

CFS spells controversy for students...

By Gordon Loane
Brunswickan News

UNB is one of eighteen student unions across Canada being asked to participate in a membership fee boycott of the Canadian Federations of Students.

If the effort succeeds, nearly \$400,000 will be withheld by one-third of the schools, representing about one-half of the fee-paying membership of CFS, according to estimates by Kelly Lamrock, Chair of the New Brunswick Student Alliance and a boycott supporter.

Eleven student unions from UNB, UNB St. John, STU, Mount Allison, UPEL, Dalhousie, Windsor, Waterloo, Ottawa, Carleton and Nipissing have confirmed participation, according to Pat FitzPatrick, VP University Affairs.

Seven other student councils, which FitzPatrick would not name, are expected to join the boycott by next week.

"We are essentially trying to prevent CFS from using unbudgeted expenditures to sue member student unions," said Lamrock, referring to possible referendum battles upcoming at several schools supporting the boycott.

A case in point is the legal wrangling between CFS and the University of Ottawa Student Union in recent weeks.

CFS sought and won a court injunction

preventing a referendum this month on the organization's future at the University of Ottawa.

"CFS argued in court that the University of Ottawa Student Union changed the referendum election rules, preventing CFS organizers from appearing on campus in apparent contravention of our bylaws," said Michael Mancilelli, Vice-Chair of CFS in an interview this week.

A new referendum at the University of Ottawa will be held in late March.

In the aftermath of the court battle, the president of the University of Ottawa Student Union decided to organize the boycott, said Kelly Lamrock.

The move disappoints but does not surprise Guy Caron, Chair of CFS.

Perched at his Ottawa office this week, Caron said Jean François Venne, President of the U of Ottawa Student Union has made persistent legal threats, and has not been willing to work with CFS.

Venne has spread stories about unbudgeted legal expenditures at CFS that Caron claims are untrue.

"I've heard various rumors about us spending large sums of money but we spent between five and six thousand on legal fees fighting court battles at the University of Ottawa," Caron said.

"We expect to split that cost with the

Ontario Federation of Students making the actual cost to us at the national office between two to three thousand dollars," Caron said.

Caron said CFS had little choice but to fight and defend bylaws voted on and approved by its membership.

"Those bylaws allow CFS to partici-

pate in referendum battles directly affecting our organization," said Caron.

Asked how the boycott would affect the CFS organization both organizationally and financially, Caron refused to speculate.

Caron said CFS members have until the end of June to pay membership fees.

In the meantime, Caron says CFS will step up its efforts to inform its members.

Caron said some members have been acting on information spread by people with their own political agenda.

"I'm disappointed some members have not contacted us to get our side of the story," Caron concluded.

...and strikes back at UNB

by Gordon Loane
Brunswickan News

UNB's decision to withhold 40 thousand dollars in CFS fees until a student referendum on the national organization's future is held in late March has caught Michael Mancilelli, Vice-Chair of CFS by surprise.

"I think UNB's decision is unacceptable," said Mancilelli, reached at his Ottawa office this week.

"Our by-laws and agreement of membership clearly state that UNB must pay up," he said.

"These are CFS fees held in trust by the Student Union," Mancilelli continued. "These fees do not belong to the UNB Student Union."

"It's obvious a political statement is being made," he said, indicating that UNB has until the end of June to forward \$40,000 to Ottawa.

Mancilelli terms "untrue" statements attributed to UNB SU Vice-President Pat Fitzpatrick in last week's issue of the

Brunswickan.

Fitzpatrick said that CFS did not even appear before the House of Commons Committee on Social Policy Reform which recently toured the country seeking input on post-secondary education funding and student loans.

"Not only did we appear before the committee but we presented an updated brief based on principles adopted by our organization a few years ago," Mancilelli said.

And the CFS Vice-Chair professed to be baffled by Fitzpatrick's statement that the national lobby group is \$200,000 in debt and running a deficit this year.

"I was one of several people who met with our auditors last week," he said.

"We have a \$56,000 accumulated debt from 1990-91 and 1991-92," Mancilelli continued.

"In addition we have a line of credit with our bank to the tune of \$70,000 that has about \$10,000 left," he pointed out.

"I don't know how you get a \$200,000 debt," he said. Mancilelli said CFS has budgeted for a slight deficit this year as Fitzpatrick claims.

"Our budget deficit is \$612.00 so it's basically break even," he said.

On another matter, Mancilelli announced that a candidate has been selected to fill the New Brunswick/Prince Edward Island field worker's position, after a five month search.

"We should be in a position to make an announcement in about ten days," he said. "CFS has chosen a person from PEI with very good organizational ability."

The appointment will be made at the end of February, just in time for referendum battles on several campuses including UNB and Saint Thomas.

The CFS field worker and lobbyist has yet to find office accommodation. Whether a Fredericton base is envisaged is still up in the air. The Saint Thomas SU has provided space in the past.

"We have not yet selected a location," Mancilelli concluded.

Attention News Staff

There will be an important meeting of the news department on Monday, February 20, at 4:30 in room 203 of the SUB.

All staff are encouraged to attend.

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