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By-law changes could cause conflict

by Karen Burgess

The issue of Student Union recognition and funding for political groups was discussed again at Wednesday night's Council meeting, but with a new twist.

During the January 20 meeting, a motion to rescind the official recognition, though limited, of several political groups was defeated by a narrow margin. At that time, political youth representatives had agreed to a compromise with the Union which would see their official recognition rescinded but their privileges intact.

Under an interim policy, the groups were given recognition with the stipulations that they would be ineligible for financial support from the Union, that they would only be able to use the poster run service for notices of

meeting, and that they could not use the Student Union name in conjunction with any promotions.

At this week's meeting, the policy was ratified as an official by-law of the UNB Student Union.

In a new wrinkle, another set of proposed by-law amendments were given their first reading and, pending publication in the Brunswickan and a three week discussion period, could be passed, and would conflict with the newly passed by-law.

The by-law amendments would change constitutional and financial policies of the Union. Amendments proposed, on advice of the SU's legal council, resolve that the UNBSU not fund or recognize "any club, organization, or group which restricts its membership, or discriminates within its membership, on the basis of gender, race, religion, national or

ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age, family status, mental or physical disability or political belief."

A letter distributed to SU Councilors by Vice President University Affairs, Anna MacDonald, names several groups that would be affected by the new amendments, those being the political youth parties, GALA (Gay and Lesbian Alliance), the Muslim Student Association, and the UNB Navigators.

The Councilors' packages also included several motions which were not addressed at Council. These motions, which were not read and therefore are not under consideration at this time, recommended the revocation of the constitutions of the above mentioned groups as "per the recommendation" of the SU's solicitor: their memberships were restricted by either political or religious beliefs.

Representatives from three of the political youth groups having or seeking recognition were present at the meeting. Jason Morton of the Young Liberals, Dennis McCarron of the Fredericton campus Progressive Conservative Youth and Chris Rogers of the Fredericton Campus New Democratic Association each expressed concern over the pro-

posed by-law amendments, but stressed that they wished to avoid any possible conflicts with the Student Union.

"If these recommendations were followed the following recognized clubs and societies would be affected:

GALA,
Muslim Student Association,
Fredericton-Campus New Democratic Youth Association
Fredericton-Campus PC Youth U.N.B. Navigators."

-MacDonald

Jason Morton believes that the association of the political groups with discriminatory practices is unfair, and points out that all of the groups accept members of other political parties.

This policy is similar to that of GALA. As is stated in a letter to Anna MacDonald from GALA Vice President James Whitehead which was included in the councilor's handout: "GALA is not exclusively gay, as gay-positive heterosexuals are also welcome to the events."

SU Vice President External Affairs, Tammy Yates, explains

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Commission calls for major changes

by Gordon Loane

New Brunswick's Commission on Excellence in Education wants to see major changes in the provincial student aid program. And universities need to take steps to improve the quality of teaching.

These are just two of 39 recommendations contained in the Commission's final report released this week. The Commission, which studied higher education in the province for the last year, was co-chaired by former Liberal cabinet minister Algea Landry and former UNB President James Downey.

"The provincial sums available for Student Aid are not generous and have not kept pace with rising costs," the report states. "It is also questionable whether the present Student Aid program offers sufficient inducement to lower income families who are concerned by the level of indebtedness a student can accumulate during an educational program listing several years."

In addition, the Student Aid program is not well suited to the needs of mature and part-time students, the Commission says.

To fix the problem, the Commission suggests an increase in provincial funding for Student Aid. In addition, the provincial government should support the Development of a new national student aid program, including an income-contingent repayment plan after graduation.

The Commission suggests that, if the federal government does not choose to change the

program, the province should consider, as a temporary measure, increasing its support to a level where the total funding available to the poorest students will at least equal the full cost of attending a New Brunswick university.

UNB Student Union Vice-President Tammy Yates says the income contingent repayment plan for student loans seems unlikely to be adopted at the federal level: "Even Commission co-chair James Downey admits the scheme will not be adopted."

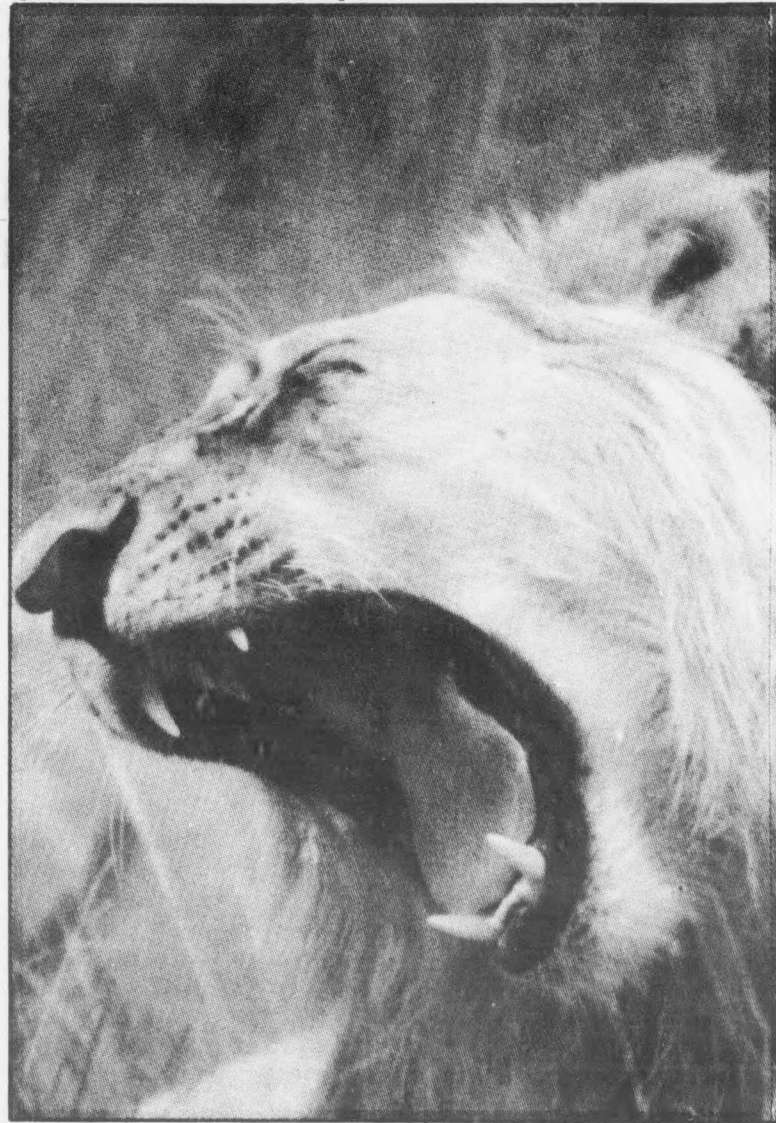
Overall, Yates is disappointed with the Commission's report. She says the report lacks vision and seems to be a document that mostly advocates the status quo.

As far as teaching is concerned, the Commission says universities have an image problem. "To improve the quality of teaching, universities need to ensure that weight is given to the matter in career-advancement. More teaching evaluations and assessments are needed and faculty need more support to increase the quality of their teaching."

The Commission also wants universities to give greater attention to issues which relate to the quality of student life. "Most academic leaders see a great need for more effective support services which will improve students' chances for academic and personal success," the report says.

On a related matter, the Commission is concerned that university students seem to be dropping out of the system too soon: "There is a wide spread

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Yawn! - No, this lion was not at Wednesday night's Student Union Council meeting, it is pictured sunning itself in the Akanga National Park in Rwanda. See page seven for a news feature on Rwanda, featured as part of a four-part series on Africa leading up to Africa Night, February 6.

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2-5 cm of snow expected on Friday, tapering off around mid-morning leaving a sunny afternoon with temperatures around -4. On Saturday, expect sunny conditions with temperatures ranging from -20 to -11. On Sunday, there is a 50% chance of flurries.

Aids Awareness facts:

On an average day...

• 15 Canadians are told they are HIV - positive

• 2 people are diagnosed with AIDS

• 1 person dies from the disease

• The federal government spends \$ 43,836 on AIDS research

-from Which do you prefer: Chunky or Smooth? What Canadians Eat, Watch, Read, Buy and Do... On An Average Day, by Heather Brazier, 1992, HarperCollins Publishers.