MUGWUMP

There are no engineering students getting financial aid?

For years I have been constantly reminded that I, an arts student, will never get a job with my chosen degree, while engineers all over the world consistently make $35,000 starting salaries with their bachelors degrees in engineering. Now, I am being told that not only will these students be better off after graduation, but that they are, in fact, better off financially now than a good part of the student population at UNB that has to collect student aid.

If this were not so, I would have to question the logic of a certain engineering student whose letter to the editor suggests that the engineers on this campus are not well served by their campus paper. That student aid is a non-issue to engineers is the only reason I can see why last week's front page story "Commission calls for major changes" applies less to engineering students than to students in arts, forestry, nursing, science, business etc., etc., etc.

By a like argument, there are no engineering students living at Bridges House, there are no Muslim engineering students, none of them are gay, none of them are members of political youth groups, none of them have children needing daycare services, none of them used to patronize the campus Bar Service at concerts, and none of them are members of the Amateur Radio Club here on campus.

Much to my dismay I glanced through the entertainment and sports section of the Bruns and realized—My God! There are no engineers who watched the Northern Pikes concert, none who play hockey, none who follow the Black Bears, and none who attended the OCSA New Years celebration.

What kind of people are these? How exclusive, protected, coddled and cherished are those who yearly attend the engineering faculty of this university. Finally, the whole issue hit home when I wondered why my father, himself a professor in this exclusive faculty, did not advise my that by a mere fluke of registration I could have assured my place in that elite which floats in the upper layers of society above the trials and tribulations of the everyday world. Oh cruel fate! Why did I not listen when my twelfth grade physics teacher was extolling the virtues of careers in engineering? (Funny, all I remember is a film about a certain ill-fated bridge...)

At any rate, I feel I must address the other issues brought forth in the letter which this Z-E.U.S.-like academic has condescended to send down his departmental Olympus to this plebeian newspaper.

The Penny Drive which the engineers held is certainly news worthy, but if the news editor isn't told about it, and a request for coverage is given to the photo editor only, then the news editor does know that she should save space for an article on it. (Note the article which was submitted by Bridges house ON MONDAY of the week it was to be published--I even had time to give the house president a call back to embellish the article with some extra information! Imagine!)

Press releases and photos of the 'Grab and Grin' (cheque presentation to the uninitiated) variety get lower priority than more timely news, and can be printed, say, the next week without losing any of their significance, whereas other news will.

The letter's author also points out that in an attempt to find out the current activities of the EUS, the Bruns could call their office and that they can be reached at 453-3534. Well, isn't that nice? I can also reach representatives of the Campus Christian Fellowship by calling 453-5089, the Law students society by calling 453-4554. Additionally, I can reach members of SWAT, the Physics society, GALA, the UNB Navigators, AIESEC, the Computer Science Society, the Hemlock club and any of the other eighty-some clubs and societies that operate under the umbrella of the Student Union just by picking up the phone. Feel free, Mr. VanWart, to come in and get a phone list from me when you decide you'd like to start making weekly calls to each and every one of these groups to find out what activities each of them is planning for the upcoming period.

Most importantly, the number everyone ought to remember from this is 453-4983—*The Brunswickan*'s. One call, my friend, would ensure that your next foray into the 'other side' is less traumatic.

Less sarcastically, though, speaking on behalf on the News department I would like to encourage students from all faculties, clubs and organizations to take part in the operation and production of your student paper. If you don't have time, just remember that you can make the life of a Bruns editor much easier by just giving us a call to tell us if you'll be submitting something—that way you have a better chance of getting it published, and we won't feel so bad when we have several consecutive phone calls asking why the press release submitted on Wednesday at 5:30 didn't go in.

— K.B., News Ed.

OPINION

The opinions found in this column are not necessarily the views of the Brunswickan

Church and state

by Jamie van Raalte

Recognize but not fund (in an ongoing nature or manner) any political clubs, religious organizations, or groups focused on sexual orientation.
- UNB Student Union Financial Policy

After much controversy and heated discussions, the UNB Student Union Council adopted a new by-law, last week, that prohibits any student political group from receiving any form of financial support from the Union. Looking into the future, the issue of funding groups based on religion and sexual orientation will be a topic of debate on campus and during Council meetings probably for weeks to come. I would like to take this opportunity to express my opinion on funding religious organizations.

Although not a student of history or political science, I have been exposed to the concept of separation between church and state. The policy is logical when you look at the historical relationship; The Crusades, pogroms, jihads and even Northern Ireland as a current example demonstrate the violent nature church and state can lead to when combined in one form or another. I honestly do not expect any religious violence on this campus. However, religion has become, in my mind, a very personal and private decision or commitment in which government has no business.

What does this have to do with the Student Union? Everything. The Union has no right to pass judgement or enforce its priorities on any religion because that is what the Council does - pass judgement and set priorities. (As one of my economics professors repeatedly says, the role of government is to allocate benefits.) Annually, the SU Finance Committee tries to meet with over sixty clubs /societies /organizations to hear their funding proposals for the upcoming year. Each proposal is judged on its merits and benefit to the undergraduate students of UNB. Then seven students attempt to assimilate close to $700,000 worth of priorities to produce a budget recommendation. This document is then judged, praised, criticized, and amended by thirty-two duly elected representatives. While I have every confidence in faculty councillors making good decisions on faculty organization funding, that confidence level lowers when discussing cultural or special interest groups but that is why we have at-large officers who take into account the bigger picture. The issue of judging religion and the funding of religious groups has no place in Council debate; it is an individual choice.

Most clubs dread appearing before the Finance Committee. Who could blame them? Do they feel that they are begging for money? That they are not getting a fair hearing? That the people on the committee don't really care about the group? That the white, Eurocentric, small 'c' conservative gathering can not truly understand their special interest or culture? What guarantees would any religious group for financial stability when they are under such a controlling and influential government who's priorities can drastically change from year to year? Faculty groups have a limited assurance in funding because that is how the Council and the University is structured; by faculty. A good number of years ago, the Union recognized the importance of cultural and special interest clubs to the campus community and especially to students. However, their funding has been anything but stable. Just ask the Health Sciences Society or the India Association. I recognize the importance of religion to the educational experience and I believe that has been expressed in the Union's willingness to sponsor, through its Grants Fund, guest speakers or special workshops for religious groups over the years. Yet, on- going funding should remain up to the individual and not be forced upon them in the form of their student fee.

Quickly switching gears, there are also a number of questions that would have to be addressed if the Union were to fund organizations based on religion. What would the Council allow to constitute as a religion and what separates them from so called sects? I have encountered a number of students that viewed 'witchcraft' as a religion. How does the Union draw that line? Our population here is a diverse one and for every religion, there are distinguishing beliefs within. Do we then begin to recognize and fund groups along denominational lines? Zionist, Baptist,Orthodox, Hindu, Mormon? At that rate, you could easily expand the number of clubs the Union recognizes to over one hundred! What an administrative nightmare and as the Unions budget becomes more constrained (believe it or not, we do not have an unlimited amount of resources) it clearly becomes a case of more mouths to feed with the same amount of food.

Two other comments that have been made to me on this issue that I would like to address before I go:

1. How do we differentiate between cultural and religious groups when the basis of some cultures is their religion? I do agree, it is a fine line but I think it has already been drawn. The cultural groups that are currently funded draw from a common geography - Africa, The Caribbean, Indonesia - which all have, themselves, a very diverse population made up of many different cultures and religions. Their functions are based on sharing their multiculturalism amongst the club members and with the university community not on promoting any one particular religion or belief. The purpose or objectives of any proposed club would have to heavily scrutinized. In addition, if we do recognize cultural groups based on religion, do we not then discriminate against those that do not? More food for thought.

2. Maybe I'm just being a bureaucrat who does not recognize the need for change. Instead of being exclusionary, take the time to work out the administrative headache and be inclusionary. One more student involved or active in the Union far outweighs all the problems. I do not really have an answer to that except to say that while I have my opinion, I am far from always being right. I look forward to the debate and listening to other people's opinions.