

2002

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2007

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1994: Economic pressure grows to put a stop to live shows being held at the Powerplant as of 16 April, when classes are let out. Operators of the venue say that lack of turnout has made it hard to pay bands to come to Edmonton to perform. An upgraded sound system, as well as pool tables and dartboards, are brought in to fill the void.

In December, after what was widely viewed as a year of mismanagement and monetary losses, the GSA votes 49-4 in favour of changing Powerplant management. The new management company that's brought in promises to renovate the bar and reinstate live acts, making it a premier venue for the city.

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2004: Alvin Law is elected as SU VP (Operations and Finance) under the campaign slogan "Power Up The 'Plant!" However, even after a menu change and shift in marketing direction, the 'Plant still falls nearly \$80 000 short of its projected budget by the end of the year.

1995: Renovations are complete early in the year, bringing in a new menu, as well as the larger stage that bands would play on for the next twelve years. The new venue is praised as a step in the right direction in getting the struggling bar back on its feet.

1997-2001: The 'Plant runs relatively smoothly during this period. Turnout during the weekends is brisk, concerts are held almost weekly (with the occasional big-ticket band stopping by), and the bar is generally quite popular with U of A students. As a result, the business stays in the black during this period, raking in six-figure profits for the SU.

2005: For the first time, the SU budgets a net loss—\$30 000—for the operation of the Powerplant. It ends the year \$173 495 in the red.

1996: Even after massive renovations to the space, the GSA continues to lose money on the 'Plant. The Students' Union steps in and offers to take over the bar, but negotiations on the transfer of the lease turn ugly as the GSA wants to keep control of the backroom lounge as a graduate-students-only space.

1997: The transfer of the Powerplant from the GSA to the SU takes place late in the winter semester. By this time, the SU had already closed Dewey's, their own unsuccessful (but much loved) bar in HUB, in January, and made plans to move the name to the backroom lounge of the Powerplant. As per the GSA's request, the space is designated for graduate students only, but this rule is not strictly enforced.

2006: A massive restructuring of the operations and management of the bar takes place. Dewey's lounge is turned into a non-licensed coffee shop, while the east side of the 'Plant is turned into a buffet. The west side, including the concert venue, maintains the same format. Though initial reception to the buffet idea is positive, lackluster follow-up leaves it empty most days of the week. By December, the business has already cost the SU a crippling \$209 807.

2008: The SU plans to open the east side of the Powerplant as student space come January, though it may open as early as December 2007—just in time for finals.

2007: The SU announces that the 'Plant will close its doors for the summer in favour of keeping RATT open. After accumulating huge losses throughout the first half of the year, the Executive shuts the 'Plant's doors to rethink its structure. Later in the summer, the SU announces that the Powerplant will reopen for the fall semester, but in a much different capacity: Dewey's is now a licensed coffee shop, while the east side of the Powerplant bar is to be converted into student space by the SU. In return for greatly cutting the building's rent, the University gains control of the west side of the bar, more than likely using it for student space as well. However, none of these renovations to the main portion of the 'Plant have taken place, and it will remain closed for the time being.

The Future: The SU has gone on the record stating that the current state of the Powerplant is only a short-term solution, and that a committee to investigate the future of the SU's role in the building will be established.

One thing remains certain: as a student space, the Powerplant has seen more than its fair share of controversy over the years. Near-constant restructuring, renovations, and mounting losses have cost the Powerplant far more than monetary gains: its identity.

Is it a bar? A restaurant? A buffet? A coffee shop? No one—not the SU, not students, not the University—seem to know what to do to reclaim the historic space. Lots of ideas have been thrown around, but its dormant state and the establishment of a committee to explore the building's future may or may not save the bricked structure from its final demise.

Whither the Powerplant? The actual building has stood the test of time—now the question remains as to whether or not its reputation can do the same.