

STU goes to polls on AFS issue

St. Thomas University Students will be faced with a decision October 8 when a referendum will decide whether STU will remain a member of the Atlantic Federation of Students.

As formed in 1976 was an organization designed to represent the views of the Maritime Students. Since its creation several universities including UNB have dropped out on the premise that the organization is not fulfilling its obligations.

STU SRC president Mike Downs said at a council meeting Tuesday night that the organizer was not fulfilling its responsibilities to NB students. Newfoundland was also unhappy and quit AFS. Downs said Nova Scotia, which was previously the stronghold of AFS is also showing its dissatisfaction by holding referendums within the next month.

He said he does not see how AFS provides strong regional representation. Downs said the New Brunswick needs strong unity and he feels that newly formed (last year) New Brunswick needs strong unity and he feels that newly formed (last year) New Brunswick coalition of Students can, although in its infancy be built up to supply this need.

AFS staffperson Tony Kelly was present at the meeting to give the view for AFS. He said that in Nova Scotia only Dalhousie University and Acadia University are having referendums in the coming week. He said AFS expects to win Dal "hand down". Kelly said support for AFS has been coming from smaller institutions across the country.

Kelly said the reason that New Brunswick universities did not hear much from AFS last spring when arguments were going on about higher education costs was that "their hands were tied" he added that the organization also had some internal trouble within the executive. Kelly said all the problems have been resolved and

the executive feels confident despite the fact that they are facing about 5 referendums, and "will come out stronger than ever".

Kelly said that the organization has been working on tougher issues such as unemployment. He said that Nova Scotia problems have kept them busy.

Kelly said that AFS intends to emphasize communication between its members this year, he said he realizes the AFS has certain weaknesses but feels that these will be strengthened by increasing student union participation and a stronger AFS executive.

Main priority for the federation this year is educational cutbacks. He said that the federation wants to organize students so that they can protest cutbacks. "We want to find out what the SRC are doing on these issues, they can use our office as a resource center" he said.

"The big aim is make some dent in student apathy" said Kelly, adding that if this did not happen then the students would be seriously weakened in the upscoring year.

There was some controversy over the issue of an upcoming AFS conference originally to be held in Mount Allison University (Sackville), but changed to St. Marys in Halifax. Kelly said that Mt. Aliston declined to host the conference because "they are afraid of offending other New Brunswick institutions."

Vice president Susan Shalala said that her source in Mt. A said that Mt. A did not want to host the conference because of their upcoming referendum. "I would suggest to you that Mt. A. realizes they want be members of the organization after the referendum" she said.

Shalala said that AFS has failed repeatedly in its obligations to this province. She said that last year when NBC was formed, the



executive tried to establish complete relations with AFS and were not recognized. "The only work done in New Brunswick last year was done by NBCS" said Shalala.

Shalala told the STU councillor that "they would be wasting their money if they rejoined the organization". She said that the treasurer of AFS quit the organization in frustration and if the internal executive do not have confidence why should their membership.

Kelly returned by saying that

Shalala said that New Brunswick institutes have a common working ground with the Coalition and that the coalition has accomplished more for them than AFS ever did.

members of AFS in New Brunswick were placed in an awkward position when they had to recognize another organization (NBCS). Kelly feels that students need a meeting point in order to present a unified front to opposition to their demands and feels that AFS can provide this leadership.

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