassment, sexism in academia — and people should

Jock night

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but ended up making a cash donation of \$25. He refused to donate time or money to the Association for the Mentally Retarded, as requested by the complainants.

"He was very hostile," says Osbourne. "He kind of had the attitude that 'you bitches don't have the right to do this to me'."

Appalled by the attitude of the respondent, Osbourne and Desveaux decided to make the rest of the team accountable for their alleged role in encouraging the act of harassment.

The filed a second complaint against the remaining team members on January 2nd, and again decided to try mediation.

The women decided to let Vicki Wood represent them in mediation, after receiving implicit threats from a member of the team. Wood was able to negotiate a tougher settlement with the remaining team members than that which had been reached with the initial respondent. The punishment was stiffer, producing cash settlements of \$25 from each player for both the Association for the Mentally Retarded and a battered women's shelter. The respondents forfeited the right to enter the campus pub at any time, with the exception of Fridays. Eleven respondents agreed to the settlement; seventeen did not.

"A lot of them just didn't take it seriously," explains Osbourne. "They thought it would just go away if they just didn't deal with it." Osbourne and Desveaux decided to force the issue by calling for a formal hearing, requested in a letter sent to the chair of the sexual harassment committee on February 19th. "Unfortunately, at that point, we all lost power of negotiation," says Osbourne. "Now the case fell into the lap of the administration."

Two months after requesting the hearing, Osbourne was finally called to testify, on a day coinciding with a final exam. And three months after her hearing, she says, "I hadn't heard a thing."

When Vicki Wood left her position at Saint Mary's in early June, she told Osbourne that she should be receiving a summary of the final report of the sexual harassment committee in the

be made aware of them."

Titi said no one has complained to him about the politics of the Women's Union. He does not know how many lesbians are members of the group, nor can he give examples of anything done to alienate women.

He wants the group to pay more attention to how many people use its services, keep better track of inventory and change the constitution.

mail "within days". Instead, Osbourne found that no one would answer her queries about the case, not even the new sexual harassment advisor, who arrived in July and was apparently not authorized to release any information on the progress of the committee.

It was late July before Osbourne was finally granted an appointment with the chair of the sexual harassment committee, Dr. Joseph Jabbar, also the vice-president of SMU. He told her that the final report of the committee had already been submitted to the president, and that the matter was out of his hands.

Osbourne sent a memo to Dr. Kenneth Ozmon, president of St. Mary's, asking him to contact her regarding the case. Two days later she received a letter from Ozmon, stating that no final report had been issued, and scolding her for being too forward with her questions to Dr. Jabbar. Osbourne replied to his letter that same day, pointing out that Jabbar had informed her that the investigation was finished.

After that, says Osbourne, "He made absolutely no attempt to contact me whatsoever. He left me with the impression that he cared very little about the matter."

In the meantime, Osbourne decided to educate herself about the sexual harassment policy at SMU. She found that the administration had failed to adhere to at least two of their own set policies in dealing with her case.

Under the dictates of the university's official sexual harassment procedures, she should have been provided with a copy of Vicki Woods' summary of the case prior to her formal hearing, and granted access to files used by the sexual harassment committee. She was provided with neither.

Frustrated, Osbourne decided to make up a press release, charging the administration with failing to adequately address the problem to sexual harassment on campus. In the press release, issued on September 8th, she states, "By failing to respond with prompt disciplinary action, the university sends a message to future offenders that this type of sexual harassment is acceptable behaviour at Saint Mary's University."

Within days, a local radio station had picked up the story.

The constitution, last revised in 1982, says men cannot become voting members. They can work for the Women's Union, and attend meetings and get-togethers, but women can vote to exclude them from events.

While he doesn't think men should be able to vote in Women's Union matters, he said they should be able to play a greater role in the organization.

Finally, Osbourne received a phone call from Joseph Jabbar, who told her that the final report had been drawn up, and that she would be receiving a summary of the committee's findings.

On September 14th, she received a summary of the report. She found that five of the team members never showed up for a hearing, and the committee pronounced the team members who refused to settle through mediation not guilty of sexual harassment. At the same time, the committee declared that "some of the offensive behaviour which took place at the Gorsebrook Lodge on the afternoon of November 27, 1988, constituted acts of sexual harassment" and "their behaviour did violate the rights of other patrons of the Pub and may have been subject to disciplinary procedures governing other aspects of behaviour on campus".

Osbourne asks, "Did it take them ten months to realize, 'yes, this was sexual harassment, but no, you guys aren't really guilty'?"

Although the case is officially closed, the committee has recommended that the five team who failed to come before the committee be referred to the president of the university, who "should take appropriate disciplinary measures with regard to their behaviour".

President Ozman was unavailable for comment on the case, and Joseph Jabbar, chair of the sexual harassment committee, refused comment.

The chair of the sexual harassment committee at Dalhousie, Barbara Harris, is able to explain the sexual harassment procedure at Dal and comment generally on aspects of the St. Mary's case.

She says, "What we've tried to do is to recognize that sexual harassment is a power issue." If the committee set hearing dates that are inconvenient for the parties involved or ignores requests for information, says Harris, then that's an abuse of power.

At Dalhousie, she points out, "The complainant is not a fringe part of the procedure. We tried to structure it so the complainant is kept very much involved." Adds Harris, "People tend to go through a lot of questioning — people who are dealing with sexual harassment have a responsibility to recognize that and to go about minimizing it."



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DALHOUSIE (Howe Hall)	9:30 p.m.	9:45 p.m.	
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Destination	Return Trips Leaves J.J. Rossey's	Arrives
MSVU	11:30 p.m.	11:45 p.m.
ST. MARY'S	12:10 p.m.	12:25 p.m.
DALHOUSIE	12:45 p.m.	12:55 p.m.

Schedule subject to change