

The DSU is the official voice of over 10,000 students on campus. The objectives of the DSU are: to defend the rights of Dalhousie students both on and off campus; to promote accessibility and quality education at Dalhousie; and to provide affordable services to all Dalhousie students. On the political side, the DSU Council represents 60 students from a diverse number of fields. The Council meets every second week to discuss stu-

representatives on the University's Board of Governor's, Senate and on roughly 20 other committees covering issues from the Student Health Plan to Program and Planning. Besides political endeavors, the Dalhousie Student Union manages and controls the Student Union building (SUB). Within the SUB, the DSU provides you with a number of services to make your life at Dalhousie more enjoyable. These services include the Grawood Pub, the Games Room, the Corner Pocket (our snazzy new pool room), Office Services, society space, meeting rooms health insurance, our own radio station and some of Halifax's best concerts. The DSU has a lot to offer you. Take the opportunity to use the services provided for you and become interested and involved because your contribution is important.

## What is the DSU you may ask?

dent issues. Students have an opportunity to participate in the democratic process as well as engage in stimulating debates. The DSU also has



Communicating the message about the Dalhousie Student Union's activities is not an easy task. For this reason that a wide variety of information mediums can assist you in finding out about the DSU. Basically, it is information at your fingertips. These services are provided to you compliments of the DSU Communications Committee.

Bulletin Boards - DSU is posted in the glass bulletin board in the SUB. For residence people, DSU Boards are setup.

Gopher - On the Internet, connect into Gopher/Dalinfo/Student Activities/DSU. Updated information about the DSU will be on-line for your viewing.

Phonelines - Still being formatted. Call 494-6969 or 494-2146 for up to date information about DSU Services for a prototype.

Email - Feel free to email DSUCOMM@ac.dal.ca for DSU Info or any of the DSU Executive members.

Electronic Signs - These signs are located in the Union Market, above the elevator in the SUB and in the Tupper Cafeteria.

Mailouts - If you belong to a society, ask your executive to show you a copy of the Society Mailout. The mailout features DSU issues and is sent out 4 times annually. The second mailout is due out in the Gazette - Check their page of our student newspaper for DSU Activities. Flip to the back to see what is going on in the local community in the Dalender section.

CKDU - listen to the most listened radio station in Halifax for DSU based show, or tune into Blowin' Smoke Mondays 4:30pm

# DSU Information Systems

Office - Come visit our office on the 2nd floor of the SUB, or call 494-1106. Our administrative assistant will gladly direct you through the proper channels.

by Rod MacLeod  
President  
Dalhousie Student Union 1994

Recently federal Finance minister Paul Martin has said that "come hell or high water...we will hit our deficit targets". I applaud the minister for his commitment to our serious deficit and debt problems in Canada. I am wondering, however, who will carry the burden of this hell (or high water).

Currently the federal minister of Human Resources and Development, Lloyd Axworthy, is overhauling the way social programs will be delivered; it has been dubbed Social Security Review. The Review is meant to help the federal government meet their budget targets.

Included in the Review is changes to the way the federal government funds higher education. Post-secondary (university and community college) students will be hit particularly hard by this measure. But in order to put the proposed changes into context, the current system must be explained.

Taxpayers pay for social programs through income tax dollars sent to Ottawa. A portion of these tax dollars comes back to the provinces to pay for programs under provincial jurisdiction. This system is known as Established Programs Financing (EPF). In Nova Scotia our government uses EPF money to fund post-secondary education and health care.

Currently universities in Nova Scotia receive \$230 million from the provincial government each year. Almost all of this money is from the EPF program. Automatically one realizes that any reduction in transfers (EPF) will have serious effects on our universities as our provincial government does not have the money to make up for any shortfalls. Faced with decreased funding, universities will inevitably jack up tuitions and reduce the quality of their offerings (meaning increased class sizes, less facilities etc). This is exactly what they have done in recent years as EPF funding has declined.

But it gets worse. Proposals from Axworthy's office suggests that EPF will be eliminated completely for post-secondary education. In its place, the suggestion is, students will be given a "voucher" from the federal government worth about \$4000 or \$5000.

The student then gives this voucher to whatever university they attend. The voucher replaces the money that universities currently receive from the provincial government through EPF. The kicker is that not only does the student have to pay their tuition (~\$3

000) but the voucher would actually be a loan that the student would have to pay back. In one fell swoop the cost of attending university would increase 300 per cent from \$3 000 to \$7 - \$8 000.

Besides the obvious effect of reducing accessibility to university education, there are other, more broad based ramifications of such a program. Firstly, the debt load of graduating students would dramatically increase. Under the voucher system, a four year Arts student who pays their tuition and the voucher with a student loan, would graduate with a \$32 000 debt. Getting a job with only an Arts degree is difficult enough. The second problem is the voucher system would have a negative impact on our economy. For example, people between the ages of 25 and 35 are major consumers in our economy. They are big consumers of durable goods like washers and dry-

ers, refrigerators, cars, stereos and the like. What would these large debt loads mean for graduating students and the economy? Students coming out of university with a \$2 - \$300 monthly student loan payment would quickly find

their purchasing options reduced. If the student were making around \$25 000 annually, less their income taxes, Canadian Pension Plan, Unemployment Insurance (etc), it leaves them with roughly \$1 500 a month. Next you subtract their student loan payment of, say, \$200 and they wind up with \$1 300 in which to live. Less than a genius can predict these things like a mortgage or a new car. Instead, they will live very much as they did during university. The problem with this analysis, you might say, is that the student will obviously have to work harder or work for a better job in order to pay for the privilege of attending university. Not a problem, really, until you consider the second kicker to the voucher system. The federal government is looking at a new way for students to

repay their student loans. The system is called the Income Contingent Loan Repayment Program (ICLRP). The premise of the system is that students do not have to begin repaying their student loan until they reach some threshold income level. Currently this level is to be around \$25 000. So students who make \$25 000 or more will have to start repaying their student loans. The trick with ICLRPs, however, is that the more you make, the higher your monthly payments will be. Sounds rational until you factor in the scenario mentioned in the above paragraph. People who are out there in the work force and who are working for a better higher paying job (so they can get a mortgage for a home or car loan) will have to pay more under the ICLR system. So even if they make more money, more will be stripped away, ostensibly leaving them exactly where they started.

Right now you send tax dollars to Ottawa and they give it to the provinces to fund post-secondary education and health. The new proposal suggests that you will send tax dollars to Ottawa and they will loan it to students to fund universities. So maybe the

federal deficit of \$5 billion. You see the EPF system is a liability on the government's books. Once they eliminate this and turn the money into loans, they would create an asset. So what was once a liability of ~\$2.3 billion now becomes an asset of the same amount and thus the \$5 billion turnaround in the government's finances. Undoubtedly a key selling feature for the new program.

It seems to me that the federal government is taking concrete steps to reduce the number of people attending university. \$32 000 is a lot of money for an Arts degree. How many people can afford that kind of debt? I certainly cannot. Further, what would decreased enrollments in universities mean? How about higher tuitions so that the universities would not have to lay off faculty (which have collective agreements and tenure to protect their jobs)? That

ment thought about this? We all know people who can just barely afford university. If tuitions go higher, they will be pushed out. Where will they go to school? Community college? If so, does the federal government have plans to update those schools? Nova Scotia community colleges are full now; how could they possibly accept large numbers of new students? And this is to say nothing of the kind of education one can expect from our community colleges, much less the stigma that society has placed on their graduates. Has anybody thought about this? These are the kinds of questions I have for Mr. Axworthy. I hope he and his committee can answer them because the DSU will be attending hearings on the matter in the next several weeks. Keep your ears peeled because these are momentous times for post-secondary education in Canada.

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**DAGS Reps**  
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**Engineering Rep**  
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**Senate Reps**  
ARTS - Chris Lydon  
DAGS - Nina Butlin  
HEALTH SCIENCES - Chris Gray  
LAW - Amy Wortman  
MANAGEMENT - Nathan Laurie  
MEDICINE - Letizia Gardin  
SCIENCE - Natalia Archer

**Science Reps**  
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## 1994-95 Dalhousie Student Union Council Members

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**Secretary for Council**  
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**B-GLAD Rep**  
Josef Tratnik

# Axworthy's reforms mean trouble for students

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