

NIUSA functions for Native Indian students

By HECTOR PICTOU
President of NIUSA

The Native Indian University Students Association (NIUSA), has been a functioning body on the UNB and STU campuses for three full years. It is organized by the Native Indian University students of UNB and STU. Its sole purpose is representing the educational interest of the Native Indian University Students, within the framework of both UNB and STU. It was the feeling of the Native students of both campuses that our interest were not adequately represented by the SRC. We felt there existed a cultural gap, which also caused a communication problem between the SRC of UNB and STU and the Native Indian students. The organization in essence serves the same function as the SRC, but we feel we can best express our immediate goals and aspirations within the University framework.

As a guiding tool for the administration of NIUSA, we have a constitution which calls for the election of an executive who are Native Indian. The executive positions are president, vice-president secretary and treasurer. These are elected by the Native Indian Student Body who are paid members. Our election to office are for the term of one calendar year, the election can be anytime between November and January of a given

year, according to constitution. The persons that are eligible for membership to NIUSA are Indians with Status or registered as defined in the Indian Act, which is in fact where the definition of Status, non-Status and Metis terminology is derived. But this is not the only criterion for membership to NIUSA any person can become an honorary member, no matter what place of origin, race, religion or nationality. What distinguishes this person from a full member of NIUSA, is that a full member is a Status Indian and he or she has voting rights within the organization.

The organization is recognized by both UNB and STU which does give the Native Indian University Student some positive input in decision making in respect to our concerns on campus. For instance, we serve on many different committees, as the Senate Sub-Committee on Indian Affairs, which is made up with professors from STU and UNB. At STU we have input in the Presidential Sub-Committee on Indian Affairs. We also have access to other Committees just a phone call away, so to speak.

Our rise in enrolment has been progressive in less than a 10-year period the population of native Indian university students on UNB and STU campuses rose up from four or five to 80 at the close of the 1980 academic year. It is now predicted that the enrolment for

the 1980-81 academic year for the Native Indians will increase by 50 plus, giving us a total of approximately 130 Native Indian University Students, the highest enrolment ever for the Native Indian People in Atlantic Canada in the history of higher education.

During the last academic year, UNB had the bulk of Native Indian Students 50-plus. Most were enrolled in the B.Ed. program, which was, apparently designed by UNB to accommodate the Native Indian People who had already acquired special skills in the New Brunswick Provincial School System, as para-professional teachers. Of course there were Native Indians enrolled in other faculties besides education.

The remaining Native Indian Students were enrolled at STU, in Arts courses and education, numbered approximately 30. In the past few years STU and UNB have had a survival skills program in essence designed to give the Native Indian Students who want to attend University on either campus or elsewhere, an orientation to University. The Survival Skills (Bridge) Program, is a tedious six-week period for the incoming Native Indian Students to the University setting. Under professional, semi-professional and amateur-instructors, the course work is laid out.

Christian Fellowship column

The UNB Christian Fellowship is a group which has been around for several years now. Nevertheless, there are probably many on campus who are ignorant about what we do and who we are. Hopefully this article will clear away some of the haze.

The group consists of about 40 or 50 UNB students who believe that Jesus lived, taught, died and rose again about 2000 years ago in Palestine in the way the Bible records the history. We believe in God, as Jesus did, and hold that God's definitive and exclusive relations to humanity is in the Bible. This being the essence of our belief, it leads us into a lifestyle that is unique and difficult - and rewarding. Therefore, one of our major purposes is to spend time together as friends who share a common belief and lifestyle.

What do we do? Weekly meetings are held on Friday evenings in Marshall d'Avray Hall at 7:30. The routine consists of some idle chatter as people arrive, some songs together once most have arrived, a discussion of some issues relevant to Christianity in our day and age, given by a guest speaker. The official meeting then ends and people, usually in small clusters go off to skate or to play some other reserved or violent sport, to shoot the breeze at a restaurant, to see a midnight flick at the Gaity, or whatever... smaller Bible study groups and a couple of everyday prayer circles.

That's not all. UNB Christian Fellowship does not exist solely for the entertainment and encouragement of its members. Equally important is the attempt we make to create a dialogue on campus between non-Christians and Christians. Since university (hopefully) is place where people learn to think, sooner or later these heavy matters should arise. These questions deserve attention - at least a little - and shouldn't be ignored or thrown in the closet their for good (like socks with holes in them). Most Christians who retain their faith in University have been forced to explore these questions vigorously and they often find, and stand on, answers which are radical and precise.

Granted, the modern image of a religious person is often either that of a narrow-minded fanatic or a naive wishy-washy emotional weakling. Well, hmmm...the rumor is not true. Members of the UNBCF would say their faith in Jesus is based on solid ground intellectually, just as it is in every other way. Most members consider it a privilege to discuss the question of Jesus with a sceptic, whether he or she be a militant atheist, a lackadaisical agnostic or sincere believer in another religion. Thus everyone on campus is invited to our Friday night meetings. The issues we will be discussing this semester were designed to discuss the very questions a sceptic or a cynic would ask about Jesus. Everyone is welcome. There will be more details about specific evenings in a future column of the Brunswickian.

If you'd like to know more, call Andrew Bartlett at 455-6120.

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