

# AAU says funding must rise by 15 per cent

by Cathy McDonald

The Association of Atlantic Universities (AAU) said in a report released last week a funding increase of 15 per cent next year is necessary to keep up with increasing enrolment and technological changes.

The AAU, chaired by Dalhousie president Andrew MacKay, submitted its annual report to the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission in October. The MPHEC will be recommending funding levels to the provinces in the Spring.

The AAU's report differs from its recommendations in past years by stressing that enrolment increases be taken into account, warranting a special 3 to 4 per cent increase in funding next year. The report then calculates two levels of necessary increases, 12 and 15 per

cent, based on the possibility of a government wage restraint program in Nova Scotia.

In the past, the MPHEC has based its funding calculations on the assumption that student enrolment would remain static and eventually decline. However, this assumption has been proved wrong. The AAU points out enrolment has increased 15 per cent in the last three years; seven per cent last year alone.

The report accounts for the effects funding restrictions have had on universities in the last years. As well, it stresses the difficulties university administrators face in planning for the future when funding levels are uncertain.

"The degree of apprehension felt by university administrators and staff in the Maritime provinces regarding the future of their institu-

tions is perhaps at a higher level at the present time than it has been for many, many years..." the report states.

Because the Nova Scotia government increased funding at a level lower than that recommended by the MPHEC for this academic year, and in addition removed \$3 million in funds last August, it left institutions with 4 or 5 per cent less funding than was deemed necessary by the AAU. Cost increases have been outstripping revenue sources, the AAU says, so universities have been forced to reduce staff.

The Nova Scotia government indicated last September its intentions to enforce wage settlements on university unions to a six per

cent increase, as a part of its wage constraint program for the public sector. If this intent becomes government policy, universities would only need a 12 per cent increase in funding, the report says.

The AAU details why universities cannot save in non-salary costs. Economies in this area, representing 25 per cent of costs, translate into reductions in the acquisition of books and equipment. However, in order to keep up with developments in society, most notably the expanding use of computers, courses must become more sophisticated, adding to non-salary expense.

"The universities should be in a position to teach students the latest

applications of computers to their respective fields, but to do this they need to have up-to-date equipment in sufficient quantity. Maritime universities are sadly lacking in this respect," states the report.

The report concludes its argument for a 15 per cent (12 per cent with wage regulations) funding increase by underlining the special role universities play in the economic and social fabric of society. "While not expecting to be immune from the effects of the current economic recession, Maritime universities believe that the current demand for university education provides the opportunity to build for a better future, and that this opportunity should not be lost."

## CFS-SUNS talk it out at powwow

by Cathy McDonald

Attempts to solve the boiling controversy between Nova Scotia student associations and the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) continued at a high-level meeting at the Dartmouth Holiday Inn, last Sunday.

The Central Committee, the executive body of the CFS, set aside Sunday during its winter week-long meeting in order to hear Nova Scotia's complaints.

The CFS is the national student association that coordinates student services and political action. Dalhousie joined the two-year old organization by referendum last year.

Criticisms of the CFS include the lack of accountability of its executive, its effectiveness in running political campaigns, the power of its paid staff, and the executive's attitude towards Nova Scotia.

Tim Hill, Vice President External on the Dalhousie student council, detailed Nova Scotia complaints in a report for Dalhousie student councillors, which was presented to the Sunday meeting. Hill commented on the meeting afterwards, saying it was productive. "There is now an understanding of (Nova Scotia's) philosophical problems with CFS." However, Hill is waiting for the Central Committee's written report before deciding on what action Dalhousie should take.

"We're looking for some valid reason (in the report) for us to stay in CFS." Hill said the Central Committee must address the organizational problems in CFS plus its attitudes towards Nova Scotia. "I don't know if they're capable of solving the problems," Hill remarked.

Brenda Coté, Chairperson of the Central Committee, felt Sunday's discussion was "positive". "The representatives from all the different provinces have become aware

of the gravity of the problem. Now the process of evaluating CFS will be easier."

Dalhousie's delegates to the last CFS conference, held in Victoria in November, returned frustrated and angry. They claimed their attempts to air complaints had been obstructed.

While Saint Mary's and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design have decided to hold campus referenda on CFS membership this term, urging their students to vote for pulling out, Dalhousie has not yet decided on a similar action.

Because Nova Scotia's discontent with the CFS is so strong, coupled with the threat of institutions cancelling their membership, the Central Committee decided to meet in Dartmouth to allow the fullest participation of Halifax schools.

As well, a member of the CFS national staff, Bruce Tate, came to Halifax for a week in December in an attempt to address Nova Scotia's complaints.

Nova Scotia is not alone in its dissatisfaction with the CFS. Criticism from many members caused the Victoria conference to begin an examination of CFS's structure. It was decided to hold a special "National-Provincial Meeting" in Ottawa in May for all members, to focus on the relationship between the national and provincial CFS components as well as reforming the Central Committee.

However, Dalhousie may not wait until this event to decide what action it will take. Hill proposes in his report that Student Council decide whether to hold a referendum on CFS membership soon.

The Central Committee holds three meetings a year, as well as meeting before and after each of the two annual CFS conferences. Student reps from all Canadian provinces sit on the committee. Their meeting ended Wednesday.

FUNDING OF MARITIME UNIVERSITIES  
1983 - 84  
A Submission by the  
ASSOCIATION OF ATLANTIC UNIVER  
MARITIME PROVINCES to the

	Full Time Students	Increase	Total F.T. Equivalent Enrolment	Increase
75-76	31,473		37,191	-0.5%
76-77	31,521	+0.2%	37,011	+0.6%
77-78	31,596	+0.2%	37,219	-1.7%
78-79	30,854	-2.4%	36,599	-2.3%
79-80	30,473	-1.2%	35,776	+2.8%
80-81	31,385	+3.0%	36,782	+5.6%
81-82	32,908	+4.9%	38,834	

## Voluntary fees, says B.C. minister

VANCOUVER (CUP) -- The recent University of B.C.'s \$20 student society fee referendum may all come to nothing.

Provincial universities minister Pat McGeer is currently discussing with the B.C. cabinet making university student society fees voluntary.

McGeer made the comment at the Social Credit party's annual convention following a comment by a Simon Fraser University student.

Terry Hewitt told delegates his \$60 annual student society fee goes to "leftist" organizations at SFU.

"The (SFU) student society gives \$200,000 annually to a newspaper that's further left than Marx,"

Hewitt said. The mandatory fee and society membership infringes on his rights, he said.

Hewitt said many students are denied education because of the excessive fees.

McGeer agreed with Hewitt, saying "in times of economic difficulty it would make a difference. It has to be looked at."

McGeer called university student societies "closed shops". Student fees have "gone up and up" over the years, he said.

Since the power to levy fees rests with university boards of governors, making such "union-like check-offs" illegal might be necessary, he said.

The provincial government or the universities would have to assume any long-term capital obligations that student fees currently go towards, he said.

But Michael Bently, UBC Social Credit club vice-president, disagreed with Hewitt and McGeer. "It wouldn't work," he said.

"Tuition fees should also be made voluntary," AMS president Dave Frank said Monday.

Frank said he will bring the issue before student council Wednesday. A presentation to McGeer is very likely, he said.

UBC students overwhelmingly defeated a referendum in the early 1970s to make AMS fees voluntary, Frank said.