

End of Term Report – Fall 2008



Stewart Rand – Vice-President External

Dalhousie Computer Science Society

The main role of the Vice-President External in the Computer Science Society is to act as a liaison and representative for our faculty to the Dalhousie Student Union. The VP External primarily advocates for Computer Science students to the DSU Council, ensuring that our voice is heard and that any issues that have a significant effect on the students and members of our faculty are properly addressed, with our best interests in mind. To a lesser extent, but important nonetheless, the VP External, as a DSU Councilor, is to act in the best interests of the student body as a whole.

I began attending Computer Science Society meetings in mid-September, and expressed interest in the position of VP External, as a way of getting involved with the society. I offered to take on the responsibilities of that post in the interim, with the intention of running for that position in a formal election. The first DSU Council meeting I attended was on September 24th, and I attended every meeting of Council following that date. I attended DSU Council training on September 28th.

While I regret that I did not get involved with any committees of Council, I was a member of the DSU Vote Squad. On the day of the federal election, October 14th, 2008, I greeted students in the Student Union Building and gave out information on how to vote in the election. There was a long lineup of students waiting to vote, overwhelming the Elections Canada staff at the polling station, and we deemed our outreach efforts a success. That being said, many students were turned away because they did not have proper identification. Mark Coffin, Vice-President Education of the DSU had a number of criticisms of the way Elections Canada did things, however, and contacted them about those specific issues.

One of the most important ways I represented our Society to the DSU Council this semester was by ensuring that we were approved for a grant for our annual Snowball (SNoBOL) dinner. Last year our society was approved for a DSU grant in the amount of \$1000 for our annual event. This year, we applied in the same manner, and requesting the same amount. It came to my attention in mid-October that the DSU's Grants Committee had not approved our grant application. In the document that was made available to DSU Council, the status of our grant was "deferred". Several weeks later, the Grants Committee made a report to DSU Council. I inquired about our society's grant for Snowball, specifically asking Vice-President Internal Daniel Boyle if he could clarify the deferral of our grant. He wasn't sure of the specifics at that time, so I spoke to him after the adjournment of Council. I informed him that we received a grant in 2007 for the same amount, for the same event. He indicated that we would very likely be approved for the grant. The term "deferred" meant that the committee did not have enough information to justify approving it, but he acknowledged that we met the criteria for receiving it.

At the DSU Council meeting held on the 19th of November, the Grants committee formally presented a report in which we were approved for the grant. As for Snowball, I created and distributed to Council a song request sheet for the music playlist, to aid in the creation of a song list for the event.

As a delegate from our society I attended several functions, including a meeting with the group involved Campus Master Planning. Members of the executive of what were formerly called "A-Level" societies were invited to the meeting to discuss the future of Dal's physical campus, and to a lesser extent, student life. Andrew Aikens, Liz Legere and I attended to represent the Computer Science Society. Most of the ideas that came up were similar to those that were brought forward during the DSU's Imagine event. I informed council following the event on how to contact the Campus Master Planning group, and suggested that they give input on Dal's future campus.

Since my main role is to communicate between the DSU and the Computer Science Society, there were a number of important issues that I brought forward. One of these was the extension of the university president's term. I advised our society that Tom Traves was seeking an extension of his term as president, and gave contact information for how to have input, through our DSU President Courtney Larkin.

Generally, I informed Council every week about the happenings in the DSU, and participated in CS Society events. I helped administer a Starcraft tournament in September, participated in a marketing video shoot for Computer Science, as well as a photo shoot for the Faculty's web site.