

## **End of Term Report**

**Summer Term, 2007**

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Dalhousie Computer Science Society**

### **Summary**

The primary role of the Vice President External is to act as the Computer Science representative to the Dalhousie Student Union Council, and to act as a liaison between Computer Science students and the DSU. It is crucial that the voice of students from Computer Science be heard within the DSU due to the unique needs and aspirations of our faculty. As the face of Computer Science within the DSU, the position also comes with the opportunity to meet student leaders from other faculties and societies. This helps to hear outside perspectives on how to improve the efforts of the Computer Science Society, organize attendance at mutual society events, and generally encourage cooperation for mutual benefit.

Going to DSU Council meetings is merely the foundation of the portfolio of the Vice President External. In this role, it can be very helpful to join DSU committees, take part in DSU events and even simply socialize with other councilors or involved members of the DSU to help gain a better idea of how it functions, and how best to approach problems and put ideas into practice.

### **DSU Council**

This summer, the DSU Council meetings have been fairly uneventful. The executives are getting their plans for the year together, and no overly controversial matters have been discussed. Among the motions passed was one to resolve concerns regarding Society Policy, which is discussed in further detail later in this document.

Expect the following term on Council to be more exciting!

### **Constitutional Amendments**

After a long wait in the voting process, a series of constitutional amendments that I had drafted and brought to Council during the previous term were finally approved. However, a new concern has arisen; the separation of the constitution and the bylaws, particularly for the sake of ratification. Since an elections policy is necessary in a constitution to be ratified by the DSU, our bylaws must be included in our ratification process. This is somewhat of a loophole, but potentially manageable. However, the version of the constitution must be constantly updated with the proper bylaws attached, and that version must be the one used on TigerSociety.

The changes themselves focused primarily on the makeup and duties of the executive and council positions of the Computer Science Society, such as the representation on Faculty of Computer Science committees, specifying the role of the undergraduate and graduate representatives, and the removal of the Fundraising

Representative position. Other changes included revisions to the election process that make it both more fair and more flexible, and fixing various typos.

## **Society Elections and Bylaw Changes**

Several concerns arose during the Society elections for the fall term. These included some confusion regarding voter eligibility and misinterpretation on the election guidelines. In an attempt to rectify the problems, the election portion of the bylaws were completely overhauled and clarified, in the hopes of avoiding any future confusion. The elections themselves had to be thrown out and restarted. For this reason, future Councils should ensure they have as many details and as much time on the election as possible to ensure everything runs smoothly.

Among the changes were a specific definition of eligible voters, clarification on the various periods of the election, and the responsibilities of the Elections Officer to the Society Council.

## **DSU Committees**

Both committees with which I am involved, the Society Review Committee and the Recruitment Committee, have been very active over the summer. Committee involvement is something highly beneficial to Vice Presidents External, as it allows them to better understand the inner workings of the Union and to add the voice of Computer Science students to additional bodies.

On the Society Review Committee, a great deal of additional work is being done on top of the committee's usual role of society ratification and review. An extensive process has begun to completely overhaul Society Policy. There are a great many societies whose constitutions or operations are currently in violation of the policy. Some of the major concerns include non-Dalhousie students holding executive positions on the society and distinctions between the different levels of societies.

Fortunately, the Computer Science Society is in line with the current policy. For the others who are not, there will be a process to create a new Society Policy, and once it is established, societies will have a limited amount of time to bring their constitutions and actions in line with the policy. Failing to do so will result in a failure to be ratified during the following year.

The Recruitment Committee has also been busy hiring positions such as the new Vice President (Finance & Operations), Board of Operations members, the Executive and Summer directors of DSAS, Council Chair and Council Secretary.

## **Ratification**

The Vice President External must ensure the Computer Science Society is successfully ratified by the DSU. Ratification currently takes place online via TigerSociety, which can be found at [my.dsu.ca](http://my.dsu.ca). It would be prudent to speak to the DSU

Vice President (Internal) if there are any questions or concerns regarding the ratification process or criteria.

## **Society Barbeques**

Barbeques make up the most consistent and visible events held by the Society over the summer. This summer, the owner of one of the barbeques we use requested the return of his barbeque, and because of that, the Society purchased a replacement barbeque. The propane tanks also needed to be filled. This was done very recently, so there should be sufficient propane to last for awhile. It may depend on the frequency of barbeques in the fall term, but we should have more than enough propane to last us until next summer.

The barbeques were largely successful and were rarely, if ever, free. As such, we have made a fair amount of money barbequing. One issue we have encountered, however, is the excess of small change in the till that is never used. As such, I recommend the following Council arrange to purchase the materials needed to make rolls of coins which can be stored in the bottom of the till and used as needed.

## **Geekbeer**

Geekbeer events saw highs and lows over the summer, but overall it was a very difficult summer for the event. Geekbeer events during the reign of the summer Social Representative were poorly attended, and the issue became complicated further when that Social Representative resigned. The previously assumed notion that Geekbeer was a mandatory Society event was called into question.

In an effort to determine whether the event had lost appeal or whether it was simply not being pursued, myself and the President of the Society worked together to arrange a major Beat the Clock Geekbeer with significant advertising, and spoke to people across the campus. The event was, in several ways, too much of a success; the number of people and amount of drinking grew out of hand, and led to a few minor incidents. The mixed success, along with time constraints for Society members, led to only one further Geekbeer after the Beat the Clock event, one for the end of term, which was a reasonable success.

It will be the responsibility of the incoming Council to determine how to proceed with Geekbeer into the Fall. The amount of effort required to hold the event makes it difficult to sustain on a weekly basis, particularly if sufficient advertising is sought to make the event worthwhile. At the same time, there is both demand and potential to hold Geekbeer events, at the very least infrequently. While ceasing the weekly tradition will mean informing people when Geekbeer is and is not taking place becomes more difficult, I believe biweekly Geekbeers, with one per month being themed, is more appropriate for Society resources.