

Aid report conducted without student input

By PETER O'MALLEY
Canadian University Press

OTTAWA (CUP) - The Council of Ministers of Education (CME) will meet September 9-10 in closed session in Regina, and one of the items on the agenda at the annual conference of the provincial education ministers will be the report of the federal-provincial working group on student aid.

The National Union of Students attempted unsuccessfully last year to include students in the discussions and preparation of the report, arguing that students

should have some input into student aid policy-making.

But to no avail. The federal government and all but a few of the provinces listened with deaf ears, and resisted a move by Alberta to open up the talks to more than the official representatives of the federal and provincial student aid bureaucracies.

The working group remained closed, released no record of its discussions or any materials for public debate. The secrecy of the group was violated only once, when an unknown party leaked minutes and other items to the student

press and student organizations last November.

Without the leak, there would still be no public knowledge of the existence of the group, which had been mandated by the CME to take a look at adjusting student aid policies to meet present and future needs.

Now it is learned that the report of the group to be tabled at the CME meeting in September may never be publicly released.

A CME spokesperson expressed doubt that it will be, and said that if any agreement is reached between the provinces on the recommendations in the report, the CME will probably release a statement, but not the report itself.

Meanwhile, there appears to be some attempt being made to downgrade the significance of the

report and its recommendations.

Last winter federal officials tried to dissuade NUS in its efforts at securing student representation on the group by saying the talks weren't all that important anyway.

Now, John Bonner, who represented Ontario in the talks, says the significance of the group isn't in the recommendations it has made, but that it ever met in the first place.

According to Bonner, one of the problems of provincial student aid officials is that the two federal departments involved - the Secretary of State and the Department of Finance - never meet with the provinces at the same time.

"The working group was actually the first occasion all the provinces and all of the depart-

ments at the federal level involved in student aid could meet officially and all in the same room," he said.

Bonner also indicated that the recommendations of the working group are very general, citing the need for greater federal flexibility in dealing with the provinces as an example of the type of recommendations made.

Whether this is true, or whether the group was unable to reach consensus on the major issues facing it and has reduced the scope of its recommendations, is not known at this time.

And whether anyone other than the handful of bureaucrats and politicians who will get the report will ever know the answer is to be decided at the September CME meeting.

Unless there is another leak.

Scarcity of apartments binding off-campus students

WINNIPEG (CUP) - There will be a shortage of off-campus housing this fall for Winnipeg university students, according to Monika Oepkes, University of Manitoba Housing officer. That housing which is available will be more expensive.

The shortage, said Oepkes, is primarily due to the decline in numbers of available apartments. The vacancy rate in Winnipeg this year is 1 percent, down from 5 percent last year.

Many people who previously offered room and board to students aren't this year because of the rising cost of food.

Oepkes said some landlords are not renting to students because

students want eight month leases instead of the regular twelve month leases. Others have had problems with students and prefer other kinds of tenants.

The cost of housing is also up. Rents in Winnipeg have risen about 20 percent over last year, with no corresponding increase in student aid.

The sum total according to Oepkes, is that "a lot of people are finding that they have to look for different accommodation than they wanted."

Students are finding it impossible to get into residence and rents are so high now that students can't afford a proper apartment, even if they were available, she said.

OFS urging results in student aid hearings

TORONTO (CUP) - Ontario Federation of Student's Chairperson John Shortall says he thinks student pressure for a new deal in student aid has a lot to do with the Ontario government's decision to hold public hearings this year.

But he fears the government might use the hearings only to "pretend they're interested in public debate" and then go ahead and do what they have wanted to do

about student aid all along - increase the amount of money students must borrow to finance their education.

The OFS has been urging the government for the past three years to eliminate tuition payments and institute an aid system based on grants rather than loans.

Shortall said the timing of the submission deadline - October 31 - was "ideal for OFS" because the

federation will be holding a general meeting at the end of September. He said he hopes the student unions across the province will be able to "come to a common position" to take to the government.

OFS has not yet decided if a single brief representing all the students of the province should be presented at the hearings, or whether OFS as well as individual councils should submit separate briefs.

SOCIAL CLUB MEMBERSHIPS!

STUDENTS, STAFF, FACULTY, ALUMNI



ALL APPLICANTS MUST APPLY IN PERSON

RENEWALS:

Wed. Sept 17, 12:00 - 6:00 PM
Thurs. Sept. 18, 10:00 - 1:30 PM
SUB BALLROOM

NEW MEMBERSHIPS:

Thurs. Sept. 18, 2:00 - 7:00 PM
Fri. Sept. 19, 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM
SUB BALLROOM

ALL APPLICANTS MUST HAVE:

- 1) Two proofs of age (19) including one picture ID
- 2) Proof of status - eg. Student Card; Faculty Card
- 3) Renewals should have old CHSC card. Summer membership renewals MUST have old CHSC card.

Fee: \$5.00, Cheque or Cash

ANYONE IN your name a EXHIBITIONS Loan, The C

UNB-STU Pro welcome, LAST DAY of RECEPTION of the Museu 2-5 p.m. Art CINE-CAMPU 7 and 9:15 p INDIAN ASS

FIRST DAY VARSITY M further infor UNB-STU Stu New membe SRC MEETIN COURSE EV.

CINE-CAMPU Terrible Thi FIRST UNB D YEARBOOK learning son FIRST DAY CHESS CLUB RED AND B

WUSC-UNB RAP ROOM. COLLEGE H SMOKE SH

CHSC MEMB MODERN LA PUB WITH

DOONESB

