

Dear Editor,

MEMORIAL LIBRARY - FURTHER QUESTIONS

In a recent interview with the *'Sackville Tribune Post'*, President Campbell stated, "Saving the Memorial Library and converting it into an Arts Centre instead of building new would have resulted in an additional \$5 million price tag . . ." A new Performing Arts Centre is expected to cost \$30 million. Of this amount it is assumed or expected that \$10 million would come from the University's budget and \$20 million from alumni and fundraising support.

The most critical question, perhaps, is where would the additional \$5 million come from? Mr. David Steward, Mount A's Vice-President of Administration, thinks he has the answer. In a *'Sackville Tribune Post'* article dated October 20, 2010, Mr. Steward is quoted as stating, "That \$5 million would have to come from our students." This is a convenient claim to make since most people would respond with, "We wouldn't want that to happen, would we?" But is it accurate?

I think that Mr. Steward's claim could well not be accurate, because there is an important implicit assumption made. The critical assumption is that both projects would raise the same \$20 million from alumni and fundraising support. This would seem to be rather unlikely. Are there no alumni or wealthy friends of the University who might be moved to support the renovation of the Memorial Library with a generous donation of, for example, \$5 million? Generally speaking, alumni support would perhaps be significantly stronger for a renovated Memorial Library (to become a Performing Arts Centre), than to destroy that heritage to build a new Performing Arts Centre. If this were the case, the \$5 million cost difference would shrink or possibly disappear.

Mount Allison has an excellent vehicle to communicate with its many thousands of alumni in the form of *'The Record'*. Why not devote a major article to the various aspects of the choice the University is faced with in the upcoming issue? Such an article would generate, no doubt, many, many responses. With the alumni and friends of the University contributing the majority of the funds, should they not be given opportunities for having a say?!

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