

SU budget meetings largely ignored by students



The UNB Student Union, pictured at Monday's council meeting, recently held two open meetings give individual students the opportunity to have a say in its budget. The first meeting was held on Jan. 29, and no one showed up. The second was held on Feb. 2, and three people came – the SU President, a member of the Finance committee, and one other student.

Andrew Meade / The Brunswickan

SARAH RATCHFORD
THE BRUNSWICKAN

Only three people showed up to a recent series of open meetings intended to discuss SU fee and budget breakdowns.

This year, the UNB Student Union fee was \$89. The purpose of the two meetings, held on Jan. 29 and Feb. 2 respectively, was

to give students a chance to voice their concerns and input regarding that fee.

VP Finance and Operations Lisa Solte says no one showed up to the Jan. 29 meeting, and three people came on Feb. 2: SU President Bethany Vail, one member of the Finance Committee, and one student who was there for clarification.

No changes to the budget were proposed, nor were suggestions made regarding the Union fee.

"I put an ad in the Bruns, and advertised

on e-news and the UNB website. I don't know what else to do," Solte says.

SU President Bethany Vail says that council would be a good idea, but that groups, had they come to the table. She expressed surprise at the lack of attendance to the meetings.

Solte said that she did not receive concerns or suggestions through other avenues such as e-mail, either.

The year's budget was brought to council

and passed on Monday evening.

The Coalition for Accessible & Affordable Education was expected to be a representative of the coalition.

At least one person affiliated with the CAAE was vocally distraught about the UNBSU budget during the CAAE's January Slash Fees Forum.

Neil Cole, a member of the coalition, says that they are concerned about "tuition

fees, supplemental fees, and differential fees that are all related to tuition.

Undermining the capacity of our Student Union to fund campaigns and deliver valuable services would be a mistake."

Cole says the CAAE believes the "SU has the propensity to deliver quality services and implement campaigns that can lower tuition fees and advocate for grants instead of loans; these are valuable services for students."

UNBEA speaks out against the elimination of security position

CAMERON MITCHELL
THE BRUNSWICKAN

Residence security budget cuts have left the University of New Brunswick Employees' Association wondering where the line will be drawn.

The most recent cut involves the elimination of a security position in the residence office. Two officers lost their jobs when this position was eliminated, one part-time officer and one full-time officer.

James Brown, Director of Residence Life and Conference Services at UNB, told the Brunswickan in a previous interview that the termination of this position will not have a negative effect on the campus population or the students in residence. The position was deemed unnecessary because administration believed it was largely clerical in nature.

The UNBEA disagrees.

"They made it sound like they were cutting only the clerical side of it," said UNBEA president Currie Langley. "But that person was also there as a security officer in the building."

It is the fact that they are removing

a security officer from within the residence community that has the UNBEA concerned.

"When the guys are working in the residence office they are there all the time. They are close to where most of the problems happen, like parties that get out of hand," said Langley.

Problems do arise within the residences, such as parties becoming out of control and students becoming ill, sometimes severely, due to over-consumption of alcohol. By removing the only officer specifically stationed in the residence office, the UNBEA is worried that these problems could become very serious.

"There have been instances where kids have passed out and they've driven them to the hospital or called an ambulance, and they've been told that if (security) hadn't intervened then those students would have died," said Langley.

"Our biggest concern is that someone won't be there all the time," he continued.

There are other reasons that the UNBEA is worried about the elimination of the residence office position. For years, the security officers have worked to build a sense of trust and community within the residence population, and now they are worried that will disintegrate.

"They are there and they are a

presence. They walk around and get to know the people," continued Langley. "And if something happens they are only seconds away."

To compensate for the eliminated position, administration has created a secondary position in the traffic division. Currently, there are two supervisors that go out and write tickets for vehicles with parking violations, and that number is about to turn into three.

The UNBEA cautions that the position is a cost-return position where the person would be getting paid through the tickets they write. It also doesn't address the problem of nighttime security because the traffic supervisor would only be working during the day.

Ultimately, the UNBEA is worried that these cuts to security will put students at risk.

Director of Security and Traffic Reg Jerrett assured the Brunswickan (Vol. 142 Issue 18, Jan. 28, 2009) that campus security will continue to make nightly rounds despite the cut. He said that termination of the position will not have a negative impact on the residence population.

Langley believes differently: "Positions are being eliminated and that will result in a reduction of services, and ultimately the students will suffer," he said.

UNBSU discusses environment, new website at council

SARAH RATCHFORD
THE BRUNSWICKAN

The UNBSU covered a variety of issues at their Monday, Feb. 9 meeting, among which were UNB's new website, environmental endeavours, and Winter Carnival.

Cynthia Goodwin, Director of Communications and Marketing, along with David Shipley, Web Content Developer, gave a presentation to the SU regarding the new UNB website.

A new addition to the website is my.unb.ca. Goodwin said that this portion gives especially relevant information for students, and that "we're very open to feedback from students."

Shipley said that this portion of the site offers a certain amount of customization. Individuals can decide which campus events to display, and whether to display information relevant to faculty and staff, students, or both.

Also addressed by Shipley was a recent matter of contention amongst students wishing to get a hold of peers for projects. Some students have been under the impression that they can no longer access other students' contact information through the UNB phonebook.

This is not entirely the case, he explained. By going to phonebook.unb.ca/everyone, and logging in with a UNB login ID and password, other students' e-mails can be accessed.

Other personal information has been removed due to privacy issues.

UNBSU Eco-Commissioner Jens Ourom brought his environmentally-related news to the table. Some of his current projects include plans for an eco-week at the end of March, implementation of recycling facilities outside the SUB, and a potential additional fee for next year's students in order to implement 100% post-consumer recycled paper across campus.

VP Student Services Stephanie Lord spoke to Council about Winter Carnival. Volunteers raised \$300 for Gaza relief efforts. Both Winter Formal and the Red and Black Revue met with good attendance, and \$6600 was raised for the IWK by the Bridges' House Polar Dip.

Jon O'Kane, VP External of the SU, also announced that he has stepped down from his position as VP External of the NBSA. He said he did so in order to make it clear that his main interest lies in properly representing UNB students.

Near the end of the meeting, O'Kane made a presentation regarding financial aid policy. The SU went in camera for this portion, stating that the details are not yet ready to be open to the media.