

ASUC to present resolutions to federal government

By DERWIN GOWAN

The most important gathering of last weekend's Atlantic Area Student Union Conference was the final Plenary Session at which each workshop presented a resume of their proceedings and from these, resolutions to be presented to the government and the administration, were drawn up.

The first to be discussed was the Student Aid Workshop. The first resolution would have the institutions present ask the federal government to extend the interest free period on Canada Student Loans from six months after graduation to one year. They also resolved to keep in contact with one another with respect to the subject of Canada Student Loans,

as well as the various provincial bursary programs. They also resolved to act as a unit while dealing with the federal government. The next resolution had to do with the inequality of student aid opportunity across Canada. They resolved to petition the appropriate government agencies to equalize the bursary to loan ratio throughout the country. Along the same lines, they resolved to ask the government to meet future student fee increases with increased bursaries, as opposed to an increase in the loan part of the assistance. This is because of the disproportionate amount of the bursaries in some other provinces. They also plan on seeing what they can do to get the government to extend aid to part time students.

Discussion then moved to the subject of an Atlantic Student Union. The main reason for setting up a regional association was that the Higher Education Commissions have been or are being phased out in the Maritimes. Therefore, they accepted in principle that there should be a single association to deal with the Maritime Higher Education Commission. At first, the association will act mainly as a medium for the exchange of information until something more concrete is devised. For this purpose, the University of New Brunswick will act as a clearing house for information. It will be sent here, then distributed to the various other member institutions. They also decided to have another conference in January at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, in Truro, a central location. UNB will be compensated for the operating costs of the clearing house then.

Atlantic area student unions and their newspapers investigate present national advertising systems and possible alternatives. They would like this to be presented at the Atlantic Region Canadian University Press Conference this year, to be held at UNB.

They want all student unions to investigate the handling of student union fees by university personnel from the time they are paid until they are delivered to the SRC Comptroller. Apparently, some administrations have been waiting rather late before handing the money over. Some suggested that these are being invested by the university in the meantime on short term debentures, etc. No institutions were named.

They agreed to exchange information concerning financial policy, budgets, programs, publications, services, etc., and to do this on a regular basis.

They resolved that the executive of the various student unions present regularly exchange student newspapers. They are going to forward a list of officers immediately after they take office, so that one union will know who to talk to in another one. They resolved that there should be a greater effort to distribute more information pertinent to a student's welfare as well.

To free families from having to support a student, they resolve to have the government give all students independent status at the age of 18. They resolve to ask the government to have student loan forms available by May 15, and to have all loans processed and sent out by September 1 if they were sent in by July 15. This would allow the student time to go through appeal procedures before the first of the academic year.

The final presentation was from the workshop on Student Union Finances. They first resolved to express their approval of a program of course evaluation by students at all universities and colleges in the region. They recommended that such a program be actively undertaken by student unions at those institutions where it does not presently exist. Second, they resolved that all

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there should be equalization of opportunity across the country and between technical institutions, colleges, and universities.

They rejected the idea of making the government responsible for paying interest when a student has to borrow money elsewhere because of an administrative holdup. Instead it was decided that there should be ways found to expediate the processing of student loan applications. It was eventually resolved that it be recommended to the proper government agencies that loan applications in before July 15 be processed before the end of September. This would give time to make an appeal before the academic year begins. Also, it was decided that loan application forms should be available before or no later than May 15.

The consensus was that representatives of the Atlantic universities should get together with aid officials to discuss the problem. As well, the universities of each province should get together to confront their respective provincial governments. When dealing with the federal government, the

consensus was that Atlantic universities should be united. A constant communication should be kept up with the federal government. With all this in mind, the delegation suggested that there should be provincial conferences before the next regional one.

Everyone was favourable to the idea of preparing a brief on the subject of student aid and equality of opportunity for student aid across the country. This would have to be done by the federal government or the National Union of Students. It would mean hiring professional consultants who would take into account such variables as different employment opportunities, cost of living indexes, and so on.

Another novel suggestion was the setting up of a national higher education commission. This could be done on the inter-provincial level.

The last resolution was that aid be made available to part time students, with the last recommendations being that all of this information be publicized and sent to the four provincial government and federal as well.

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