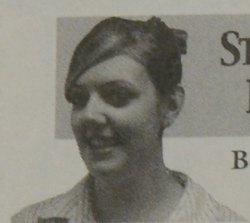


Student groups ignored in selection process



STUDENT BEAT
Bethany Vail

Over the years, students have fought for representation at every level of this university. We have not accepted being pushed to the sidelines in the decision making process; instead was have shown we have a stake at the table. Just a few years ago students successfully lobbied the administration for a vote on Student Standings and Promotions Senate committee, which is a committee that hears academic and standing appeals of students. It was viewed as a huge step forward in the student moment and taken as a sign that the administration values student input.

Currently, students have votes at the Senate and Board of Governors levels, which are the two major decision making bodies at UNB. When a vacancy occurs in a major position on campus, such as a Dean, the three student groups (Graduate Student Association, Adult-Learners Part Time Students and the Student Union) get together to decide which student should serve on the search committee. The chosen student is a representative for the entire Fredericton campus. This process ensures fair and equal representation of a cross section of students. Midway through the summer, John McLaughlin announced that he will be leaving his term as President early – at the end of this academic year in fact. The wheels of the machine instantly started churning as the university prepared itself to undergo a search process to select the next President of this institution. This threw faculty and administration into an uproar about representation on the Presidential Search Committee. It is a joint Board and Senate

committee, comprising of only six members from the Saint John and Fredericton campuses, representing administration, faculty, and students. The composition of the committee is laid out in the University Act – a monstrosity that needs to be updated badly.

It is noted that one member of the six be a student, wherever possible. According to the Act, the student needs to be either a Senator or Board of Governors member which leaves a pool of about twelve students to choose from. Typically, it is left up to the board to select a student from the board, which narrows the student possibilities down to three.

One would think that for a search committee as grandiose as the Presidential Search Committee, student groups would come together in similar fashion as for a Dean search to make a recommendation as to who they felt would best serve them in this important student role. Ultimately, it is up to each respective nominating committee of the Senate and Board of Governors to decide who gets placed where. However, this is the same practice with all committees and it has never prevented students from making recommendations before.

This time around, students were denied the opportunity to get together to make a recommendation to the Senates and Board because they were never informed in the first place that this committee was taking form. No one from the Senates, Board, or administration notified the student groups as to what was going on or to what the proper protocol was for selecting a student. A simple e-mail to the student groups on both campuses would have sufficed, explaining that one single student will be selected from either campus. But no one was told.

Instead a Board of Governors Nominating meeting was held over the summer to decide without any student input whatsoever. They chose

the first student name that came up in the meeting and did not express reason as to their selection. Their only discussion was with regards to the need for a student to be on the committee, not about the merits of the student who should be there.

Although the Board and Senates followed proper protocol, I am bitterly disappointed in how they went about it. I appreciate that there was a tight deadline to form the committee; however I do believe that in this fast paced email crazed world there was time to notify the student organizations so they could put forth a recommendation.

This student will play an integral role in choosing the President who will make or break our institution is this upcoming time of change in post-secondary education in our province. We certainly do not want a token student just to say we have representation. We want a strong student voice with good judgment who will speak out for all students of UNB when it comes down to the crunch. I feel that by the Board and Senates bypassing the thoughts of students during the whole process, they have reduced us down to nothing than mere tokenism.

The student who has been selected has done a tremendous job thus far representing the thousands of students at UNB, however, the process is a questionable one. If it takes opening the University Act to ensure that students are heard and represented at every level, then that is something that must be done. I am not willing to sit in the backseat. I am willing to do what it takes to ensure fairness and equality in every decision that this institution makes and that means making sure students have a voice. This university should be willing too.

Bethany Vail is President of the UNB Student Union. Student Beat is a weekly column by UNB student leaders examining issues that are pertinent to students.

The changing nature of today's media



MUGWUMP
Tony von Richter

It's a sobering thought, knowing that you work in a dying medium.

Unfortunately that's exactly the reality that those of us in the print media are faced with.

Be it in the student realm or the more mainstream realm like the Globe & Mail and the Telegraph Journal, we're all being forced to realize that at some point in the future these sheets of paper that we love and produce each issue will soon be gone, replaced by a series of intangible ones and zeroes.

Strangely enough this doesn't bother me as much as it probably should.

When I say that the death of print media is a sobering thought, it's not because of the loss of our physical pages, it's because of the style of journalism that could be lost when newspapers finally disappear.

Last year when Peter Mansbridge appeared at the CIBC Business Plan Competition he spoke about the nature of the TV news business and particularly the reporting

philosophy behind The National. Mansbridge went on to say that what appears on The National are just the headlines and people need to check out the Globe & Mail or some other newspaper for the complete story.

So what happens when there are no more newspapers to turn to?

If all we have left are media outlets that are interested in presenting the headlines and not providing any real depth to their stories, how will we ever get to the heart of any issues?

Unfortunately we're already beginning to see the effects of this as more and more media outlets are moving to shorter pieces, desperate to grab people's attention in the few minutes of spare time that they have available to them.

Is this a good thing though? I understand that people have less and less free time and that it's a battle to get people to devote their time.

However, I think most people would prefer pieces that they had to dedicate a little more time to, provided that they got the complete story.

All too often now we only think of the short term consequences, the battle for people's attention now, not the battle for their attention over the next few weeks and months by presenting a quality product that

leaves the reader significantly more informed than they were previously.

So why am I writing about this now? Simple, this weekend is the annual Fall conference for the Atlantic Region of Canadian University Press, and seeing as the Bruns is hosting we've dubbed the conference shARCUP 08 in honour of our mascot, Sharkey.

One of the big themes of the Canadian University Press this year is preparing for the move away from the traditional weekly publications printed out and distributed across town to a more fluid form of content like blogs, podcasts, and web exclusive stories that will help supplement our traditional products before they are finally retired.

While I fully embrace this move to supplement our traditional products, I think that we need to embrace the same standards that we do with our printed publications or we're not doing justice to ourselves, our readers, or the subjects we cover.

I think that it is up to us, the student journalists, to set the standard in this new era, to ensure that the principles that we have based our organizations on for decades don't die out along with our medium.

Tony von Richter is Managing Editor of The Brunswickan. He can be reached at managing@unb.ca.

Living for yourself



BRING IT ON HOME

Josh O'Kane

In the sixth grade, I knew I wanted to be a writer. Writing novels was the coolest idea for a job I could possibly think of. I even wrote a 40 page 'novel' for a class project based on characters from video games I liked, and I wanted to make it a full grown-up novel once I graduated.

By the time I got to high school, I was over writing and video games. My parents told me I was smart enough to be a doctor – and since I couldn't figure anything else out, I decided I would be a doctor. Easy enough.

My high school guidance counsellors agreed. While I was too lazy to read full-on novels and history books, I was pretty good at sciences. This meant that I was automatically categorized as a potential doctor, and told to apply to the sciences. If I was good at science then, I might as well be a doctor, right?

Without giving me time to think, I was immediately

categorized as a potential doctor, and, along so many more who have traveled down that path, enrolled in a science program at university.

I gave up becoming a medical doctor soon enough, but decided I wanted to be a chemistry research professor. Though I did fine at chemistry, I never got any satisfaction out of the work I did, and every bit of homework and studying turned into a chore. Why would I ever want to do that in my everyday life as a grownup?

It hit me eventually, as I got further into my involvement with the Bruns, that I got most of my satisfaction from engaging the public.

My sixth grade dream to be a writer, in fact, came full circle. Suddenly I wanted to be a journalist.

Even through high school, my focus at the end of the day was in my extra-curricular activities instead of school. I always cared a lot more about interacting with people than I did with books.

I plugged through four years of university before I finally admitted that if I ever wanted to be happy, my career would need to be more interactive than pouring chemicals into different jars.

But what if I had been encouraged to follow what I really enjoyed from the start?

I've spent my time as an undergraduate pursuing a degree in a field I don't care about, and it's looking like I will pursue a master's degree in journalism at this point. While I don't regret my time at UNB at all (in fact, I wouldn't have fallen into journalism if I went elsewhere) it would have been nice to follow what I enjoyed from the beginning.

I fell into the rut I did because I let other people tell me what I might be good at. I might have made a good doctor, but would I have been happy? If you don't follow your goals – if you follow someone else's – how can you be satisfied in life?

If you need to question your future, you should question whether it's the future you want. If your parents tell you to be something, or your teachers tell you you're good at something, that's great – but don't make a career about something unless you know it makes you happy. A career can come with parental approval and a fat paycheck, but it might not always come with happiness.

Josh O'Kane is Editor-in-Chief of the Brunswickan. He can be reached at editor@thebruns.ca.

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