

## Canadian north has inadequate education opportunities

Present higher education opportunities for native and non-native residents of the Canadian North are not adequate, according to a report released by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC).

However, they say inadequate programs is not the major problem.

The real problems, says AUCC, centre around the psychological and cultural dissonance which northern students experience in urban centres and large institutions. Although some technical training is available locally, the majority of students from the

Canadian north must travel to urban centres in the South.

Students complain of the impersonal atmosphere, home sickness, inadequate financial assistance, lack of proper preparation in northern schools to meet the requirements of the universities and the resulting fear of failure, and the lack of employment opportunities following graduation. They miss close interpersonal relationships and the opportunity to relate to professors and other students in a close human way with the chance to be accepted for themselves, to think differently, creatively and culturally and to be

valued for this ability, says the association.

The study also found a strong negative reaction to research activities in the North. Northerners cited the approach of field-workers, the unavailability of reports and the lack of follow-up to the research as evidence that these activities are intended primarily for the benefit of the South rather than the North.

Special programs and projects initiated by universities to involve northern people in higher education have achieved some success but, due to lack of communication and understanding, have had little impact on the total situation.

Not all northerners believe the solution to the problem is the development of higher education opportunities in the geographical North. If changes in the present situation could eliminate the sources of dissatisfaction among northern students and parents, it is likely that northerners would support a system of post-secondary programs in both the North and the South, the report says.

Those who do favor the development of opportunities in the North insist that programs must be of excellent quality, that northern certificates and degrees must be recognized as equal to those of the South, that students must retain the choice of education in the north or elsewhere and that job must be available for graduates. They also believe that the southern model of the university is not workable in

the north; while some qualities of a centralized structure are desirable, the issue of students being close to home remains a prime concern of many northern people.

The report, entitled *Northern People and Higher Education: Realities and Possibilities*, was commissioned by the AUCC to investigate the ways in which higher education affects the peoples of northern Canada and to assess the role of Canadian universities in relation to northern education and research. Information concerning higher education facilities in Alaska is also included, allowing for comparisons between a northern state which has had these facilities for many years and

the Canadian north where facilities were only being planned in 1974.

The report represents phase II of an AUCC study of the universities and the north. Phase I consisted of a published inventory of northern-related activities at 35 Canadian universities. It divided these activities into classes, research and special projects.

Phase II of the study was conducted by Ms. Del Koenig of the Institute for Northern Studies, University of Saskatchewan. It was financed by grants from the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, the Donner Canadian Foundation and the Ford Foundation.

## Entry to NUS for Calgary?

CALGARY (CUP) — The results of the referendum held here on September 26 for membership in the National Union of Students (NUS) are in, but no-one seems to know whether the referendum has passed or failed.

Only 12 percent of the 10,000 eligible students voted in the referendum, with 56.3 percent voting in favour of membership in the national union.

The problem is that it has been previously believed by student council members that a 66 percent majority is required to pass any referendum involving fee increases.

The referendum failed to achieve the required 66 percent, but now members of council have learned that their constitution makes no reference to that requirement.

Presumably, if the council decide to accept the results of the referendum, it could request that the Board of Governors increase student fees by \$1.00, and Calgary would become a NUS member.

Just what decision the council will make will not be known until the council meets on October 6.

The September 26 referendum was the second NUS membership bid attempted at Calgary within the past year. The first, held last spring, attracted 35 percent of the students, with 63 percent voting a

favour. It was declared "unsuccessful" because it lacked the 66 percent majority.

NUS campus committee secretary Noel Jantzie cited the low turnout, the placement of the polls, and the unfamiliarity of first-year students with the work of NUS as reasons for the reduced support at the poll this time.

Less pamphletting and posterage was done this time, he said, which may have accounted for the lower turnout. The placing of a voting poll in the engineering building, while none were placed in residence areas, also caused problems for the NUS proponents.

"We pamphletted the residences and had support there," said Jantzie, "But we didn't cover the engineers."

He also feels the high proportion of first-year students effected the outcome. "They don't have the experience to know what NUS offers them, and they haven't really found out yet what happens to students in post-secondary institutions in Canada."

Jantzie pointed out that the NUS student aid petition is doing well, with over a thousand signatures so far. "We have more signatures on the petition than the number of people who voted for NUS in the referendum".

## Students reject plans to join federation

EDMONTON (CUP) — The student association at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) has rejected plans to join the recently proposed Alberta Student Federation.

At a meeting September 24, the general student council voted to remain a member of the already established Alberta Presidents Committee made up of colleges and technical schools in Alberta.

The council felt Alberta's three universities would control policy making in the proposed ASF,

thereby excluding the technical schools from the decision making.

ASF, originally proposed by the University of Alberta in July of this year met in August to discuss the purposes of the union. At that time the universities felt they had the college and technical school support.

NAIT council said they would remain outside the ASF organization even if they were the only technical school in Alberta to do so. They said they would not mind being the "black sheep in the family."

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for information contact: Elston Johnston 454-1823  
Peter Steeves 455-9834  
Daryk Penk 453-4934

Kickline auditions:

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Oct. 16 Oakroom in STUD, 7-9 p.m.

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