

ATLANTIC MINI-CUS FORMED

twelve campuses could be members

Representatives from universities in the Atlantic provinces met last weekend (Oct. 17-19) in Charlottetown to discuss the formation of a Federation of Atlantic Students' Councils. Twelve universities and colleges from the Atlantic region were represented.

The final plenary session of the conference on Sunday, Oct. 19 saw six universities committed to the Federation. Memorial of Newfoundland, St. Francis Xavier, Mount Saint Vincent, College Ste. Anne, and Saint Mary's of Nova Scotia; and Saint Thomas University of New Brunswick now form the Federation. The University of Prince Edward

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Island and College Maillet have given a secondary commitment subject to ratification by their student councils. The University of New Brunswick and Dalhousie had no mandate to commit. Only Acadia and King's College of those represented refused to join the Federation.

The FASC is designed to prepare the ground work for an Atlantic Union of Students. A referendum to be held on individual campuses in March or next fall is the proposed procedure for deciding membership in this organization.

RELATION OF STUDENT TO COMMUNITY

Present conditions in the Atlantic Provinces, economically, educationally, culturally are indicative of the need for a broad based union of students in this area.

Article III of the FASC constitution reads:

Role and Purpose: Recognizing that the student is a member of the University Community and accepting the fact that he relates to and identifies with society in a variety of ways, the aim of the Federation is to constitute a nucleus of Student Council representatives from the Atlantic Region. The federation will serve as a forum for all particular and common issues and hang-ups with the understanding that these issues will not call for action on the part of the federation but will serve as a basis for a continuing analysis of the social, economic and cultural situation of the Atlantic student and of the Atlantic region as output information to all member campuses and as a guide for action within their region.

The federation's express purpose will be to conduct an educational program within their Student Unions in order to create a broad-based, democratically instituted student movement which will culminate in a referendum in March, 1970. During its initial year, the federation shall

further holds as its purpose: the creation of programs within its budgetary limitations; conduction of intensive research into the policy and program needs of students in the Atlantic region, including implementation of these programs in the event of a student organization being formed in May."

SRC COMMUNICATION

As well as dealing with problems involving students in an environmental context, the Federation will examine the problem of relevancy of Student Councils and presumably will suggest reform mechanisms which will increase their validity as policy determining organizations.

A problem central to SRC structure is communication between councillors and their constituents. One of main priorities of the Federation is to initiate studies in this area.

Cultural disparity and educational priorities of provincial governments are other areas in which the FASC

will attempt to initiate research.

FAILURE OF CUS & AAS

A careful study of past student unions involving Atlantic universities was presented to the Charlottetown Conference by Barry MacPeake, former CUS field secretary.

MacPeake cited the failure of the Canadian Union of Students and the Atlantic Association of Students to recognize the importance of dealing with problems of university students in the Atlantic economic and cultural context, as the main reason for the eventual rejection of those organizations by universities in this area.

A second major contribution to CUS and AAS decay was the irrelevance of their organizational structure to student interest groups on individual campuses.

FIELD WORKERS

The FASC has hired two field workers in an effort to avoid the mistakes of former associations. Skip Hambling,

former UNB graduate student who has been involved in labor organization in the Maritimes, and Cathy Walker, an organizer for Women's Liberation, will visit universities in the Atlantic provinces to speak to campus student councils and student interest groups.

The field workers will provide the necessary communication links between campuses and provide valuable organizational experience to student groups researching problems in areas which interest them. The field workers will also co-ordinate study and action on these problems.

As the constitution emphasizes, the Federation of Atlantic Students' Councils is an interim organization designed to facilitate the formation of an Atlantic Union of Students. The programs and policies of the association are intended to promote greater SRC efficiency and relevance on the local level and by research and action on problems necessarily of interest to students, to familiarize campuses with the benefits a regional union could offer.



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