

A short history of other NUS referenda at U of A

by Tom Barrett

Next week's NUS referendum will be the third one held at the U of A in the last six years. Students rejected membership in the National Union of Students in 1973 and 1975.

In 1973, U of A students voted by a margin of 359 to 322 against formal affiliation with NUS. This represented a turnout of less than 4% of the student body, an incredible show of apathy even by U of A standards.

Although there were no official pro-NUS and anti-NUS committees in 1973, a number of students wrote letters and took public stands on NUS. The Gateway also printed an editorial by Patrick Delaney, a

member of the council executive, encouraging students to say no to NUS.

The pro-NUS arguments, presented by groups as diverse as the Young Socialists and the Student Christian Movement, centered on the need for representation and lobbying power at the federal level, and NUS's ability to provide it.

Most of the other statements made by those in favor of joining NUS were in response to charges levelled against the organization. Traditionally, the pro-NUS campaigns at U of A and elsewhere have been forced to adopt a defensive posture.

Delaney accepted the need for a national student organiza-

tion, but charged that NUS was ignoring things like student finance and concentrating "on such issues as a boycott of Portuguese wines, Marxism, Nescafe, and Kraft products."

Incidentally, despite Pat's faulty grammar I believe we can assume he was accusing NUS of advocating Marxism, not boycotting it.

Delaney also suggested that "the present structure (of NUS) has become the mouthpiece of a few individuals who seem more concerned with promoting their own interests than the interests of students." No doubt Delaney was quite familiar with this perspective, as he was later forced to resign from council

executive for pocketing \$2300 of the students' money.

The NUS referendum in 1975 received a lot more attention from students, but the result was the same as two years earlier.

This time 2,604 students turned out, but only 854 (32%) voted in favor of joining NUS. Loreen Lennon, who hosted the pro-NUS 'victory' party described it as rather subdued.

The referendum was proposed by VP External Brian Mason, who had attended a NUS conference over this summer. Mason also recommended that money be provided for the formation of pro-NUS and anti-NUS committees. Both suggestions were adopted by student council.

Mason reiterated the pro-NUS arguments advanced in 1973 and challenged the contention that the federal government plays only a minor role in education spending. He pointed out that although the provinces are the principal policy-makers on education the federal government supplies approximately 50% of the money. He also claimed that the federal government plays an important role in student aid.

The anti-NUS campaign, led by student councillors Peter Drabble and Rick Cooper, claimed that the university's lobbying efforts should be focused on the provincial rather than the federal level. They suggested that the recent formation of the Federation of Alberta Students made a national students organization unnecessary. They also suggested that the money supplied by the federal government was a non-negotiable 50% of education expenses. In other words, that the Feds automatically matched whatever the provincial government spent. This claim has since been refuted, however.

A NUS debate was held in SUB, but according to the Gateway the panel outnumbered the audience.

An argument which has resurfaced again this year, is that NUS is a left-wing or radical left-wing organization. Unfortunately this is a very difficult question for U of A students to make a judgment on. Our next article on NUS will deal with its current activities, policies and strategies. These should provide students with the most objective answer to this particular charge.



Student council executive exhibit their patented split-slate look during the debate on the FAS referendum. That's Cheryl Hume on the far left, Kaysi Eastlick and Steve Kushner in the center, and Mike Ekelund and Dave Fisher to the right.

Finance VP comments

More gov't funding, or more U cutbacks

by Loreen Lennon

At present there are no spending guidelines from the government and there is no indication when the university can expect its 1979-80 grant from the province. It's anybody's guess *how much* the U of A will receive next year, said Lorne Leitch.

Professor Lorne C. Leitch is the Vice-President Finance and Administration for the university and responsible for the administration of its budget. He spoke about the university's financial position for 1979-80 at a Media Luncheon Wednesday.

"We have been working without planning figures 'til now. But we've gone to the deans for their estimates and will be ready to go as soon as the government announces the grant."

Leitch is concerned about the recent news that there will be no increase in tuition fees for next year.

"We were led to believe

that there would be another 10% tuition fee increase and were budgeting for it. I hope the government intends to account for this in calculating our grant," he said.

If not, an increase similar to last year's won't be enough to cover inflation.

Without the extra 10% from tuition fees, another 8.25% increase in grants would be effectively only about 7.25%. And that will not cover the salary increases that have been negotiated, or the rising costs of materials and supplies.

"It would simply mean further cutbacks; and we've already cut back a lot," Leitch warned. "There's no doubt that, in this case, the quality of education would suffer."

"But that's a judgment that's hard to quantify."

Leitch admitted that the U of A has coped pretty well with inadequate funding for a few years, but now the situation is serious.

Salaries account for 85% of the university's operating budget, and cutbacks have affected personnel directly.

"Last year we froze 41 academic and 100 non-academic positions. That means when a vacancy occurs, it isn't filled. Without sufficient funding, all our vacancies will be soaked up in 1979-80."

He says you can deal with cutbacks by attrition but it's not a good idea in the long run. Attrition responds only to vacancies without taking into account the needs of the university.

Leitch hopes for an increase at least equal to last year's, and perhaps a little more. However if the U of A continues to be subjected to increases less than the rate of inflation, he predicts a certain decline in the quality of its education.

The fiscal year begins April 1. Unless the pending election produces some major policy changes, one thing is certain. "If we have to make further cuts next year," Leitch commented, "they'll be conservative cuts."

Disco dancers drop in droves

(NS-CUP) — The widespread popularity of disco dancing is allegedly resulting in a rash of ailments which are disabling thousands of disco patrons.

A growing number of podiatrists have expressed concern about the possibility of permanent foot damage suffered by women who frequent discos. According to those foot specialists many women run the risk of chronic foot problems because they insist on wearing platform shoes or spike heels while dancing.

Other medical authorities have expressed concern about the possibility of hearing damage by disco-goers because of the excessive noise levels at many clubs. Disco D-Js as well as patrons have suffered long-term hearing loss, an ailment widely referred to as "disco ear."

Now, some plastic surgeons claim their business is on the upswing because of an alleged fondness for cocaine among a sizeable minority of disco enthusiasts. *Billboard* magazine claims that a number of plastic

surgeons are encountering cases of what might be called "disco nose." Some coke sniffers are allegedly requiring plastic surgery to correct nasal problems caused by excessive use of the drug.

The latest medical problem to crop up stems from the growing popularity of disco roller-skating. One roller rink owner in Ottawa recently found it necessary to spend \$2,500 on first aid equipment to treat cases of "disco butt," and other skating-related injuries.

FAS criticizes Grantham report

The President of the Federation of Alberta Students expressed serious concern over the recently released *Report of the Task Force to Review Students' Contributions to the Costs of Post-Secondary Education*.

"This is not the report the Task Force members approved," said Redlin, who was also a member of the Task Force.

"At the final meeting in Calgary the Task Force decided by a majority vote to include a recommendation, numbered 14.6 (k), stating that Alberta should make representation to the Council of Ministers of Education Canada to establish procedures that would ensure student discussions with the Canada Students Loans Plenary Group. This recommendation does not appear in the report as released," he said.

"There was some confusion created among members of the Task Force concerning this recommendation when, following the final meeting, a statement was circulated to all Task Force members claiming that students already did have opportunities for discussions with the Student

Loan Plenary Group. I pointed out at the time that this was completely untrue," Redlin said.

"I was thus shocked when I discovered that Ron Grantham had decided, following expressions by some Task Force members of confusion over the issue, to have the recommendation removed from the report, without having contacted the Chair of the Plenary Group itself in order to determine the facts of the matter."

Mr. Grantham is the Chair of the Task Force and was responsible for any minor changes that might be required before the Report went to print.

At a press conference last Saturday, Grantham denied the Task Force had ever passed Motion 14.6 (k).

"The Report is based more upon opinion than fact," Redlin said.

"For example, a fixed ratio of tuition fees for different types of institutions was recommended. This would result in a 7.2% increase in fees for most university programs, a 40% rise for most colleges, an 83% rise for Olds, Fairview and Lakeland Colleges and a 119% increase at S.A.I.T. and N.A.I.T."

"The taxpayers of Alberta deserved more for their \$75,000."



The new face at RATT belongs to Fran Taylor, Ron Stewart's replacement as head bartender. Look out for the engineers Fran. They're the ones under the tables.