

Referenda losses hurt national student organization

OTTAWA (CUP) — The Canadian Federation of Students was sent reeling by a disastrous series of referenda losses this month.

The University of Toronto, Canada's largest post-secondary institution, decisively rejected the federation, as students voted an overwhelming 61 per cent against CFS.

The loss came on the heels of a string of earlier defeats. St. Mary's University, the first CFS member, voted March 8 almost 70 per cent in favour of pulling out. Then the University of Windsor rejected CFS by a 65 per cent margin, followed by Brock University (65 per cent) and the University of Victoria (51 per cent). Only B.C.'s Kwantlen College supported CFS, with 70 per cent in favour.

CFS staff and executive members admit the defeats are a danger signal to the organization. They say CFS has lost momentum and must rethink its strategy if it is to escape the downward spiral that has killed preceding national student organizations.

Flaherty partially blames recent referenda losses on member councils that say 'you deliver or we'll pull out of CFS' instead of trying to work with other members on campaigns. "It's not the job of staff and the executive to make the campaign work, it's the job of stu-

the federation will have to do with less revenue after inflation next year.

"We don't like to speculate on cutbacks, it's sort of a dirty word," Flaherty said. "It's not going to be a great year, but it's not a question of survival."



dent leaders across the country."

She said the recent losses are "a signal that we're not doing our jobs," and that CFS cannot grow unless it rethinks its strategy.

Although CFS has won more money than it has lost through referenda this year, it will still drop \$27,000 U of T paid for its membership in the National Union of Students, CFS's predecessor.

CFS executive officer Diane Flaherty says the losses could mean

Flaherty said CFS should stop holding membership referenda and concentrate on campaigns.

"We've put the cart ahead of the horse," said Flaherty. "We've said we're going to win all these referenda and then develop this wonderful organization we've all been promising."

"Perhaps we have to take a term or a whole year off from our membership drive and focus on our campaign. If we let referenda take precedence we may not have an organization to work with."

CFS chair Brenda Cote expects federation members will make several proposals for structural changes at the national conference next May. But she says the way to interest students in CFS is to become more militant.

"There's an attitude of 'don't go too far, otherwise you'll ruin the image of CFS'."

Flaherty disagrees. She thinks CFS can't be too militant because students are not as militant as they were a decade ago.

"Students are not as militant as in the past but that does not preclude having a good campaign," Flaherty said. "The issues are there and our job is to get students involved."

"Quite frankly, I don't think we've been doing that," she said.

Stingy provinces from coast to coast

VANCOUVER (CUP): Nova Scotia universities aren't the only victims of stingy provincial governments.

The B.C. government plans to freeze university funding next year, even though the federal government will transfer 8.4 per cent more to the province for post-secondary education.

Lisa Hebert, student society external affairs co-ordinator at the University of B.C. said if the province implements a freeze UBC will have to cut spending \$14.5 million, equivalent to the entire faculty of medicine budget. The federal government currently pays about 67 per cent of UBC's costs and the provincial government only about

20 per cent.

Robert Stewart, B.C.'s deputy minister of universities, said federal transfers to B.C. for education under Established Programs Financing are considered part of general revenue.

"They will be distributed according to the priorities of the government," he said. "The provincial government has never accepted that EPF is earmarked."

"I don't see how the provincial government can continue to talk about a zero per cent increase," said faculty association president Jonathan Wisenthal. He said the university community should "get together" to pressure the government to reverse its decision.

Student presidents beg for funding

VANCOUVER (CUP) — George Pedersen and Doug Kenny are not typical panhandlers on Granville Island.

But like jugglers and street musicians, along with 15 students, the two university presidents from the University of B.C. and Simon Fraser University went begging for

money March 19 at Vancouver's trendy public market. They were protesting the B.C. governments plan to freeze university funding next year.

For about an hour, they handed out leaflets asking for support for B.C. post-secondary education. The event was the first of a Canadian

Federation of Students province-wide demonstration which also included rallies and demonstrations.

"It's a positive approach," said Lisa Hebert, UBC student society external affairs coordinator.

"We feel we have to affect public opinion, particularly since the government runs by public opinion polls. Collectively, students can reach at least 50,000 people in the community," Hebert said.

Hebert said this fiscal year will be bad for students with possible enrolment restrictions, tuition fee increases, deterioration of equipment and layoffs because of government underfunding.

Kenny criticized the provincial government for its lack of economic diversification and added that future economic growth depends on education.

"B.C. has never been supportive of education," Pedersen said, adding that the province has the lowest post-secondary educational participation rate in Canada.

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will have that particular house for next year. Depending on available funding, Director of Housing John Graham says there will be a reallocation of office and housing space to more efficiently accommodate the university's needs.

Graham says university Vice President Finance Robbie Shaw has asked that the society's needs be considered in the university's overall plans of space reallocation.

Because of the house's current condition, extensive renovations will be necessary for it to be put to any kind of use. "I suspect the commerce society will know if they will have the house for next year by the end of April," says Graham.

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