

# Short term goals met - Bourque

The Bruns interviews SU president Bourque.

TDF photo

*How would you assess the Student Union's work thus far? Were there any specific objectives laid out earlier this year, and how has the Union fared in meeting these objectives?*

In general, the Student Union has met its short term goals for the term. The term was significantly marked by the following:

- 3 sold-out concerts: Northern Pikes; The Pursuit Of Happiness; Skydiggers.
- The introduction of an alcohol-free Bar (Dry Bar) operating at a profit
- A National Student Day March covered by local and Atlantic media and receiving coverage on "The National".
- The incorporation of the Student Saver Card into the Student Union Card as well as receiving the most Student Saver Discounts/capita in Canada.
- The introduction of better means of communication for students through the Clubs & Societies Boards, Market Source Board and the new Travel Board.
- The first ever Student Leadership Conference Retreat to promote discussion of important student issues amongst student leaders.
- A highly successful AIDS Awareness Week with the introduction of the "Condom Wallets" province-wide, initiated by the UNB Student Union.
- The successful efforts to prevent the highly controversial meters to be installed in local taxis cabs and the identification of a company giving fair fare rates to students.
- A Referendum on the SUB smoking issue giving the decision ultimately to those affected.
- A crisis situation with vacancies on council with the absence of two executives handled effectively by the Student Council and a subsequent by-election to fill these positions.
- In the new year, council can

promise an even better term. With a concerted effort from an experienced and enthusiastic council, we will continue to reach out to students by rotating council meetings in the residence system.

- Budget-wise we are right on track, and continuously developing better systems of management control to more effectively run the Student Union in the years to come.
- Although a slow start, the Paper Post is beginning to flourish: booked solid with work during the final months, providing a quality affordable service for students with a staff that has worked late nights and into the weekends.
- The identification and proposal of a new Health Plan to look after a broader scope of students needs. It will be refined and presented for referendum next term.
- A controversial issue stimulated the interest of the entire student population. We succeeded in raising student awareness about the Student Union's activities. However, the Social Club issue has proved to be the most frustration. A large number of students are still not aware of the Student Union's interest in having representation on the Board of Directors and opening the bar up to all students on the campus.

*Will the Council be continuing with The Foundation for Students this year? We understand that it was put in place as a corrective against abuses during the mid-eighties. If council intends to continue with the Foundation is there a certain amount of autonomy being relinquished? Are there councillors who would rather the Foundation were dismantled?*

The Council will continue with the Foundation for Students. However, changes are recommended to components that are no longer necessary. For example, elimination of the administration's veto. These changes will probably happen this Friday. The Foundation provides stable financial management of the Union from year to

year without the worry of mismanagement by transient student administrators. The Foundation provides an excellent system of checks and balances that will ensure the long term financial stability of future Student Unions. It is our opinion that the Foundation is an asset to be envied by other Student Unions.

*The Social Club issue was probably your most publicized activity this year. Do you think the council has the support of students? If in fact a restructuring is needed why does council feel that such a restructuring should have Student Union representation? Are there other ways in which the restructuring could be done? How would you respond to the suggestion that this issue and the handling of it had a negative effect on your presidential image this year?*

I believe the Social Club issue has probably been the most controversial issue in recent years. Unfortunately, the issue has been clouded in misinformation and deceit. Due to lack of accurate information, it has left many students wondering what is really being proposed. Before the Student Union had a chance to introduce its proposed restructuring, the whole initiative was branded as a 'take-over' which was not our intention at all. Ensuring legitimate student representation (and I mean through election where more than a handful of people participate) in all campus organizations that claim to be acting in the best interests of students, is part of the Student Union's mandate. This extends from organizations that sell liquor on campus (Bar Services) where we have a voice on their Standing Advisory Committee, to the Board of Governors of the University (a 100 Million Dollar Corporation). Why should the Social Club be any different when it claims to be working in the best interests of students? We sincerely question this. Their tactics have been low, deceitful, and highly personally oriented. In regards to the liquor licence changing if the Board was restructured, they lied. About the price of beer at other universities, they lied. About the advertisements allegedly in the Bruns, they lied. About the ratification of Council Minutes, they lied again. Why? To protect a select number of individuals who sit on a Board of Directors who represent no one except the 30 or 40 friends who elected them. This is not democracy. This is a perversion and distortion of any type of organization structure in place. We asked for a membership list (which is required under provincial law) they wouldn't give it to us. We asked to talk over a proposal, they



SU president Kevin Bourque

didn't want to talk to us about anything. We asked for Minutes of past Board Meetings, they didn't have any. We held a public forum and invited questions to the proposal we were introducing and they disregarded it.

Unfortunately, we are not dealing with rational people who will sit down and talk openly and honestly about student concerns. That's the problem with the Social Club, and will continue to be the problem anytime anyone asks too many questions or gets too close. There is something fundamentally wrong with this approach. Our goal has been, and is, to have legitimate student voices on the Board and to open the Bar up to all students who are 19 years of age. We never suggested relinquishing priority memberships and their benefits, raising beer prices or changing the licence. Communication is the best means to solve problems. The Social Club to this day will not extend that luxury to those who want to have input into the only campus bar we have. The Advisory Board since its announcement almost 1 month ago has not even met. Will students question these actions further? That remains to be answered.

In terms of my presidential image, I believe that our accomplishments stand for themselves (those I listed above). We've worked hard to overcome obstacles, have been open and honest to students, we've taken criticism and we've confronted it by meeting with many faculty organizations and through our Public Forum.

Next term we will continue to be accountable to students. Council Meetings will rotate in Residences and a faculty hour is planned.

*What is the situation on the Student Union Building expansion? Will there be any progress on it this year? Is this year's council at all interested in the issue?*

Regarding the Student Union Building, terms of reference for a Committee will be presented to Council in January. Unfortunately, due to

health, the current Building Director has taken a sabbatical leave. As he would be an important component on our SUB Expansion Committee, we felt it would be counter-productive to proceed without him. SUB Expansion will be a big project

next term. *It is obvious that this year's joint UNB/CFS march was less supported than last year's. Are there reasons for this? What is the status of the relationship between CFS and UNB's Student Union this year?*

Concerning the National Student Day March, this year was solely an effort of the UNBSU. CFS was involved with other activities that day. Due to the vacancy in the position of the VP External, it may have had an impact on the number of students who attended. The event received excellent coverage by all local and Atlantic media and excerpts were televised on CBC's "The National" along with other schools. The issues were well articulated by the media and presented the harsh realities facing students in the 1990's. The Student Union's relationship with CFS remains productive; this year the Student Union has chosen to allocate office space in the SUB Lobby to CFS with the hope that with higher visibility more students will have an increased awareness of student issues, both locally and nationally.

*What would you consider to be the most significant failing of council this term?*

Most significant failing - Overcoming the misinformation regarding the intentions of a restructured Social Club Board of Directors. A more 'open to all students policy'.

*What would you regard as the greatest accomplishment of the term?*

Increasing student participation - excellent entertainment, controversial issues (Taxi Fares, Social Club), leadership conferences and filling Student Union position in elections.

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