

Art gallery top of the chopping block

by Ken Burke and Bruce Galloway

- Elimination of all varsity sports at Dalhousie.
- Closing down the non-academic aspects of the Dalhousie Arts Centre, including the Dalhousie Art Gallery.
- Elimination of Dalhousie's Student Counselling Service.

Listed above are the most controversial in a series of potential cutbacks which Robbie Shaw, Dalhousie's Vice-President of administration and finance, proposed in a recent report to the Dean's Council. These cuts may be necessary, as, "any more cuts are into the bone. We've cut away all the fat we can," Shaw said.

According to Shaw, such drastic measures would be necessary if Dalhousie's projected deficit of \$8.3 million dollars for 1982/83 cannot be substantially reduced. While he personally did not think the cuts would be necessary for the upcoming year, they are an eventuality that should be discussed. "If people want to cut into the substance of the University, we'd like to hear about it."

The report itself, while proposing \$450,000 in "uncontroversial cuts" to non-academic departments, also has drawn up a second list in which the elimination of varsity sports, the Student Counselling Service, and all non-academic Cohn activities is proposed. The report also suggests the elimination of the *Dalhousie Review*, making the Faculty Club break even, chopping \$100,000 from Dalhousie's grant to the Institute for Public Affairs, and reducing staff and duplicated service at Audio-Visual Services.

Elimination of the Dalhousie Arts Centre's non-academic activities would save the university \$350,000, axing varsity sports would save \$317,000, and a budget reduction of \$160,000 could be achieved through shutting down Student Counselling Services.

So far Shaw has received a limited response to his suggestions, although he will be "giving it another week or so" to see if many more comments come in. "We have got a loud and clear message not to cut varsity sports," he commented.

However, members of the Dean's Council, an advisory body to President MacKay, have some very definite ideas about the proposals.

"The Art Gallery (costing \$120,000) should be closed immediately, as of July 1, 1982," said Donald Betts, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science.

Because the Art Gallery is one of several in Halifax and Dalhousie lacks visual arts courses, Betts thinks the Gallery is a "luxury we can't afford. It's a nice thing to have," he added, "like an aquarium."

Kenneth Leffek, Dean of Graduate Studies, agreed with Betts on the low priority placed on keeping the Art Gallery. "It would be a shame to close the Art Gallery, but we may have to do it."

Theatre professor Alan Andrews, referred to the University classification of Dal Cultural Activities and the Art Gallery as "non-academic" as barbaric.

Andrews said the various artistic displays at the Rebecca Cohn are as important to an arts student as libraries and laboratories are, in their way, to other students. Especially hard-hit by these proposed cuts would be Music and Theatre students, he stated.

Besides their academic worth, the cuts would also remove quality cultural events from the Halifax area, Andrews said. He warned of the dangers of restricting programme support to such an extent that its benefits become trivial, in fact a non-academic programme, run like the Metro Centre.

Dean Betts said varsity sports should be left alone by the cut-

backs, as the activities keep up an "esprit de corps" on campus. However, several of the Deans agreed that some funding for varsity sports should begin to come from outside the university - even to the point of finding outside sponsors for Dalhousie teams.

The coordinator of intercollegiate athletics at Dal, Wayne McDonald, seemed less concerned about the possible threat to his athletic program. McDonald referred to Dalhousie's varsity sports program as being one of the best in the country and within its budget package this year. "It would be disappointing from an alumni point of view," he said.

McDonald also said that a varsity sports cutback would be detrimental to athletics throughout the Maritimes, pointing out that Dalhousie is hosting three AUAA championships this year.

Judith Hayashi, Director of Dalhousie Counselling and Psychological Services, feels that cutbacks should not eliminate or seriously harm Student Counselling.

Hayashi pointed out the value of the centre's three services - educational counselling, career counselling, and psychological aid - to all students of Dalhousie. "This is very supportive to the academic process," she added.

Gallery suffers from lack of awareness

by Cathy McDonald

The attitude that the Dalhousie Art Gallery should be the first on the university's list of proposed "drastic cuts" is caused by a lack of awareness of that program's activities, according to director Linda Milrod. The gallery is one of the non-academic areas currently being considered for elimination in the near future.

In an interview, Milrod said this list is a "bunch of straw men." She does not believe "we're all in the same boat," referring to the naming of varsity sports, Student Counselling Services, the *Dalhousie Review* and others as potential cutback victims. By placing the art gallery in this list, it can only lose the popularity battle.

A lack of presence on campus contributes to misunderstanding of what the art gallery does, said Milrod.

A well-respected institution in the Canadian art world, the gallery offers an opportunity to enrich awareness of the visual arts. "Acquisition of knowledge is the university's fundamental purpose" said Milrod, who ques-

tioned the classification of the gallery as a non-academic part of the university.

"All that obviously doesn't work."

Some myths Milrod feels are a result of ignorance of the gallery's activities, including the belief that the only thing it does is hang paintings around campus, and confusing it with the Nova Scotia Art Gallery on Coburg Road. The Dal gallery is situated in the basement of the Dalhousie Arts Centre.

The gallery presented 21 exhibitions last year, eleven of which were historical art and nine contemporary. Recent important shows include a collection of Bolivian weaving, donated from private collections, that travelled to 12 centres over a two year period, and a controversial outdoor exhibit of contemporary sculptures placed in Halifax to coincide with the Learned Societies conference last summer. The Bolivian weaving show was seen by 50,000 people, who all associated it with Dalhousie, Milrod said.

Over the years the gallery has acquired a \$1 million permanent



Power, by Hans Straub, can be seen at the 28th Annual Student, Staff, Faculty and Alumni Exhibition, currently on display at the Dalhousie Art Gallery.

collection.

Exhibits produced by the gallery itself, as opposed to travelling or contracted exhibits, involve research for the accompanying illustrated catalogues are the lasting benefit from a show, and are sold at the exhibit, and distributed to libraries, art galleries and some commercial outlets.

Dalhousie would save \$120,000 by eliminating the gallery. Four people form the staff, leaving an operating budget for next year of \$42,000. This is half the size of this year's budget, after budget restraints. Another \$80,000 is received from outside sources, such as the Canada Council for the arts, National Museums of Canada, and private companies.

The art gallery's history dates back to Dal art lovers of 1953, and the Dal Art Club. Space for hanging pictures was found in the Arts and Administration Building, then in the Killam library in 1970, and eventually in the Arts Centre in 1975. The first full-time curator was hired in the mid-sixties.

A significant upcoming exhibit Milrod is currently researching is

a showing of the history of Canadian architecture, the first time such a collection will have been put together. The Dal Art Gallery is different from the seven-year old Nova Scotia gallery, which has a restricted mandate to purchase and show local artists. While the Nova Scotia Gallery is more conservative in its selection, Dal can be "avant garde", she said.

Art is a language a person has to commit time to study in order to understand it. The fact that the viewer must make an effort in order to find enjoyment is why the performing arts have always had the leading edge in popularity, and is one of the reasons why the university is not considering closing the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium, she said.

One thousand people visit the gallery in a year. Exhibits have a lead time of four years. To close down the operation would involve cancelling large outside grants that have already been spent on preparations, which would cause considerable embarrassment to the university, Milrod said.