

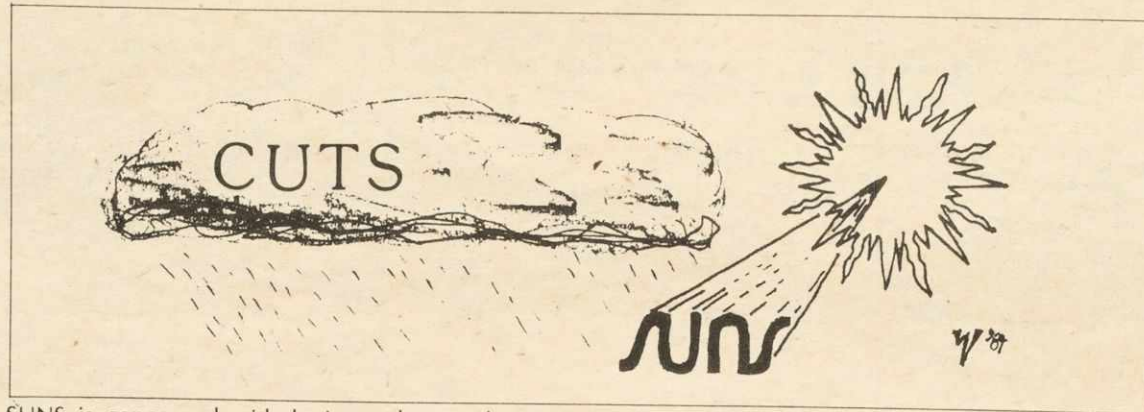
SUNS conference provides stronger foundation

by A.D. Wright

After administrative problems that almost caused it to falter this year, the Student's Union of Nova Scotia (SUNS) is back on its feet and spoiling for a fight. And the two levels of government are not going to let them down.

At the conference held at Dal this weekend, information workshops for student union representatives from across the province were held. One day of the conference's agenda was devoted to these workshops, which were a combination of information dispersal and feedback.

SUNS is mostly concerned with budget cuts; their effect on accessibility to a post secondary education and the quality of that education. The executive of



SUNS is concerned with letting government know the impact of budget cuts on universities in a sagging economy, and most importantly, with giving students an awareness of the consequences of these cuts.

"I want 20,000 students to

know what SUNS is," said Mike Chisholm, the new SUNS chair. "We must make students realize what is happening," he added. Chisholm is currently President of the St. Francis Xavier University Student Union and was elected SUNS chair at this con-

ference when James LeBlanc's term ended.

Of particular interest to SUNS is Bill C-12 (see this week's editorial for more on Bill C-12), currently in Committee in the House of Parliament. The bill would result in a \$380 million cut

in Federal funds over the next two years. This would result in an increased financial burden on provincial governments and, of course, the student, through increased tuition fees.

Currently, SUNS is organizing a Spring Campaign for improved summer job creation programs for students, as well as some type of legislated limit on tuition hikes. They see themselves as responsible not only for defending the rights of those already in post secondary institutions, but also those still finishing high school. Student unemployment last summer was up to 18 per cent, and things are not looking brighter for this summer.

There is to be another SUNS conference in April to finalize the Campaign, and further organize SUNS itself.

Nova Scotia's student leaders fight back



Halifax (CUP)—Nova Scotia's student leaders are preparing to fight back.

At a spirited meeting of the provincial student organization Feb. 10-12 in Halifax, a lobbying campaign involving numerous educational issues was worked out.

The Students Union of Nova Scotia will be approaching the department of consumer and corporate affairs charging possible price fixing of tuition fees by the province's universities.

Last spring university presidents met and afterwards openly announced increases of tuition fees in the 15 per cent range.

Dalhousie vice-president (external) Atul Sharma says such price fixing would not be acceptable in private industry.

"Given the widely disparate financial conditions of all different institutions I find it hard to

believe that they all required a 15 per cent increase," he said.

SUNS is asking that tuition fees be set according to a fair and accurate assessment of the financial resources of all students, and not in the current arbitrary

manner.

SUNS is also calling on the provincial government to make numerous specific changes in the criteria and amount of student aid available to individuals.

The organization is challenging

the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission to more aggressively defend its funding recommendations. Nova Scotia has not met the commission's recommended level of funding to the universities in the last

three years and threatens to do so again this year.

SUNS hopes to increase their lobbying efforts by establishing regular contacts with individual members of the provincial legislature across the province.

Chisholm : SUNS elect third chair



HALIFAX (CUP)—Mike Chisholm is the newly elected chair of Nova Scotia's provincial student organization.

Chisholm, currently student union president at St. Francis Xavier University, is the third person to serve as chair of the Student Union of Nova Scotia this academic year.

Elected Feb. 12, Chisholm said he'd like to work on building "grass roots" support for the

organization.

"Students have to know what SUNS is, what we're doing," he said. "If we don't get a solid base on the organization then we're not getting anywhere."

Chisholm and SUNS campaign co-ordinator Pat Byrne—also a St. F.X. student—will have to commute about every two weeks to Halifax from Antigonish for the SUNS executive meetings.

Chisholm admits it will be a

problem, however he says he is willing to commit the time and is looking for similar commitments to the organization from others.

St. F.X. may be a good place for Chisholm to start his grass roots campaign—two of the slates running in the student union elections have questioned that campus' participation in SUNS.

"Whoever gets elected I'll have their minds changed by the

end of the week. I don't think they really know much about the organization," he said.

Chisholm will be in the post only until April when he expects to graduate. He said the SUNS chair should continue to be a student.

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