

B.C. Students Prepare for Battle

VANCOUVER (CUP) - Students in British Columbia are taking important steps toward better financial aid, housing and summer employment.

National Union of Students (NUS) fieldworker Bob Buckingham made the claim March 7, pointing out the building of the British Columbia Association of Student Union (BCASU) an upcoming housing conference, student research and organizing at the campus level, and growing support for BCASU and NUS.

Buckingham has just spent 11 days visiting student councils at Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia, Capilano College and Vancouver Community College all in the Greater Vancouver area.

He also attended a meeting of the Steering Committee of BCASU.

"There's a very strong desire to get BCASU off the ground. They'll be holding a founding conference in late March at which they plan to incorporate, approve a fee structure, and hire two staff members."

At the March 1 BCASU steering committee meeting, Buckingham said, "We identified 10 areas of concern to B.C. students, among them were student financial aid, housing, day care, and rape crisis centres."

Priorities and programs will be set at the founding conference.

"This is a very positive development, not just for B.C. but for all Canadian Students. The better organ-

ized students in each province and region are, the more they can contribute to student work at the national level."

Another positive development, said Buckingham, is a NUS conference on housing organized by student committees at SFU and Capilano and set for mid-March.

"They're inviting people from all over the B.C. Lower Mainland - students, old age pensioners, tenants union representatives, native people, representatives from Vancouver's trade union research bureau, and anyone concerned with the cost of housing - to discuss research to be done and the development of provincial and national housing policies for low income groups."

The BCASU will use this research and policy to pressure the provincial government and NUS the federal government, said Buckingham.

At both SFU and Capilano research has already begun on student housing needs, as well as student financial needs.

"The research on financial needs will give us an indication of what students' real income and expenses are in this part of the country, and we'll use that to let the provincial and federal government know exactly what we need," said Buckingham.

Capilano College students are also doing research on summer employment for students, said Buckingham.

"They're researching ex-

pected student employment in the private sector this summer and doing an analysis of provincial and federal government projects as they relate to students in B.C.

"This will help us to anticipate the number of unemployed students this summer, and to develop a critical analysis of government student employment programs," he said.

NUS will be able to use this information and analysis to push the provincial and federal governments to start putting more money into student aid, said Buckingham.

"It's obvious," he said, "that if students can't find jobs this summer then they're going to have less money to contribute to their education this fall, and they'll need more financial aid."



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WOMEN BEWARE

MONTREAL (CUP) -- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved the use of diethylstilbestrol (DES) as a "morning after" birth control pill, according to a report in the Montreal Gazette February 13.

The Gazette article appeared the day after the Daily reported that some daughters of women who took DES to prevent miscarriage are now developing a rare form of vaginal and cervical cancer.

The first direct link between DES and cancer was discovered in 1970 when Dr. Arthur Herbst of Harvard University found that young women developing vaginal cancer had mothers who took DES during pregnancy.

In the U.S., DES was widely used in the 1950's to prevent miscarriage. It is estimated that 50,000 female fetuses were exposed to the carcinogenic effects of the drug during this period. The effectiveness of DES for preventing miscarriage has since been disproved.

According to the Gazette, "Experts have estimated that between 3,000 and 27,000 women have or will experience DES-linked cancer."

The extent of DES use in the Montreal area for preventing miscarriage is still unknown, but it was probably very limited. According to Dr. Mary Ellen Kirk, a pathologist at the Montreal General, "As far as the cancer goes, I don't know of a single case in Montreal."

Kirk suggested that young women who suspect they were exposed to DES during their fetal development should see their gynaecologist.

The Gazette report noted that DES is marketed in Canada under the brand name Honvol and Stibium, and is used for the treatment of prostatic carcinoma and menopausal disorders.