

Last April UNB President Dr. James Downey set up a special committee to study the role and function of the dean of students office. The study stemmed from an incident which took place on this campus nearly a year and a half ago -the expulsion of Jones House President Kevin Ratcliff from residence.

Many claimed that the dean of students was in a conflict of interest - caught between upholding the administrative decision of the dean of men and at the same time acting as a student ombudsman defending a student in some "hot water" for his actions. The nature of the dean of students role and function vis a vis students was brought into serious question.

Last spring the dean of students search committee, headed by Vice President Academic Dr. Robert Burridge recommended that a study of the dean of students job be conducted. Accordingly President Downey appointed a six member committee, to study the matter.

The presidential committee, headed by Administration Professor Harold Sharp began studying the issue with vigor. Several meetings were held last spring and promises of a report were heard from several sources within a couple of months.

The problem is that a final report has not been produced. In fact, there is some serious doubt as to whether the presidential committee is functioning at all.

This week the *Brunswickan* tried to find out when we could anticipate the committee to report, when the report would be released and what decision UNB's president had arrived at. After all, these aren't unreasonable questions given the fact that 10 months has elapsed since the Dean of Students Presidential Committee was appointed.

First, the *Brunswickan* contacted the chairman of the committee, Professor Sharp, who said the best person to ask about this matter would be the president. Next we talked to Vice-President Dr. Robert Burridge, who politely professed little knowledge on the status of the committee's report, but did refer us to the president.

The president, a really busy man these days, was kind enough to return our call. Dr. Downey said he didn't know what the current status was of the committee or its report but assumed "the committee was going about its work." "I have written a letter to the chairman of the committee, Professor Sharp but I have not heard from him," he said.

Dr. Downey did promise to find out the current status of the committee, for which we certainly thank him.

We also discovered something else in the course of our investigation. The presidential committee is supposed to be representative of all members of the university community. Isn't it ironic that a committee studying the dean of students job has no active student representative? Perry Thorbourne, was originally appointed to the committee, but has not been a student at UNB since last May. It appears a new student representative is needed, before all else.

Well, what conclusion can one draw from this entire incident? We think it's a classic case of the administration dragging its feet. The president doesn't seem to know what is going on in a committee that he appointed. Surely, he has to take some responsibility for not asking for some report by now.

The incident begs another question. Is this another example of the UNB administration creating some cosmetic committee that gives students the impression something is really being considered when in fact nothing is being done, or ever will be done?

We think the president owes us answers. Ten months have elapsed since the presidential committee was set up. Perhaps a report could be presented, and just perhaps some sort of decision could be made. After all, we don't think that would be too much to ask.