

A cool million

by Josh O'Kane

It happened to Jones House, it almost happened to Aitken, and it could happen to any other house in the near future.

Residential Life has put together its budget proposal for next year, which calls for a \$1M deficit. That budget does not stipulate the closure of any houses – but if enrolment runs lower than has been projected, another residence building could see the axe.

"The million dollar deficit rides on no additional closures of houses. That doesn't mean there couldn't be additional closures, depending on occupancy," says James Brown, Executive Director of Residential Life, Campus & Conference Services. "What I can say definitely at this point is that our budget goes to the Board of Finance and ultimately to the Board of Governors, which will occur in March and April."

The budget consultation process has been in place for several weeks. The \$1M deficit stands only for the Res Life portion of Residential Life, Campus & Conference Services; the Book Store, Aitken Centre, and SUB are separately budgeted.

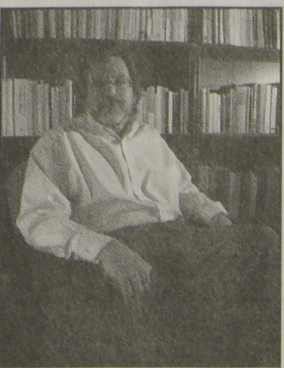
If residence sees fewer applicants next year, a house could see a minimum year-long closure. In the past, two successful instances, Jones and Bridges, this decision was objectively based on the number of returning applicants with paid damage deposits in houses in the central cluster of residences.

The central cluster includes co-ed residences Harrison, Bridges, Neill, and Mackenzie, and all-male residences Aitken and Neville/Jones. The original Jones building is now being reconfig-

ured to become UNB's Student Services building, and was acquired from Res Life by the university earlier this year in exchange for \$1.7M.

The choice of Aitken for (attempted) closure last year was based on different reasoning: Proximity.

"Within the master plan, the building that fit best in terms of conjunction with current student services and proximity to other offices was Aitken House,"



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- JAMES BROWN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
RESIDENTIAL LIFE, CAMPUS & CONFERENCE SERVICES

says Brown. "That's what really drove that decision initially. When the board in effect reversed that, we basically took the building that we had not used, and converted it into the building we were going to rededicate – the Jones building. The university's goals got substantially met by that. The opportunity got filled with Jones."

The conversion of Jones was not in Brown's initial plans when the house was first closed in 2006.

"[The conversion] did mean that what I presented to the Jones guys, a closure with the possibility of reopening, turned into a permanent closure. But I think people understood through the process that it was a substitute for the closure of Aitken. That's what happened from my perspective."

At the point which Jones was initially

the year approached."

Brown says the closure was always intended to be temporary, on the assumption that occupancy would someday rise again.

"I understand that it's widely suspected that that temporary closure was always intended to be my way in so that I could make a rededication. That's not the case. That's not consistent with what happened afterwards, either. When I said 'for this year...' it really was my intention to reopen it at the point that we had enough men to open another all male residence. And if Aitken had closed, Jones likely would have reopened."

The decision behind any residence closures for next year will likely take place in June, when applicant numbers become available.

New supercomputer to assist researchers

UNB is one of the four universities in Atlantic Canada to house new computing infrastructure

by Naomi Osborne

A new computing infrastructure may be the answer to solving complicated problems and bridging communication gaps for researchers at four institutions across Atlantic Canada.

UNB became home last month to one of several high-performance supercomputers in the region. This computer is expected to enhance the quality of work and allow researchers to collaborate with others between four Atlantic Canadian institutions.

Among those universities are Memorial, St. Mary's, and St. Francis Xavier universities.

UNB was selected to be part of the infrastructure because it has been a leader in the programming and design of the machine since 1974.

Dr. Virendra Bhavsar is the Dean of Computer Science at UNB and has devoted much of his career to this project. He says this computer will significantly enhance the way researchers across Atlantic Canada communicate.

"It is all about connecting people in Atlantic Canada. We would like to create a community of researchers," said Dr. Bhavsar.

This supercomputer is able to operate at a significantly faster speed than a regular desktop computer, considerably reducing the process of accessing information and allowing faster computation.

On a standard computer, it can take anywhere from a few days to a week for researchers to solve computational problems; this computer only takes a few hours to do the same thing, said Dr. Bhavsar.

"It can store more than 50,000 gigabytes of data, and it has roughly 200 processors, which means that it can ideally cut down the computing length by 200 times," said Dr. Bhavsar.



Submitted
Last month this "supercomputer" made its home at UNB. It is one of several within the region.

One of the major problems the researchers were having was projects taking two to six months to complete. As this was much too long, the new computer will eliminate that problem by finishing the projects in a matter of hours.

Another major asset of the supercomputer is that it has been made accessible to everyone – not only researchers. Any student that is doing research and has an account can access the computer's

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DEAN OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

resources.

"Many students use it whether they are in arts, science, chemical engineering, or computer science – they all have access," said Dr. Bhavsar. "However, it is not only open to students. Anybody doing research in an Atlantic university, in the province, or across the region can access it at no cost."

The funding for this program came from a number of difference sources. Among them are from the federal government, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, and from the partnership

of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

Atlantic Computational Excellence Network (ACEnet) is the group handling the infrastructure. It is a \$26M corporation that is made up of nine institutions: UNB, St. Mary's, University of Prince Edward Island, Memorial, St. Francis Xavier, Dalhousie, Mount Allison, Cape Breton, and Acadia.

Every researcher within these universities is able to access the ACEnet infrastructure.

The university upgrades their system every three to five years. The last supercomputer was received in 2004, and although it is still running, is considered old. Like any other computer, this new one will be obsolete in a few years as well.

In addition to this innovative research method, UNB now has a new state-of-the-art video conferencing system, which allows researchers to talk to and hold meetings with the other nine institutions.

"Another component is collaboration," said Dr. Bhavsar. "We have a video conferencing system that goes coast to coast in Canada as a multi-site facility."

This new equipment means a brighter future for UNB, its students, and researchers.

"It is unique to the province. The technology is the most important part of it," said Dr. Bhavsar. "It has much more storage, so that means we can solve bigger problems."

Energy and water at UNB

Submitted by
Becky Graham, Melissa Fulton,
and Marc Girard

Take a minute to think about energy consumption on campus. From powering the computer labs, heating the residences, and lighting the buildings, the energy demand is huge.

The Physical Plant that rests atop the hill is responsible for heating and uses an underground pipe system to transport steam. The Physical Plant on campus has taken good strides in recent years to increase efficiency and reduce emissions, but there is a gaping hole on the other end of the energy loop. LEED, a system that gives buildings "green" ratings, bestows a paltry rank of five or less out of a possible 69 for UNB buildings. This means the energy (and money) that is saved through innovations in the system seeps out our drafty windows.

UNB is making some progress in reducing electricity usage. The greatest stride, however, has gone largely unrecognized and is hidden on the roof of Head Hall. An electrical engineering class created solar panels that are now used to power an electrical lab. Consid-

ering that the computer labs on campus cost over \$200,000 annually to power, imagine the impact such initiatives could have. So why haven't you noticed these miraculous panels before? Well, that was the point. In deference to the historical architecture of UNB, the panels were approved only if located somewhere they wouldn't detract from the appearance of the building. However, given an opportunity for hands-on education, environmental benefit, and financial savings, wouldn't you hope your university would have the wisdom to opt for substance over style?

Energy consumption is on most people's radar, especially in light of climate change. Unfortunately, water conservation is its forgotten cousin. The average Canadian uses 350 litres of water every day. As engaged Canadians and UNB students, we can reduce our wasteful water practices.

A university of UNB's size uses a lot of water through the course of a year, so it is especially important to look at our actions carefully. In 2002/2003, water consumption on campus was over 375 million litres.

The good news is there are ways to reduce consumption. For example, the science buildings on campus now

use a closed-loop system so that water restricted to lab use is continuously recycled.

There are many more improvements UNB could make to its water system. For example, low-flow showerheads, dual-flush toilets, and low-flow faucets can replace older models as UNB upgrades old building infrastructure. UNB could also investigate grey-water systems. Grey-water is waste water from sources like showers, laundry facilities, and dish water, which can be recycled. For example, grey-water can be used for flushing toilets while heat from some grey water can be re-captured.

Despite what many think, action on a small scale is also important. You can run your dishwasher and washing-machine only when they have full loads, shorten your showers, or not water your lawn. We can make energy and water conservation, and sustainability in general, a higher priority for the university as well.

If you'd like to discuss your thoughts or concerns regarding energy, water, or sustainability, visit our Facebook group "University of New Brunswick Fredericton Campus Sustainability Project", or e-mail water@unb.ca, energy@unb.ca, or engage@unb.ca.

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