



Students 'badly misinformed'

BY CAROLE VASIL
Brunswickan Staff

David Campbell, whose letter to the editor you may read in this issue of the Brunswickan, is very concerned about what he calls the badly misinformed state of the students at UNB. In his letter, he tries to clarify some facts about the proposed renovations to the SUB.

The SUB Board realizes that the students want more room in the SUB. Campbell said in an interview, "there wasn't one person (on the SUB Board) who didn't agree that new construction wasn't the best and most efficient solution; however, it was rejected because of cost and political impracticability." New construction could cost upwards of \$64 a square foot, while renovations only cost \$40. This estimate, added Campbell, was very conservative. One source estimated new construction at \$80 a square foot. Then there is the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission to deal with. They must approve any new construction at UNB, and, according to Campbell, "As far as the MPHEC is concerned, the university as a whole already has surplus space." So, even if specific areas, particularly the Blue Lounge, are over crowded, there is enough under-used and un-used space at UNB to create a net surplus. It is clear that the only course open to the SUB Board is to renovate.

One notable erroneous piece of information which is wide spread on campus is that the university pays for all the upkeep of the SUB including replacing and refurbishing furnishings. "Actually," said Campbell, "the university covers normal wear and tear and basic maintenance to the structure - NOT THE CONTENTS!!!!!! Everything else, including refurbishing and repairing ANY damage due to vandalism is the responsibility of the SUB Board."

Also main points of concern are the issues of changes to the Blue Lounge and the SUB Ballroom. While the actual size of the area designated as the Blue Lounge decreases, the seating capacity will increase because of better space planning and 'built-in' seating places.

Separate TV and games rooms will eliminate interference to those who like a lounge as a quiet place of study and/or conversation. Additional lounge areas are created through so-called 'pocket lounges' and alcoves in currently unused spaces in the SUB. Because new construction is not a viable alternative, the renovation plans make efficient use of the space available and get rid of under-used and single-use areas.

Towards this second goal, many changes will be made to the SUB Ballroom. The area designated as 'Meetings' is actually a very flexible space. Movable walls make it possible to create several rooms of varying sizes, or, if needed, the area can be opened up completely as an addition to the ballroom.

The plan proposes that the stage be removed, creating a reception area which goes straight through to the foyer. A movable stage can be set up if needed. Campbell said it is ridiculous to say that the ballroom decreases in size. He also said that increasing washroom facilities was a priority, as the existing facilities are "totally inadequate."

One extremely important point to take into consideration for an undertaking such as this is one of costs. On this point, students don't have the full facts. Campbell told the Brunswickan that, if done, the renovations would be completed in three steps, because the cost of renovation done all at once was not affordable.

Detailed reports done in 1975 and 1976 by Murray and Murray and Partners stressed several major problems with the SUB. From section 3.2 of the 1975 report:

"Most obvious and pressing of all problem areas is that which entails basic space planning.....it is necessary that all areas within the building have

the flexibility necessary to accommodate the increasingly varied palate of demands generated by the student body."

According to Campbell, the proposed plan will do this.

Also cited in the 1975 report were possible fire safety and security hazards.

It is the general consensus that renovations are needed, but the students make the final decision. Because it is an important issue, Campbell hopes this article will put straight some dangerously off-the-line "facts" which have been forced on the student body.



ANNE KILFOIL Photo

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