

Graduate students don't need their own senators

The Graduate Students Association (GSA) will shortly propose to the Senate that the graduate students be allowed two seats on that body. Representatives of the graduate students have already been to the SRC, and it has given its approval to the proposal.

We do not share the council's stated view of the proposal. In fact, we have several criticisms to make:

First, students presently elect six student senators — three in the spring and three in the fall. At the last election (just a few weeks ago) the Registrar had great difficulty in finding enough people to fill the seats. As a result, there was no election, and the seats were filled by acclamation.

The opportunity was clearly open to the graduates to run for one of the positions. Frankly, if they'd shown the initiative and had campaigned properly, there isn't any reason at all why they couldn't have taken all three seats. And if they'd kept the momentum into the spring, UNB could have six graduate student senators instead of just two.

Student apathy (and that includes our older, mature graduates) being what it is, however, it's likely that this trend to acclamation will continue. We would venture to say that even if the Senate approves this proposal, the graduates will be electing their representatives by acclamation before too many years have passed.

Second, the graduates told the council that their presence on the Senate would enhance student representation, not decrease it. Well, it's true that there will still be six student senators for the rest of us and two senators for the graduates — if the proposal goes through. So we're not being cheated there.

But on what possible basis can the graduates ask Senate to increase "student representation", given the poor showing at the polls we've already experienced? The fact is that if the graduates

are a "discrete entity," as they like to call themselves, so are the various faculties. Everyone knows an Artsman and an Engineer often have different problems, right?

So student representation will not be increased at all. More than likely we'll just have two more vacant seats on Senate.

Third, the rest of the student body elects six senators. If we subtract 354 full time graduate students from the total enrollment of 5,000, we get about 4600. That means there's one student

senator for every 760 students.

But the graduates want two senators: in other words, one senator for every 180 graduate students.

That's not at all equitable, as we see it.

Within the last year, the Graduate Students Association has become very active, and we do not mean to discourage this. Student activity of any sort is to be welcomed. We would support them in their efforts to get office space in the SUB, to gain more

say in where their SRC funds go. And yes, we agree they should take their place on the Senate.

But as students, we hope, without special status. If we begin now to set up special categories for everyone, we could get into a great deal of unnecessary trouble.

We would recommend that Senate reject the graduates' proposal, and instead urge the graduates to turn their energies to gaining seats on Senate through the front door, and not the back.



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