

Universities Week not for students

by Ellen Reynolds
with Cup files

The PR department at Dalhousie is gearing up for National Universities Week but students have little to do with it.

"It's a celebration of universities and not something for students to raise issues at," says Joe Morrison, Vice-President External at Dalhousie. Morrison says the week is for promotion of universities and is a sort of open house.

"We're not trying to get involved in student or faculty issues specifically. It's not a political activist type of event, so that's why students take less of an interest," said Dr. Kenneth Ozmon, co-chair of the National Universities Week program and president of St. Mary's University.

The Minister of Education and other public figures will be invited to tour the campus, and Morrison hopes to be able to use this tour to point out some funding trouble spots at Dalhousie.

This is the third time the Week has been organized. It will take place between Oct. 23 and Nov. 1. The theme this year is "Investing In Our Future", and the aim is to promote community involvement in the university since students are an "investment in the future". Planting a tree is another activity planned to symbolize the growth of the university with community involvement.

Ozmon said students were involved in planning the Week this year through the participation of the Canadian Federation of Students.

But CFS Information Officer Catherine Louli claims CFS "had

only minimal involvement in the planning of National Universities Week". She said CFS will be a participant in the Week, "but a minimal participant".

In fact, Louli questions whether students have any cause for celebration, considering government underfunding of universities, accessibility problems, overcrowding and high tuition fees.

"My question is, if students were involved in the Week, would they be calling it a celebration?" said Louli.

Louli added that the CFS policy manual encourages its members to participate in the Week.

"We are encouraging our locals to hold forums or debates or whatever works. We think it's a good thing that people will be focusing on post-secondary education," said Louli.

This year the scheduling of the Week has also created problems. The National Forum on Post-Secondary Education in Saskatoon is set for October 25 to 28 — right in the middle of National Universities Week.

"It has created an overabundance of problems," said Less McAfee, who was hired by AUCC to coordinate a Speaker's Bureau for the Week. "Of the 31 university presidents who offered to participate in the Bureau, 25 are going to the Forum."

He said most of the presidents had to schedule speaking engagements outside of the Week because of the Forum.

McAfee said the presidents are being booked by such community clubs as Rotary and Kiwanis but that student

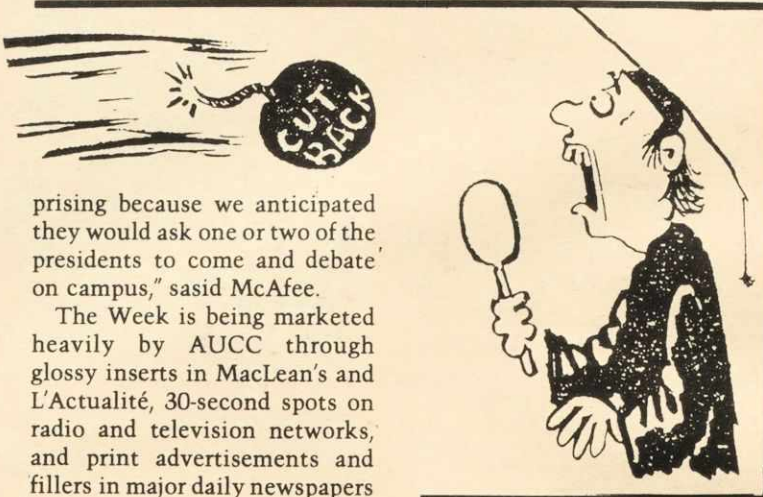
response to the project has been weak.

"We have heard nothing from any student groups, which is sur-

and other national publications.

Public Relations departments at the different campuses are expected to organize specific

events during the Week, while AUCC will host the official launching in Ottawa on October 23.



prising because we anticipated they would ask one or two of the presidents to come and debate on campus," said McAfee.

The Week is being marketed heavily by AUCC through glossy inserts in MacLean's and L'Actualité, 30-second spots on radio and television networks, and print advertisements and fillers in major daily newspapers

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