

# CFS not living up to SUNS expectations

by Steve McLuskie

Charges of arrogance, nepotism and a lack of services against the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) should make the upcoming national CFS conference a fractious affair.

The Students Union of Nova Scotia (SUNS) is disenchanted with CFS, the 2-year old national student organization. If policy changes do not emerge from CFS's November 8 Victoria conference, Institutions within the provincial body are threatening to withdraw from CFS.

"The authority of the provincial organization is being usurped by CFS," says Eric Walker, chairperson of SUNS.

Walker is angered by the requirement of prospective members of CFS to withdraw from SUNS if referendas for full membership in CFS do not pass. He says under these circumstances, the membership of SUNS is controlled by CFS, undermining the legitimacy of the provincial organization.

Walker characterizes the national body's attitude and policies towards SUNS in general as an example of "Upper Canadian Imperialism."

## "Upper Canadian Imperialism"

Peter Rans, president of Dalhousie Student Council, has been a supporter of a national student organization in the past, but is now having doubts. Rans says the national staff treats SUNS and individual student councils in a condescending manner. "CFS has national mentality that runs counter to provincial interests," he says.

One example used by SUNS was the hiring of a CFS fieldworker for the Atlantic region. Christine Soucie, a SUNS rep on CFS's governing committee, enlisted the help of some members of SUNS to interview candidates for the job. Brenda Cote, chairperson of CFS, declared the interviews invalid saying SUNS' participation in the process compromised the proceedings.

CFS eventually hired Steve Alexander, a person Côté had worked with at Université de Moncton. SUNS says it was effectively denied a role in the hiring even

though it is the largest provincial organization in the region, representing over 20,000 students.

Rans says Alexander is competent enough to fill the job but other people were equally capable. "The way in which the hiring was done reflects poorly on CFS," he added.

To date, five Nova Scotia student associations, including Dalhousie, are full members of CFS, two are associate members paying a lower fee, and two are not members, paying only into SUNS.

Alexander was not available for comment, as his whereabouts are unknown. According to Soucie, he has not been in contact with the national body for at least two weeks.

Soucie admits the hiring procedures should be changed and has discussed the problem with Côté.

## Student Nepotisms

Peter Kavanaugh, executive officer for SUNS, charges CFS with nepotism on the top of other criticisms. "CFS is turning into a retirement home for ex-student politicians," he says.

Mike McNeil, past president of St. Mary's University student council, and Ben Friedman, past student council president of NSCAD, were instrumental in promoting CFS in Nova Scotia during their terms of office. They are now full-time workers for CFS; McNeil is CFS fieldworker in BC and Friedman is the fieldworker for Alberta.

Soucie responded to the charges, saying people who have been involved with student governments and organizations in the past are better qualified to fill posts which deal specifically with student issues.

SMU is also dissatisfied with CFS. Charlie MacArthur, vice-president of student affairs, says if political and financial differences are not resolved following the conference in Victoria, SMU will withdraw from the national body. This could have serious ramifications for CFS, which is actively campaigning for new members across the country. SMU was the first member to join the organization when it was formed less than two years ago.

MacArthur says the financial wing of CFS, the Canadian Feder-

ation of Students Services (CFS-S) has yet to produce itemized financial statements of operations during the past fiscal year or its projections for 1982-83. The SMU council requested these reports over a month ago. MacArthur says Saint Mary's is withholding \$13,000 in student fees from CFS until the information is made available.

Former SUNS service representative for CFS-S Mike Crystal says he too is upset with the national body's handling of the financial reports.

## Narrow Choice of Services

"There better be some answers at Victoria," he says.

Crystal adds the board of directors is "myopic" in the way it sees

to the needs of students. The program of CFS-S is the CUTS travel services, yet there is only one office serving the entire Atlantic region. Crystal says he would prefer CFS-S developed programs affecting the immediate needs of students, including a national bookstore and food service.

A speakers' bureau and a national theatre troupe operated by CFS-S have also been criticized. SUNS says these services are hardly national since both speakers and theatre troupe are reluctant to travel outside Ontario.

Soucie says there are legitimate complaints by SUNS concerning the attitude and actions of CFS, but to expect immediate change at Victoria conference is unrealistic. The national body is still young and needs time to grow, she says.



Peter Kavanaugh,  
Executive Officer of SUNS.

# UPEI wants to cut twelve liberal arts programs

CHARLOTTETOWN (CUP) — No chemistry, no political studies, no mathematics, no music.

It was recommendations like that in a report calling for a total restructuring of the University of Prince Edward Island which shocked students and faculty into action.

The report was prepared this summer by a four-member committee appointed by UPEI president Peter Meincke to study how the university should cope with looming cutbacks. It was presented to Senate October 14, and urged the university to:

- \* eliminate 11 arts and science majors, such as chemistry, political science and math
- \* eliminate the degree program in music, which it dubbed a "noble experiment that failed"
- \* move away from the liberal arts tradition toward professional programs in business administration, engineering and computer science.

The Senate overwhelmingly rejected the report and appointed a new committee to study the matter.

The release of the report October 4 surprised and outraged many

students and faculty.

"If this goes through, in ten years we will have no university," said classics professor John Quincy.

"The authors of this report haven't a clue what a university is supposed to stand for," said political studies professor David Milne.

Three days after the report's release, 250 of the university's 1600 students gathered in an assembly to protest it.

Some students predicted there would be an exodus of students from PEI so students could study what they wanted.

"We won't be studying here next year if it goes through," said a first-year student. "We want UPEI to be what we chose it to be."

Faculty and students were angry at the lack of consultation by the committee.

Economics professor Gary Webster said most students and faculty were away when the committee was formed in May: "The administration chose the deadwater time of year."

The faculty association refused to recognize the committee because it received its mandate from the president rather than the Senate.

No faculty members sat on it, and most of those who attended the public meetings this summer were non-academic staff.

The committee only met with six student representatives for one two-hour session. Neither students nor faculty in the music department were told of the committee's existence.

Music students said the committee was misguided when it recommended scrapping their program. Music graduate Wayne Dunsford said there is a 100 per cent rate of employment in degree-related jobs among music graduates and the federal National Job Bank lists about 25 vacancies requiring music degrees.

Meanwhile, Meincke said the university lost valuable time by rejecting the report out of hand. He said UPEI did not face a major funding cut this year, but future federal transfer payments are so uncertain it must plan for future cuts.

Meincke said he was not surprised at the reaction to the report. "It is a very emotional thing to even consider phasing out a program."

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