

## SCIENCE &amp; ENVIRONMENT

## A greener future for Dalhousie

BY DANIEL MCKILLOP

"Greening Dalhousie Campus" was a workshop and seminar session held in the University Club this past Saturday, organized by students and professors of the School for Resource and Environmental Studies. The chief goals of the workshop involved reviewing Dalhousie's academic and operational practices in order to "generate a wide range of ideas on how Dalhousie University can become more environmentally sustainable in the future."

A thorough and large scale brainstorming and group discussion session was held to develop a vision on how various campus programs — academic and otherwise — can be improved to make Dal more environmentally friendly. Contrary to the usual expectations, the afternoon wasn't spent only recapitulating conventional solutions, but proved to be a necessary and refreshing movement towards actually changing the university for the better.

Present were a few members of the Senate Committee, the body which will be advised on the implementation of principles in a particular document known as the Tallories Declaration, a 10 point action plan drafted specifically for universities. The trick will lie in making it economical for people to be responsible.

The Tallories Declaration was based on reports written by the U.N. in the 1980s recommending countries to consider sustaining natural environments as a part of national policy. The document resulted out of the concern of universities regarding the part they play in helping to create a healthy and sustainable environment. The declaration was initially signed by 20 presidents of various North American Universities, but presently includes some 300 such institutions. Although Dalhousie was not one of the original 20 members, the president eventually accepted the Senate proposal and signed on as the Declaration gained prominence.

Open to everyone, including members of the Halifax community outside of Dalhousie, the workshop was an early step in an ambitious process for ensuring that the principles which constitute the declaration realize themselves.

The document asks that universities respond to the urgent challenge of adopting environmentally sound practices such as ecological restoration and reforestation.

The Tallories Declaration emphasizes the major role which universities play in "the education, research, policy formation, and information exchange" necessary to

courses. As well, the possibility of mandatory core courses in environmental studies were debated, which could be established through a networking program between universities in Halifax and in the rest of Nova Scotia. Specialized degrees and general education of environmental issues were considered of equal importance. Educating the

encourage researchers to strongly consider areas of study that will lead to understanding the sustainability of natural environments.

Dal will also be expected to manage its buildings and grounds while considering the welfare of the surrounding environment. This includes landscaping, materials and industrial means used. Each build-

overcome, since it is a widely held view that 'cheaper is better.' It is a belief that often results in serious ecological problems, and compromises the larger picture. A system of full cost accounting should be used instead, where such things as waste generation and fuel cost are considered.

According to Ray Cote, the chair of the Senate Committee on the Environment, the university has done a great deal of positive action despite the long way left to go.

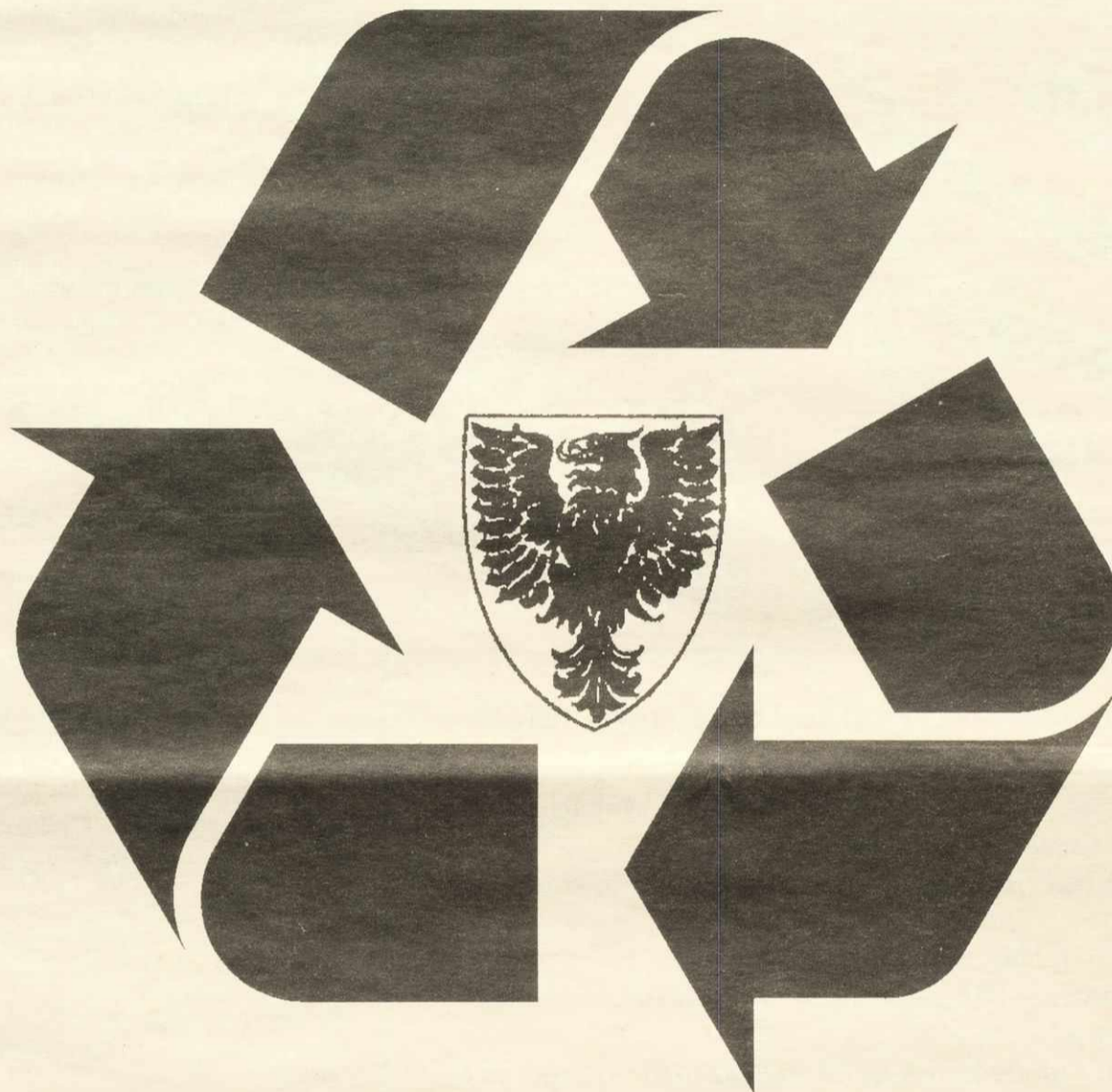
"Environmental courses have expanded over the years, and waste reduction will have been reduced for next year by 56 percent from what it was in 1990." This progress has been facilitated by such improvements as extending the heating plant to DalTech.

As well, many students of environmental studies have made and plan to deliver presentations to various community and academic groups.

"We don't necessarily want to lead this," Mr. Cote said, "but we can join and increase political power through collectivity. There is a heck of a lot of interaction that isn't understood and is often not published."

Indeed, it is vital that community, research, institutional and independent groups work together in order to maximize their influence. Joint purchasing relations with Atlantic universities may be a future possibility for increasing such a leverage.

The Canadian economy depends on natural resources, but the present quality of environmental education is poor. Moreover, little is known about what the university contributes toward establishing a more efficient and sustainable environment. Hopefully the Tallories Declaration will be made a priority at Dal.



make the goals of the document possible.

For the discussion component of the workshop, everyone present were divided into groups. Among the many issues that were covered concerning the specific role Dalhousie will play, it was generally accepted that environmental issues and solutions should be taught as a component of disciplines such as economics and health, and as a part of education and ethics

teachers and students in local public schools was also noted as a necessary positive action.

The concern for establishing ethical policies for research was expressed by several of the groups, in order to emphasize individual accountability within departments and faculties for responsible purchasing. The university will be expected to conduct research in ways that are compatible with maintaining a healthy environment, and will

ings' self-sufficiency should be maximized.

Although the initial costs for such reformations may be higher, the benefits would be far greater in the long term. Several people encouraged constructing and implementing more bicycle paths, and providing students with bus passes.

Lack of funding and corporate interest in establishing sustainable environments is frustrating to

### The Tallories Declaration urges universities to take the following actions:

- 1) Increase awareness of environmentally sustainable development
- 2) Create an institutional culture of sustainability
- 3) Educate for environmentally responsible citizenship
- 4) Foster environmental literacy for all
- 5) Practice institutional ecology
- 6) Involve all stakeholders
- 7) Collaborate for interdisciplinary approaches
- 8) Enhance capacity for primary and secondary schools
- 9) Broaden service and outreach nationally and internationally
- 10) Maintain the movement

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