

Dalhousie Student Union – Council Meeting

Wednesday, March 13, 2019 6:00 PM – Council Chambers

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CALL TO ORDER 6:02 PM

1. ROLL CALL

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

Chris Abraham	Chair
Julia Guk	Recording Secretary (non-voting)
Aaron Prosper	President
Masuma Khan	Vice-President (Academic and External)
Chantal Khoury	Vice-President (Finance and Operations)
Cory Larsen	Vice-President (Student Life)
Jeremy Ryant	BOG Representative
Kathleen Olds	BOG Representative
Mulenga Kasutu	Black Students Community
Lovepreet Singh Dhillon	International Students' Representative
Fatima Beydoun	Arts and Social Science Representative
Laura Cutmore	Graduate Students Representative
Laura Woodworth	Law Representative
Catherine Van Helden	Management Representative
Sandra Sunil	Science Representative

COUNCILLORS ABSENT WITH REGRETS

Annie Shannon-Dwyer (Vice President – Internal), Moyin Adesanya (Medicine Representative), Hannah Drake (LGBTQ Students' Representative)

COUNCILLORS ABSENT

OTHERS PRESENT

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

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MOTION 2019-03-13: A01

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the agenda be adopted as circulated, with an amendment to add a brief discussion item about NSPIRG.

Moved: Ryant **Seconded:** Khan

MOTION 2019-03-13: A01 CARRIED

MOTION 2019-03-13: A02

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the presentation about the Budget be allowed 60 minutes to present total.

Moved: Khoury **Seconded:** Sunil

MOTION 2019-03-13: A03

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the presentation about the Budget be allowed 30 minutes to present and then 30 minutes of allotted discussion.

Moved: Khan **Seconded:** Beydoun

MOTION 2019-03-13: A03 CARRIED

MOTION 2019-03-13: A02 CARRIED

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

4. COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED

A. Regrets

The Chair received regrets from Annie Shannon-Dwyer, Hannah Drake, and Moyin Adesanya.

5. PRESENTATIONS

A. Budget Advisory Committee

Dr. Teri Balser, new Provost and VP Academic and Chair of the Budget Advisory Committee, came to present about the 2019 Budget Update.

This is the third of the four sessions they have had to consult about the budget. They had forums previously and have received important feedback about the consequences that the BAC is making. The intent of this meeting is to try to get input and feedback from Councillors.

Dr. Balser's update was mostly the same presentation that she gave to Senate, with a few extra considerations at the end that she has added as a result of the feedback she has received from students. She explicitly reminded Councillors that the goal for today was to receive input from them.

The main areas for University expenditures fall into Direct support (salaries and benefits, teaching supplies and materials, strategic initiatives and investment funding), and Central support (IT, building maintenance, libraries, administration, grounds keeping, graduate studies and international divisions, cybersecurity, support services for students and staff).

She stated that costs are rising. She said challenges are that there are increasing numbers of regulations and reporting requirements; new rules around safety, security,

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animal welfare, employment practices, and human subjects. She also said that students have increasing needs for facilities and supports, insurance (aging buildings, cybersecurity), the unfavourable exchange rate (USD vs Canadian, for example – research labs depend on supplies that are mostly produced in the US, and the Canadian dollar against the US dollar is a cost that must be factored in), faculty (salaries and increases, demographic profile), technology and technical staff (requirement for more). She reminded us that there are mandatory requirements for pay increases that provoke increases in salaries, and that as faculty become senior, their pay scale also tends to increase.

Dr. Besler stated that the two main revenue sources, tuition and government funding, do not keep pace with the required expenditures. She said that the expenditures are expected to increase by 23.1 million dollars in 2019-20. She stated that the government grants are decreasing (70% to 52% government support for government education across Canada and the US) which means that tuition must increase. Because of the expected increase in tuition revenues related to enrolment growth in 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 of 8.65M, and a 2.0M (1%) increase projected for the University's provincial operating grant. This leaves a nearly 12.5M shortfall.

University operating budget models are built on an assumption of constant enrolment growth to offset rising tuition and declining government support, Dr. Besler said. The operations of universities have become dependant on chasing revenue and bodies, she further stated, which she told Councillors is ultimately not sustainable. She reminded us that she acknowledges education is not a commodity and universities should not act as businesses; however, she recognizes that the operations of universities have become dependant on chasing markets. Part of the conversation that they have been having at the BAC has been: should they stop trying to grow, and should they be finding ways to sustain revenue at the current size of the university?

Without an increase intuition, they must focus on a large increase in enrolment, which comes with its own consequences, Dr. Besler said. She let Councillors know that Dal needs 1000 more students than expected to enroll in the University to prevent tuition increases, which simply won't be possible based on current enrolment rates. Larger enrolment affects everyone as well, she said, with bigger class sizes, workload, crowding, parking, and need for services and support.

She said that the increases mostly come from international students, and many more are enrolling at Dalhousie. She recognizes population growth in Canada is coming from a lot of non-domestic folks, and that the domestic pool of students to draw from is limited.

She said that they have been asking the question; are we providing the right environment that promotes diversity and also supports diversity, are they enrolling

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students to have representation vs. just thinking about international student populations in a haphazard way?

Dr. Besler stated that Dalhousie clearly needs a long term solution, built around quality of experience vs. revenue generation. She said that there needs to be more thought put into a model for a deliberate approach to growth (or not – a decision must be made on what the growth target is), and to address sustainability of the whole system.

Dr. Besler said that currently, they are making choices, because they have to. The BAC draft report and recommendations represent their best effort to balance the range and complexity of competing needs and priorities across the university. It cannot please everyone, she said, but they have attempted to respond to the most dominant concerns and requests.

She let Councillors know that the BAC is representative of faculty, students, and admin staff. Their goal is to obtain input related to spending priorities (survey), and to involve stakeholders in creative and collaborative problem solving around longer-term challenges and consequences related to different choices made (forums).

She highlighted results for the following:

- Infrastructure and facilities (wide range of opinions)
 - Classroom size and renovation status
 - Building status (leaks, heat/cooling issues)
 - General wear and tear and/or damage
 - Some downplay or dismiss concerns
 - She said that the reality is that Dalhousie is a physical campus. Deferred maintenance is real and costly, where there are currently >\$350M in deferred costs.
 - The recommendation for this is to focus some expenditures here. Facilities renewal, IT capacity and infrastructure, etc.
- Student experience and support
 - Focus on wellbeing: advising, mental health
 - Focus on experience and success: e.g. experiential learning
 - Affordability (PhDs especially)
 - Accessibility (physical)
 - Impact of increased enrolment
 - Recommendation: Raise tuition in some places (international and domestic non-PhD); reduce international PhD tuition; allocate additional resources to student financial support and to strategic funds for general support.
- Facility budget allocations and renewal
 - Number of faculty members

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- Direct allocations for faculties
- Reality: the entire university as a whole is needed for academic operations. Direct allocations to Faculties have increased every year, but they have not quite closed the cost-revenue gap. Faculty renewal has been increasing as well, as people retire.
- Recommendation: Increase direct allocations so that the gap is only 0.5% (down from 2.4% and 1.5% in previous years), continue to support deans in budget planning and provide strategic funds that allow hiring of new faculty, and other local initiatives.
- Strategic investment and innovation
 - Support for research/grad students
 - Investment in EDI initiatives
 - Other needs: alignment of our strategic priorities, staff support equity
 - Reality: We need to be able to support new things and grow forward. Needs aren't always predictable
 - Recommendation: Focus here a modest amount more. Specific funding for student support, and possible funds for other strategic initiatives.

So far, she said that they have received concerns about international student tuition, specifically impact on recruitment, going against their desire to promote diversity, concerns about the pace of the increase and the timing of it, and concerns about the impact on the competitiveness of Dalhousie against other schools.

Dr. Besler said that there have also been concerns raised about international student support, like the allocation of funds for support and the amount of them, and the type of support that is being provided for international students.

She also said that they have received concerns about faculty numbers in terms of program continuity and workload associated with increased enrolment.

Other concerns question the impact of the PhD fee changes on STEM researchers (as grants must pay for these types of PhD research programs). Getting rid of international fee for PhD students allows more recruitment. She mentioned that FASSS students tend to take longer to complete PhDs and lowering fees for international students may disproportionately affect FASSS by increasing fees there.

Questions and Answers from the Q & A Period

The following are brief summaries of the questions asked by students, and summaries of the responses provided by the Budget Advisory Committee.

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Question 1: Is there any other way to structure how the tuition hike happens and who it affects? For example, you mentioned that maintenance for buildings is one of the big expenditures, and you said that those maintenance costs would mostly be allocated to Sexton and the School of Health and Performance. Should that not be considered when allocating hikes rather than putting a hike on the entire Faculty of Science? Could there be a way to target tuition hikes around building maintenance on what programs use the buildings and classrooms that are experiencing maintenance?

Answer: Theoretically, it would be very complicated to do this. Also, the cost for providing labs and space for science students to learn is more expensive to maintain over time than costs to just maintain classrooms that are attributed to other faculties. The way that we approach maintaining campus now is targeting areas in greatest need.

Question 2: You mentioned that funds will be allocated to equity and diversity initiatives. Have you thought about including financial equity as well? These are not mutually exclusive because racialized folks face more issues around financial aid. Do the equity and diversity initiatives that you are funding include financial aid for marginalized groups?

Answer: Yes, we are thinking about these specific allocations and we are happy to have these types of discussions. These conversations would be open to students.

Question 3: It seems like this is creating a divide between undergraduate international and domestic students; why is there such a big increase?

Answer: The big increase for international students is to balance Dalhousie with other U15 schools. It not an intent to create a greater divide; Dal has some of the highest undergrad fees of all Canadian schools and bringing up the international fees can offset even larger increases for domestic students.

Question 4: I am concerned about grad students who are non-thesis based international students. Both undergrad and graduate international students are shaken by potentially being exploited to make up a 12.5M budget shortfall. These students are often structurally disadvantaged to access financial opportunities, with limits on financial aid access and employment on campus, and less opportunities to get funding the way domestic students can. This is shifting the burden onto students that can already not afford these increases. I get emails from students that are struggling to pay tuition from these programs who are terrified of what is to come. Half of the DSU foodbank users are international students and the \$500 000 of financial aid that you're offering would be covering \$6000 of funds for 83 students, which is entirely insufficient for the projected increase in tuition. How will this feedback be used to re-

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evaluate the budget proposal to put graduate students as a priority and ensure that they aren't continually forced to make budget shortfalls? I know that \$17.5M budget shortfalls have been made up before, and this has not been put onto the backs of students before.

Answer: Feedback has been taken and discussions have been had about changes and trade-offs. One of the conversations we had was to either have a 25% reduction in fees across the board, or a \$500 000 increase in support for international students. This was a decision that was made on a trade-off. For 19-20 there will be an increase in endowment support for students. We are unsure of the proportion that will be available for grad students, but we estimate a 1.7 million increase overall in student assistance for 19-20.

Question 5: Just to clarify: the increase for non-thesis masters students, is it 11% increases, or 8.1% increases?

Answer: 11.1%.

Question 5 Follow Up: Okay, so the justification is to bring international fees closer to U15 average. So the natural question to ask is, is Dalhousie's support striving to be as supportive as other U15 schools? Also, what does this mean for continuing PhD students, like 1st year into their 2nd year, will they still have to pay the differential fee, particularly international students?

Answer: Based on advice received from students from years ago, students who are in program said "if you are going to implement changes, don't implement them for students who are in-program". We identified those students. The major changes in fees will only affect students who are just coming to Dalhousie to begin their academic careers here. As for the support, BAC will hear these discussions specifically.

MOTION 2019-03-13: N01

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the presentation about the Budget be allowed 30 minutes to present and then 30 minutes of allotted discussion.

Moved: Khan **Seconded:** Beydoun

MOTION 2019-03-13: N01 CARRIED

Question 6: Every time we have to pay extra fees (as international students), you must consider that minimum wage in Nova Scotia is only \$11 per hour. Faculty and staff are getting pay increases every year, so student staff should be seeing pay increases as well. My second concern is that in the internetworking program, most students are international, and so this program is bringing a lot of funding. Still, the quality of service for this program is poor; one professor is teaching 4 courses, there are no proper labs, so how would the 11% change this situation?

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Answer: Fees for internetworking are set through the Faculty, so they are not automatically going up by these prescribed increases. I urge you to speak to the Dean because these are administered through the Faculty of Engineering (the decentralized funding model gives some autonomy to Faculties to apply additional auxiliary fees that would not otherwise be through regular tuition in the university).

Question 7: Engineering students pay some of the highest tuition rates, and for that they get less services than almost every other campus does. 11.1% over a 4 year period is roughly \$2500 extra. Engineering students who have 6 courses as part of their full course load, 8 hours of homework per course, 6 hours to sleep - there's an extra 14 hours a week leftover after courses, labs, and sleep. If they have to pay \$2500 more and minimum wage won't change much in 4 years, let alone that housing goes up every year, and getting scholarships through top-tier opportunities isn't possible since the program is hard and demanding. It doesn't seem reasonable to increase tuition by that much, where international students are paying so much more than domestic, and make up a big population on Sexton. 50% of Sexton students don't have time to work, and outside of that, they will not have more than 15 hours a week to work, since mandatory classes go until 9 at night. People are in positions of high risk for mental health due to stress, and now they are going to be even more stressed with these budgetary problems being put on the backs of students. Engineering mental health is one of the most severe issues that you will see in the industry. (Also, 25% of the students in Engineering are international, and overall Engineering students are 12.5% of the whole student body).

Answer: I hear what you are saying, and will take note of these issues.

Question 8: I've been feeling disrespected about how this has been going down. First, you made it seem like an 8.1% increase and did not incorporate accessible language for students. You should have made it clear that it's actually an 11.1% increase, considering this is an academic institution. Also, there are no international students on the Budget Advisory Committee. Every year the DSU puts forward names of people that should get put on BAC and they get ignored. Lobbying with the University is still not happening despite attempts to reach out to them. We should be working together to have a strategy. There are many international students would not be able to eat. They can only work 20 hours a week on campus, and the amounts of stress pushing on international students makes it painful for them to exist; it's demoralizing and diminishing. Academics are being sacrificed. The Writing Centre does not have the capacity to help students with language barriers, and there is a lack of funding toward the International Centre. Additionally, there's only one orientation for international students. These students are in the dark. I don't appreciate how you are pulling a shady move and playing on the marginalization of students.

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Answer: I'd like to state that the fee raise is for new students early. International students who are already here won't be affected by this fee raise, and future students have a choice in whether to come here or not. Also, I'd appreciate it if people could be careful about assuming intent. We had some long conversations about how to roll out this plan and how to discuss the recommendations and the memo that went out. We had purposeful dialogue about how to do this, we were not pulling a shady move or playing on the marginalization of students.

Question 9: According to this mathematical formula, different faculties get their own funding and it's up to them to decide how they spend it. There has been a lack of transparency and have not been seeing how it's been sent. Could this formula be changed for international students and allow the international centre to have more capacity? They mainly do immigration work and sometimes have a few events. Also, how much does Dalhousie spend on International Student recruitment? I know that staff go abroad recruiting students to places like the Philippines and Vietnam?

Answer: I don't have that number but it's an important question and we will get back to you about it. The answer will be in the minutes of the next council meeting. The money going to faculties has been assumed to be used effectively but it's important to think about.

Question 10: Do incoming international students know that they will be paying higher fees?

Answer: Because the way the BAC works, final recommendation won't be made until after the decision goes through the board. We will have to make sure that we have the info for incoming students.

Question 11: What efforts have been made to find alternative ways to fund and make up for this shortfall? Have you had students and faculty in Economics and Sustainability consulted about potential other ways to obtain funding? Why are administrative staff making so much, with the current university President making more than the Prime Minister?

Answer: Since the beginning we have tried to create processes to consult with students and faculty to use some of their brilliance in solving these problems. I recognize that we haven't done as much as we could have. As for the question about administrative staff salaries, I am unsure as I do not set salaries for the President.

Question 12: You mentioned a point about how you are comparing Dal to the U15. I see this as being unfair, as the only 2 universities that charge less differential fees than Dal are U of M and U of S, and they have the 2nd highest and 3rd highest minimum wages in the country. Yes, Dalhousie may be in the U15, but you can't ignore the

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local context that students have to face; like that minimum wage is so low. Dalhousie's International Strategy (2017-2020) is to examine the impact of differential fees for grad and undergrad programs, and this does not seem to have been sufficiently researched. We need more transparency. Where are the \$750 000 allocated towards international students going?

Answer: I agree that international countries should not be seen as markets, and agree on transparency – attempts have been made on the front end, but this is a good point.

B. Quick Life at Sexton Campus

Jen gave a presentation on life at Sexton Campus and current issues there. She said that the Design and IDEA buildings are pretty but are not ideal for students who are on Sexton. The IDEA Building is a huge hallway. She suggested incorporating sound baffles, because she said that you can hear people on the other end, and can't study there or be there for anything public.

She also brought concerns about the DSU office hours. They are currently handwritten, change every week, and not attended by execs. She said that the DSU Health Plan Office hours are 10-12 every day of the week. Study rooms are booked solid and this room would be good to have for other purposes and put DSU office and health plan office together. She further explained that societies don't have offices or spaces to host office hours. She highlighted a lack of outlets in the Design building, space could be used for studying if cushions were added so that people could sit there, because the stairs are uncomfortable, putting more outlets in there.

Her next concerns were about the T-Room. She said that students have suggested that during the week reallocated as a study space potentially to cover the actual bar so that people could sit there to study. She said that supplemental furniture is needed that won't break when sat on. She highlighted that there are only two microwaves on campus. There is a lack of food options and they are at high cost; 3 strawberries are sold for \$3.25.

She also described that there is a lack of security staff. There are also no nurses, the international centre has short hours. Several doors are not accessible and one whole building without wheelchair friendly access.

MOTION 2019-03-13: A04

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the agenda be amended to bring New Business up ahead of appointments and committee reports.

Moved: Sunil **Seconded:** Khoury

MOTION 2019-03-13: A04 CARRIED

6. NEW BUSINESS

A. Fight for \$15 and Fairness Follow Up

Chantal wanted to give a brief update about the Fight for \$15. She mentioned that Council will have a motion by the next council meeting.

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B. NSPIRG

MOTION 2019-03-13: N02

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council move in-camera for a discussion.

Moved: Olds **Seconded:** Prosper

MOTION 2019-03-13: N02 CARRIED

MOTION 2019-03-13: N03

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council move out of camera.

Moved: Larsen **Seconded:** Kasutu

MOTION 2019-03-13: N03 CARRIED

7. APPOINTMENTS

A. Dalhousie Associate VP Academic Search Committee

Nominations: Chantal Khoury

Khoury was appointed on unanimous consent.

8. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Senate Caucus

Prosper said that Senate met Monday, and they had the report presentation with regard to student declaration of absence and BAC. In the student declaration of absence, by submitting one the university is actually taking that and inputting it within the system and so they're able to use it as a tracking tool for students who declare that they are absent and to follow up with them, Prosper told Councillors.

B. BOG

Olds said there will be a discussion about 5.2, Dal's diversity and inclusiveness strategy, with the opportunity to ask questions to Peter MacKinnon and Jasmine Walsh.

9. OLD BUSINESS

10. EXECUTIVE REPORTS

The Executives circulated their detailed reports to councillors and talked about the highlights during the meeting.

11. NOTICES OF MOTION

12. ANNOUNCEMENTS

13. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:27 PM by the Chair