

EDITORIAL

It's time for change

Daycare, more space and a racial discrimination policy

by Allan Carter

Concerns have been raised lately about many student issues and so far there has been little, if any, public response from the UNB administration. Of course, it is difficult for an administration to find the resources and the people to cover all the issues and concerns at the same time. Nevertheless, some of the concerns which have been raised lately need immediate attention.

The study (A Profile of Adult Learners at UNB) which was completed by the Department of Extension and Summer Session after surveying students over the age of twenty-five, indicates that the need for an on-campus daycare centre is crucial. More and more mature students are attending UNB, and a large number of these students have children. It is not surprising to see UNB students taking their children to class with them since they cannot afford the expense of a babysitter or private daycare. The study states that "more energy must be directed into overcoming the barriers which are preventing the realization of such a [daycare] facility."

For the most part, energy and action would be expected from the university administration. Presently, there is a committee on campus which has been working diligently last term and all this summer on the issue of daycare at UNB. However, the UNB administration has no representation on this committee, and the committee's major concern at this point is the lack of space on campus for such a facility. Apparently, the administration wants direct feedback from the committee's results of their investigation into the possibility of a UNB daycare facility. While one can commend the university's openness on this issue, it is obvious that at some point the university is going to have to become actively involved and must finally decide where this facility should be constructed. This decision must, of course, be based on the committee's recommendations. What makes this concern even more crucial is the fact that the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission has allocated a substantial sum of money for such a facility. The money should be put to use while it is available.

In general, space limitations at UNB have become a problem. This is obviously confirmed in the Department of Extension and Summer Session's report when they state that "CAMPUS [the organization for Continuing, Adult, Mature and Part-time University Students] is largely hampered by a lack of permanent space from which to operate on campus." Unfortunately, this is a fact which most organizations on campus share. Moreover, the possibility of new clubs and organizations on campus is growing. Everywhere, student involvement appears to be growing and, as a result, new clubs are formed. The perplexing question which everyone involved must ask is: Where are new clubs and organizations going to reside and what is going to happen to organizations which have outgrown the space they already have? The answer appears to be even as perplexing as the question: SUB expansion. For years, just like daycare, SUB expansion has been discussed, investigated and eventually filed away until someone brings up the concern again. Last year, it was quite obvious from the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission's report that the university administration was interested in seeing SUB expansion become a reality. However, it has only been in the past year that the Student Union has finally committed itself to SUB expansion and one wonders whether or not its hesitancy on this issue for the past few years will downplay the students' involvement and input in the expansion of the Student Union Building.

Another issue which has reared its ugly head once again is racial discrimination. In this week's issue of the Brunswickan (page one) there is an article about eight international students who filed a complaint with the Business Administration Faculty about a professor who they felt was inconsistent in his/her teaching and discriminatory towards the eight students. Obviously, the issue has been a long and laborious one for everyone involved, since the university has no formal procedure specifically for such cases. If the university is serious about implementing a racial discrimination policy, it should do so now. Such a policy would guarantee that certain procedures are followed for every case, thus serious discrepancies would not arise. In

addition, like the sexual harassment policy, a racial discrimination policy should be created so that everyone is aware of what is deemed as being discriminatory or racist. Ideally, if such a policy existed, every professor, student and other university member would be aware of the university's definition of racism and discrimination at UNB and its disappointment of such behaviour. That fact in itself would be an improvement, since the university would then be making a formal, clear announcement of what they will not tolerate at UNB. Something which they evidently do not do right now. Further, such a policy would show that the administration is aware that such behaviour does exist in the university.

Perhaps some would coin the above issues as a "student's wish list". It would appear though that such changes at UNB would not benefit only the students, but also the university as a whole. Certainly if daycare was available on campus, more potential mature students who have children would see UNB as a definite option, rather than an impossible venture. In the same way, organizations on campus play a large role for students who are deciding whether or not to attend a certain university. Surely, no one would argue that a university is much more attractive to potential students if it has many viable clubs and organizations which it can boast about. But first, such clubs and organizations need space. For international students, the climate may be a bit more comfortable if the university makes it clear what actions they will not tolerate at UNB and if a policy is in place in case they have any problems. At the same time, university employees will know for certain what actions are deemed to be racist or discriminatory.

There are many other concerns which have not been raised in this editorial due to space limitations and time. However, the Brunswickan is a forum for all students to use if they feel an issue needs to be brought to attention. Whether one writes a letter to the editor, or an opinion, or three opinion articles for the Spectrum page, the Brunswickan welcomes input.



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