

## THIS IS YOUR BRIEF

### The New University Must Be A University As Traditionally Envisioned, Or It Must Not Be At All.

**Editor's Note:** The following is the text of the SDUSU's Brief to the University Planning Committee presented to the Committee last Saturday.

#### Introduction

We, the students of St. Dunstan's University, strongly support a single publicly-owned, secular institution of higher learning for the province of Prince Edward Island.

#### —The One Publicly-Owned University—

Given the increasing costs of higher education, and given this province's position of economic instability, we clearly see the need for rationalizing and centralizing this province's educational institutions.

However, while this need is evident, and indeed imperative its satisfaction must be achieved in such a way as not to alter, change, or disfigure the traditional purposes and ends of the university.

The "raison d'être" of the university is the transmission and acquisition of knowledge. Its motto is "Knowledge for the sake of knowledge." Its end is people in the broadest sense of the term, that is, people who are knowledgeable, appreciative, and aware. If the institution is not this, if it does not embody this sentiment, if it does not seek this end, then it is not a university but a farce, a charade.

However, while this embodiment is essential and primary, the university may, and of course does, have other ends and purposes; to-wit the providing of trained professional people, i.e. sociologists, psychologists, doctors, engineers, for the maintenance and betterment of society. This end and purpose of the university is important and must not be overlooked. However, as pointed out, it is not essential, but secondary, and must not overshadow and smother that which is essential.

Many of the government statements would seem to reflect an insufficient awareness of the university. Its concept of the university would seem to be only the latter secondary one, and its hope the setting up of a factory to produce people to advance the Island's economy. If this is so, we, the students of S.D.U., would strongly object: the new university must be a university as traditionally envisioned, or it must not be at all.

#### —The Secular Institution—

We also envision the new university as being secular in nature. By this we mean simply that the new university should not be instituted as the embodiment of the intellectual ideals of any particular creed or sect, i.e. it should not be specifically Muslim, Christian, or any other.

However, this is not to say that religion has no place in the new institution; we simply wish to insure its freedom from the dogmatism, narrowness, and insularity of many creed-based institutions. In fact, we would see the new institution containing many or all of the world religions in a department of religious studies, with the caution that this department be free of any partisan religious affiliation.

Thus, what we wish, in short, is that the new university be free from religious bias. However, note, that this freedom in turn must not become a bigotry in the sense that it will object to, and reject, anything and anybody that is not totally secular. This is a delicate and important point: in the secular university, the free university, people, whether students or faculty, must be judged

according to their academic excellence, not according to their particular religious affiliation; and yet, at the same time, the institution must remain free from any religious identification or dogmatism.

#### —Student Representation—

Recognizing students as necessary, legitimate and integral members of the university community, it is our firm belief that, for harmonious academic community life, **the student community must have, through student representation, a direct voice on all governing bodies of a university.**

It is, therefore, recommended that the proposed university, as part of its permanent corporate structure, have voting student members, (which members, having one year tenure for as many terms as are possible, shall be determined in a manner to be decided by the student community) on all policy decision making and administrative bodies as may be chartered.

It is further recommended that as part of the corporate structure of the proposed university, a "Faculty-Student Committee" be established, whose structure, tenure of membership, and responsibilities be the following:

##### A. Structure and Tenure

(1) Eight (8) faculty members to be chosen from the faculty community, in a manner to be decided upon by that community, one of whom shall act as co-chairman of the "Faculty-Student Committee".

(2) Eight (8) student members to be chosen from and responsible to the student community, in a manner to be decided upon by that community, one of whom shall act as co-chairman of the "Faculty-Student Committee".

(3) Each faculty member may retain membership for two (2) consecutive terms, each term being two (2) years, and shall be eligible for re-appointment after a lapse of one (1) term.

(4) Each student member may hold membership for as many terms as he or she is chosen by the student community.

##### B. Responsibilities

(1) To make its own by-laws.

(2) To advise the Senate on matters of academic policy and curriculum.

(3) To give assent to all academic policy and curriculum changes before initiation of said changes may be effected.

#### —Finances—

In recognition of the fact that, in addition to being a social and physical institution, the university corporate exists fundamentally and primarily as an academic and cultural manifestation, we submit that it is a basic right for every qualified individual to be given the opportunity to benefit from the advantages of personal and social development to be found only at the university level. Any person who, having successfully completed the secondary level of education, and, having a true desire of personal endeavour and fulfillment, and in addition, having made application for the university level of education, should not, indeed, must not be turned down for a lack of financial assistance.

Bearing in mind this underlying principle, we request that the following proposals be considered, ratified, and adopted as a part of the

plan of the new university on Prince Edward Island:

##### (1) University Tuition:

That a Finance Committee be established with complete authority to underwrite tuition costs for all students of Prince Edward Island families, living in P.E.I.

##### (2) University Room and Board:

That a Student Housing Committee be established to provide adequate and reasonable accommodation for all university students with no Prince Edward Island student being turned away for lack of funds to finance these accommodations.

##### (3) Bursaries; Grants; Scholarships:

That a Scholarship Committee be established to grant funds to deserving out of province students who may desire to attend the institution but find it economically impractical to do so; and to grant financial support to Island students wishing to pursue courses of study not available at the new university.

##### (4) Post-Graduate Program:

That a branch of the Scholarship Committee be given authority to grant funds to deserving students on a competitive basis, for further study at another university until such time that a similar program is established at the new university. The granting of such funds could be conditional upon the applicant's acceptance to return to the university upon completion of the work for a minimum working period of one year with the option to renew the teaching contract if the candidate so desires.

#### —Student Affairs—

Recognizing that the nature of the university is such that student affairs is an integral part of the educational and other related activities, we re-affirm the traditional role of a student council as the solely legitimate and autonomous representative of the student body in the new university.

#### —Student Housing—

The university exists primarily to serve the intellectual needs of its members. However, in order that this end be achieved, certain physical needs must also be served and satisfied.

Dominant among these physical needs is adequate and appropriate housing. Housing at both the present institutions is insufficient and inadequate. To insure that the case is corrected at the new institution, we demand the following:

(1) Architectural Structure: The new residences ought to advance the architectural design of apartment-type dwellings.

(2) Composition: Residences ought to be of four general types. First, there should be residences that will house males only, and secondly residences that will house females only. Thirdly, there should be residences of the co-operative type that will house both male and female students. Finally, there should be residences for married students composed of housekeeping units.

(3) Control: Control of the residences should be solely the responsibility of the occupants who collectively will decide house rules.

(4) Finances: The residences should be built and maintained by the institution out of its funds. No charge (see section on Finances) should be levied on the student.