

SUNS finds a home in SUB

by Andrew Sinclair

The Scotia's Union of Nova Scotia has found a home. After two years of hopping about from University to university, SUNS has finally opened up its own office.

SUNS chairperson Loretta Mullen is pleased with the new office, and thinks that it will help solve an old problem — lack of visibility. "It makes SUNS more real and will help students identify with us" she said. By providing a place to keep files, the office, which is located on the third floor of the SUB, will also improve the efficiency of the organization.

Described by Mullen as "a potential lobbying force for students in Nova Scotia", SUNS is an organization of ten student unions from institutions across the province. Headed by a Steering Committee of five students, SUNS relies solely on membership fees for its budget, which, last year, was around \$800.00. This year, thanks to an increase in fees the organization has about \$3,000.00 to work with.

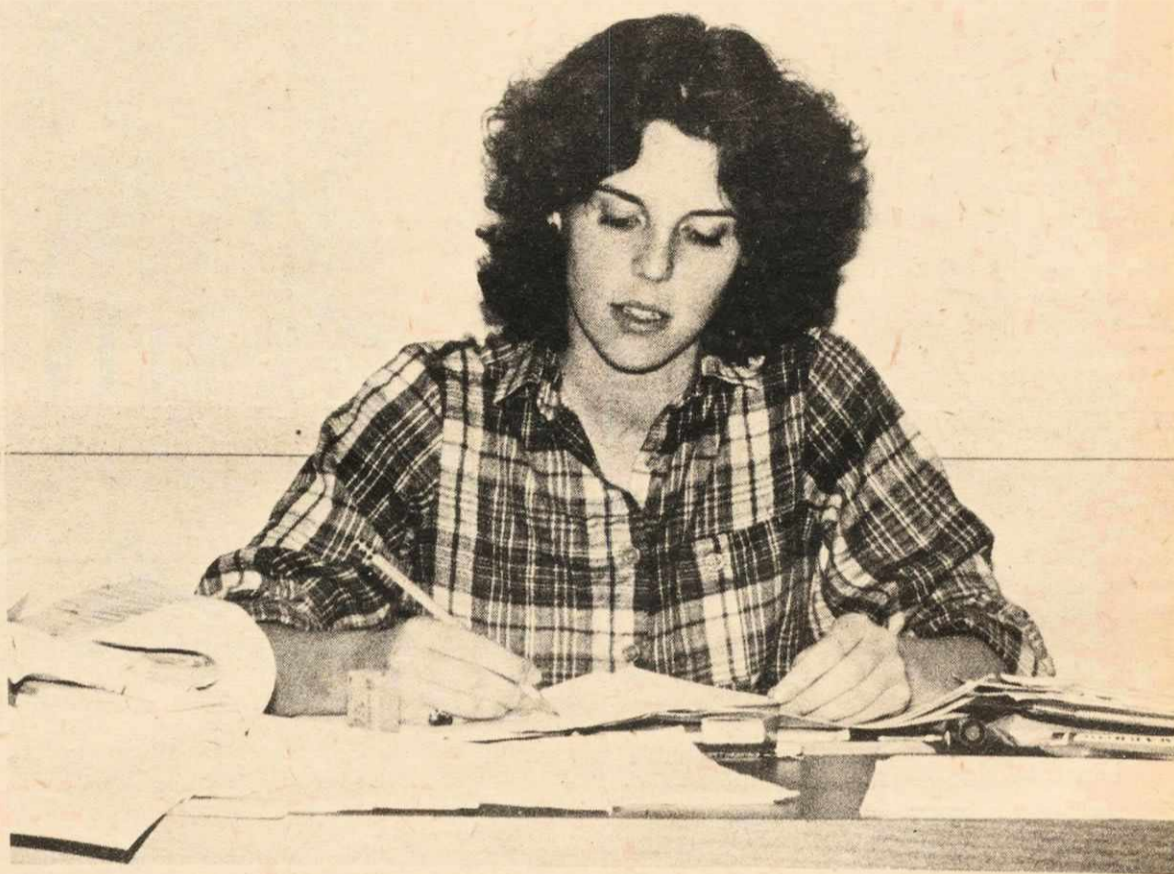
Founded to represent the interests of students, SUNS is naturally very concerned about the average university student. Unfortunately, the

average university student has never been particularly interested in SUNS. Steps are, however, being taken to change this. The Dalhousie Student Council, for instance, has printed a pamphlet introducing and explaining SUNS, and plans to open a SUNS information booth in the SUB lobby sometime in the near future.

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As well, student councils across the province, according to Mullen, are urging councillors to become more involved in the campus committees that make up the backbone of SUNS.

It is these committees — small groups of councillors and ordinary students — that provide the link between the average student and the SUNS executive. Each member institution has such a committee, which distributes to the student body information about issues and problems that concern students. The



HAYDEN/DAL PHOTO

SUNS chairperson Mullen at work in their new SUB office.

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75% An accounting system has not yet been developed that will be useful to all the different areas that will be needed for different purposes. Different costs are incurred for different purposes because a wide variety of relationships exist between costs and are most frequently expressed in terms of revenues generated from the sales of different products or services. It is the breakdown of costs and not aggregate totals, which serves as a basis for financial position, but it is not income and financial position, the accounting system as well as outsiders, but it is not enough for managerial purposes, the accounting system must provide needs to know the quality of current performance of individuals who have been assigned responsibility. Finally, management needs to know what costs are expected to be, and how they are likely to vary under alternative courses of action.

Submitted by Mary P. Anderson
Basic Accounting III

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committees also receive, hopefully, feedback from students about these issues.

The ten committees then get together for a plenary meeting at which common problems are discussed. If the plenary decides upon a specific course of action with regard to a particular issue, it refers to the steering committee, which then tries to carry out the recommended action.

Quite often, this action takes the form of a written brief submitted to the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission. An agency of the council of Maritime Premiers, the MPHEC keeps the three Maritime governments informed about higher education in the region, and, more importantly, recommends changes, with regard to both organization and funding. The SUNS executive usually submits a brief directly to the Nova Scotia government as well.

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Not surprisingly, SUNS has difficulty in persuading the government to listen to its recommendations. One reason, according to Mullen, is that higher education, with its typically transient student body, is much less visible to the public than elementary or secondary education. It is therefore an easy place to cut back. As a result, much of SUNS' energy is directed at making the public aware of

what the government is doing, as well as getting their support. As Ms. Mullen says, "the more support that you are able to show you have, the more they are likely to listen."

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Another problem is the lack of resources and research facilities. With its small budget and staff, SUNS is at a great disadvantage when it comes to drawing up alternative plans to the ones they criticize, and as a result are for the most part limited to submitting ideas.

Nonetheless, progress is being made. Rather than take long-term stands on issues, SUNS has concentrated on offering short-term suggestions with a long-term goal in mind, a policy that Loretta Mullen thinks has been very successful. The government almost never accepts an entire brief — "usually they just take parts of it", she says, but they do take parts. "We are progressing...they do make some changes...they don't ignore us. All you can hope to do is influence their attitudes, and I think that's where we're doing the most good."

