

Premiers meet Friday

Administrations play waiting game

Canadian University Press

University administrators in the three maritime provinces should know within two weeks how much of a subsidy the Council of Maritime Premiers is willing to contribute to offset operating costs at Maritime Universities next year.

The premiers informed the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission at a meeting in Summerside, P.E.I. in early December they were not prepared to fully meet their request for a 14 per cent increase in operating assistance for the 1978-79 academic year.

The MPHEC had requested an 11 per cent increase in operating grants with two one and a half per cent increases for equalization within the region and with the rest of the country.

Most administrators are disappointed with the failure to meet

the MPHEC request but are waiting to be informed of the exact amount of funding the governments have allotted before speculating on the possibility of fee increases or further cutbacks for next year.

Father Malcolm MacDonnel, president of St. Francis Xavier University and Chairperson of the Atlantic Association of Universities (AAU), said the AAU should be aware of the exact figures by the end of this month when it meets in Halifax.

MacDonnel said the question of fee increases would have to wait until the administrators have a clear idea of what their financial situation will be next year and whether the governments are prepared to make any specific recommendation on the question of tuition fees.

The Nova Scotia government last year agreed to boost the original grants to the institutions provided tuition fees were maintained at a six per cent increase. Most administrators agree that in the face of government failure to meet budget requirements, higher tuition fees is the only source of alternative financing. The MPHEC said in its Financial Plan for 1978-79 tuition fees may in future be expected to increase with inflationary increases in institutional operating costs.

Although fee increases are seen by the administrations as the only alternative to increase revenues, they are hesitant to hike fees any further. Owen Carrigan, president of St. Mary's University, said it would almost be unjust to raise fees again. He said students are paying the highest fees in the country now and it would not be fair to widen the gap even more.

Meanwhile, the Atlantic Federation of Students is prepared for the worse and willing to take serious action to oppose new increases. Secretary-Coordinator, Tony Kelley, said the AFS executive is waiting to determine the extent of fee increases and cutbacks, and depending on the outcome will begin organizing students at campuses throughout the region.

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Over 150 student journalists from across Canada attended the 40th annual conference of Canadian University Press over the Christmas Break in the Lord Nelson Hotel. The conference, co-hosted by the Dalhousie Gazette, the St. Mary's Journal, and the Mount St. Vincent Picaro, included discussions on the technical aspects of the student press, issues facing students, and the future of the organization.

Dalhousie council releases student fees

The Dalhousie Student Council agreed to release student fees to the Atlantic Federation of Students (AFS) Sunday, but not without some reservations about the internal structure of the organization.

Dalhousie delegates to a special plenary session of AFS at Acadia University in early December told council they felt the Federation was financially stable and recommended the Dalhousie fees be immediately turned over to the AFS executive.

The council was also presented with a petition signed by nearly 600 students deploring the council's actions and demanding the immediate turnover of fees to the federation.

Last February Dalhousie students approved membership in AFS and agreed to pay \$1 each.

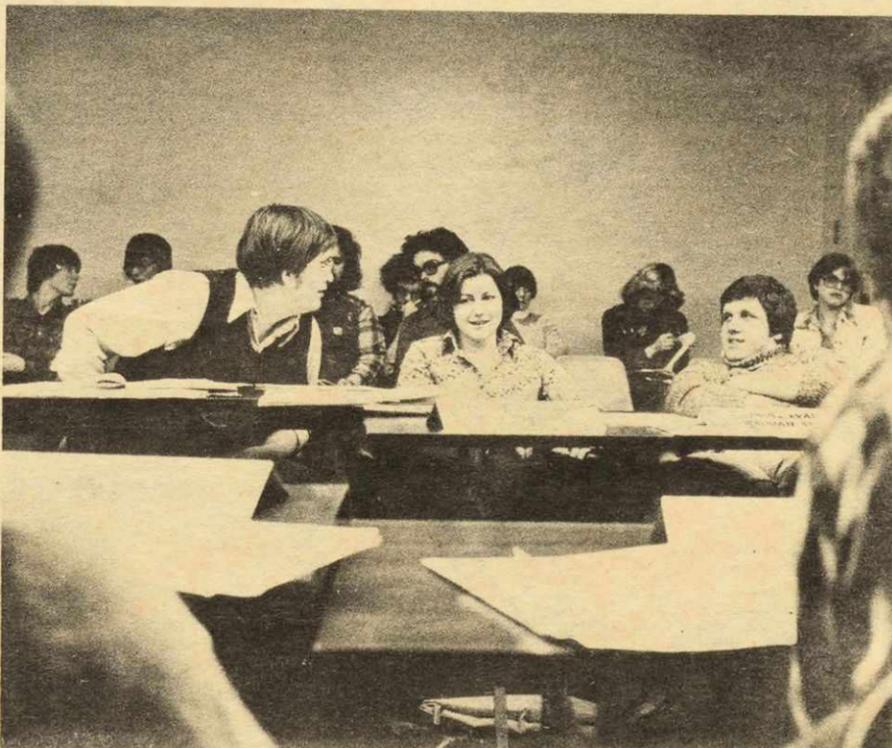
Following council approval of the notion, Law representative Keith Evans presented a motion that declared the Dalhousie student council did not agree with representation by institution (1 vote per institution) and would like to see a system of representation by population.

Evans added however that Dalhousie should try to work for change from within the Federation. "Once we are there we can change it", he said. The motion passed with little debate by a wide margin.

Dalhousie delegate to the December plenary, Tom Rose, said although AFS appears to be united and stable internally, he felt there was still a rift between Dalhousie and other member institutions.

AFS treasurer Howard Bashinski of Acadia University told the Dalhousie council he thought the supposed rift was nothing more than a backlash to the fee freeze, and was not a functional difference. He pointed out the fee freeze made its point and there were many differences within AFS that will have to be resolved from within the organization.

Council president Robert Sampson said he now supports AFS, but believed withholding fees probably did the organization some good. "Whatever damage was done was done in good faith with true respect in an effort to help AFS."



Council reps discuss AFS fees