

One student's opinion

LET'S CHANGE THE STUDENT COUNCIL

'NEVER THERE WHEN NEEDED'

By ANDY WAHL

This article is one student's opinion of student government at UNB. It is not necessarily the opinion of the Brunswickan editorial board or staff.

UNB's withdrawal from CUS at the recent CUS congress has raised the issue of forming a voluntary student union here.

It is obvious that the Student Representative Council is not fulfilling its role either in the student eyes or the eyes of present SRC members. Now is the time for a detailed study of student government and the form it should take.

In recent years the SRC has become more involved in political matters, particularly those relative to university government. There have been attempts to run a course evaluation program. There have been demands for student representation on governing university councils. Rising fees have raised student ire. However there have been no adequate or successful results to student demands.

Assuming that these are relevant areas of student union concern, what must be done to produce better results?

It is obvious that there is no mass student involvement in any of the SRC's political demands. Only last year's march on the Centennial building, New Brunswick's civil service headquarters, did a little to make the average student aware of the implications of a fee raise.

MUST UNITE

Much better communication must be established with the student body. Students demands are not going to be met unless students are united and committed.

One solution is more education of students by the SRC.

Teach-ins, guest speakers and seminars must be organized on relevant issues. Money would have to be made available. Year-books, debating, Brunswickan and other programs that SRC money is wasted on will have to take second spot.

If the student body is to become aware of the pressing social issues before them, the SRC cannot be a bureaucratic structure baby-sitting students and run by an enlightened minority.

NO IRRELEVANCIES

The second possibility would be a voluntary student union replacing the present structure. This would be more democratic because only those students wanting to would become members. Student money wouldn't be wasted on petty irrelevancies.

Such a union would not be concerned with providing services to the students. It would spend more time developing an analysis of existing problems, more time educating students and more time pressing for necessary changes in the university and society. The union would attract only those students committed to work for that program and its ideals.



UNB delegates at last month's CUS Congress felt that too much thinking was done for students. In explaining UNB's withdrawal from CUS, delegate Lawson Hunter said, "We felt that students should have an opportunity to decide as individuals rather than as units in a collective body whether or not they wanted a national union. We could form a much more democratic union that way." Students, Hunter feels, are too often, as in the above photo, allowing an elitist group of their peers to do their thinking for them.

The students must confront this issue themselves. They must decide the type of student government they want.

WHERE IS SRC?

The present SRC is bureaucratic, elitist, undemocratic and unrepresentative. It wastes thousands of dollars on useless organizations. It never tackles the real problems confronting the students. Students can't even have a voice in running their own residences. They must abide by moral and ethical standards dictated by Fredericton's old maids. Where is the SRC?

When security and campus police infringe on student rights to privacy and freedom, where is the SRC?

When we ask, responsibly, for adequate and fair student representation on university and faculty committees, and get tokenism in return, where is the SRC?

TUITION FEES

When the administration, university president and the board of governors lie about tuition fees and blame their own inadequacies on a near-bankrupt province, where is the SRC?

When students are forced to pay exorbitant prices in Fredericton stores and restaurants and have to live in inadequate housing, where is the SRC?

In other words, where is the SRC when it comes to the real issues facing students. Students

must face those questions. The SRC must be radically restructured immediately.

Student problems can be ignored no longer.

UNION

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UNB's role in CUS and CUS's role as a national union.

There have been no further statements from SRC president Dave Cox about the voluntary student union. Cox and four other SRC members made up UNB's delegation to the congress.

VIEWPOINT

by Gary Robins

What do you think of orientation?



Maggie Thomas
business 1
I think it's great. It sort of breaks you in to university life.



Jane Pingree
arts 1
I think it's good. It's fun. You get initiated and meet people.



Les MacFarlane
arts 1
It's a waste of time. Really stupid and infantile. It's just a bunch of bullshit.



Ronnie Shaw
civil 1
It's nice. You get to meet all the people. The Frosh squad is pretty nice and helps you out a lot.

Margot Buckley
science 1
It gets you out of your shell and makes you feel more at ease. The frosh kit is very helpful. You really get immersed in college life.



Rosalind Geldart
science 1
I think it's groovy. I'm glad they didn't cut the initiation part of it completely. We all expected it.



Marie MacNeil
arts 1
It's great for meeting people, but then everything here is great or something—mostly or something.



Ron Carlyle
business 1
It's good for the first students as far as familiarizing them with the campus. It also helps instill a little spirit in them.



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