

REPORT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

to the

NUS/UNE THIRD ANNUAL

GENERAL MEETING

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Dan Palmer - B.C. Representative
Myron Tiechko - Saskatchewan Rep
Doyle Brown - Nova Scotia Rep
Don Thompson - Treasurer
Pierre Ouellette - Member at large
Ian Boothe - Member at large

May, 1975

ACTIVITIES:

The first meeting of the Central Committee served as an orientation session for the new members. There was a review of the responsibilities of both Central Committee members and staff, as well as a preliminary examination of the NUS/UNE finances. An investigation of alternate sources of funding, to supplement the 1974-75 budget was undertaken by Thompson.

The committee agreed with suggestions that a pamphlet explaining and promoting the purposes of NUS/UNE office staff. The discussion evolved into an analysis of the job descriptions for both the general secretary and executive secretary. It became evident that the existing descriptions were ambiguous and inadequate. All members agreed to the need for concrete terms of reference which would enable the general secretary to engage in political analysis and fieldwork and the executive secretary to organize the office and do preliminary research. A sub-committee on hiring was struck to draw up staff application forms and receive and assess applications for new personnel.

Reports on the short-term lobbying program were submitted and a critical analysis of the implementation process followed. The short-term goals included tax exemptions for study materials and student union fees. Some members were concerned that the lack of comprehensive research data would severely handicap the program. It was pointed out that through the Standing Committee of the Financing of Post-Secondary Education, NUS had long-term policies which if well supported and researched could form a framework and perspective through which the short-term goals could be better realized. There was a consensus that well-documented research was fundamental to the success of the NUS/UNE lobby and that the priorities of the General Secretary be research and lobbying.

A general review of the May motions from the workshop on the financing of Post-Secondary education was held and we decided that lobbying the federal political parties was an immediate priority. The provincial representatives agreed to research post-secondary financing in preparation for discussions on the Fiscal Arrangements Act.

A standing committee on financing was established to facilitate the financing of any policies, committees and research. Specifically the committee was instructed to

investigate alternate sources of funding. Standing committees on Government Relations, and the Status of Women were also formed.

We agreed to hold the October conference at the U of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, and generally discussed the conference structure and agenda.

The August meetings began with an analysis of the lobby programme. The response to the mailout was poor, with the NDP the only federal party which replied favourably. The CC members were asked to follow up the Central Office correspondence by contacting MPs at the local level. A working committee was formed to prepare a preliminary brief on accessibility and to suggest specific demands and strategy for the October conference. This was follow-up to the Lethbridge discussions, where it became apparent that NUS/UNE must take a long term perspective on the lobby programme and integrate the proposed short-term goals with long term objectives.

Thompson presented a financial report and recommended that immediate attention had to be given to alternate sources of funding. The possibility of short-term loans and grants was discussed and some members volunteered to approach government agencies for funding. Considering the severe constraints of the budget, we concluded that a proposal for a fee increase would be prepared for the October conference. The task of organization of the October General Meeting was the final agenda item. Responsibilities were assigned and preliminary work on a number of reports was begun.

A tentative budget and rationale for the fee increase were drafted at the 14th Central Committee meeting. A consensus was reached that a fee increase to \$1.00 was minimally necessary. A committee was struck to prepare a report on restructuring, finances and the fee increase.

The NUS position on the student housing crisis was reviewed. We agreed to establish housing workshops at the October conference to expose the issue and develop an initial criticism.

Thompson reported that he had established a book-keeping system and we discussed our financial status. A tentative budget for 1975-76 was analyzed and simple house-keeping motions on constitutional amendments and the October conference were passed.

Delegates of the October General Meeting ratified the student aid (accessibility) campaign and the proposed fee increase. Subsequently, the Central Committee met and dis-

cussed the implementation of the student aid policies and assigned duties to the provincial representatives. The reps were instructed to present the NUS position at meetings with their provincial education ministers and student assistance departments. This was to ensure national exposure of the campaign and assist the lobbying efforts of the Central Office staff. We decided that immediate research on student assistance was necessary and instructed Creswick to develop an analysis for the May General Meeting.

As directed by the May Plenary, the Central Committee raised staff salaries to \$130.00 per week.

By November, posters and inserts for the CSLP campaign had been developed and distributed. Concurrent with this development, NUS/UNE stepped up its capacity to lobby at the National level, often in solidarity with regional associations of students.

It became apparent that the federal government required substantial input on student financing and commissioned Statistics Canada to survey a sample of post secondary students. The National Office staff kept up consistent pressure for student input into the surveys and for supplementary surveys in areas neglected by Statistics Canada.

During recent months, the office staff has concentrated its efforts on the preparations for the May Conference and continuing work on the student aid campaign. The campaign work has centred largely around co-ordinating the lobbying of government groups responsible for policies on student aid.

Following NUS/UNE's attempt to secure student representation on the Federal Provincial Task Force on Student Assistance in February, the NUS/UNE staff was granted permission to make a presentation to the members on the group at their April 9-10 meeting in Toronto. This provided NUS/UNE the opportunity to explain our dissatisfaction at not having had our request to the Council of Ministers of Education (CME) answered. Our request was that the CME alter the terms of reference for the Task Force to allow student participation on the group and access to all documents arising from their sessions.

The members of the Task Force repeated their invitation to NUS/UNE to present a brief on the issue of student aid which they would be willing to consider. The staff stressed the fact that our request for student participation was not exclusively for written submissions, but also for student presence at all discussions regarding student aid. It would be impossible to address the issues the group is discussing without at the very least access to their documents. Unless we are able to analyze their position, it is highly unlikely for them to give our submission serious consideration.

Their response to our requests was apparently sympathetic, but they felt they could do little to influence the ministers.

Following this meeting, the staff also attempted to lobby the Chairman of the CME for a final response to our requests. After considerable pressure, they did manage to speak with the Chairman's special assistance and another staff member of the CME. Their statements were somewhat contradictory. The special assistant said that the Chairman could make the decision on student participation through informal consultation with the ministers on the council, while the CME representative insisted that the ministers only acted upon recommendations of the Committee of Deputy Ministers of Education. It appears from subsequent investigation that this decision to change the terms of reference for this group is of a political nature, and that the first explanation is the more credible.

The staff recommended that we continue to seek student representation on the CSL Plenary Group, which holds its next meeting in the Fall of this year. This gives NUS/UNE the entire summer to develop a lobby campaign, which could involve lobbying members of Parliament, approaching opposition members and the opposition party critics of financing and the Secretary of State. Added support for our position and pressure on the government could be secured through contacts with press, and extending our links with outside groups such as the Canadian Labour Congress and poverty groups.

Motions were passed requiring that referenda be held to increase the per student fee by May of 1976, after which time member institutions which had failed to hold referenda or had lost referenda, would be required to withdraw.

The Lakehead, Halifax and Ottawa meetings developed into planning sessions for the May conference.

An examination of regional and national student-related issues occurred and investigation by Central Committee members and other resource people of these issues began. The status of foreign students within the Department of Manpower and Immigration's Green Paper, the crisis of unemployment, the lack of student housing and an elaboration and extension of the CSLP campaign were all discussed. We agreed that each of these issues had a national impact and required analysis by the Central Committee. We were asked to select students to participate on the Senate Hearings on Cannabis but since we did not have any policy on this we suggested that individual campuses be invited to

send reps. We discussed the tentative budget for 1975-76 and reviewed the status of member and non-member institutions across the country.

Buckingham was instructed to fieldwork the West during these months and his trip was successful. Campus committees and effective liaisons were established on a number of campuses, along with extensive exposure of the CSLP campaign. We agreed that more fieldworkers were required for 1975-76 and that this should be a budget priority. An expanded fieldworking staff could co-ordinate referenda within their regions and provide institutions with information and organizational assistance.

Negotiations with Quebec post-secondary institutions and their representative association ANEQ were initiated by members of the Central Office and Glendon College Student Union. It was our expectation that a strong delegation from Quebec would attend the Glendon Conference and that a positive liason would develop.

NUS/UNE lobbying resulted in the AUCC Board of Directors being asked to endorse our student aid campaign, which was forwarded to their committee on the financing of post-secondary education, for study.

Another encouraging factor is the formation of provincial and regional student organizations. The creation of the Atlantic Federation of Students, the British Columbia Student Federation, the Association Nationale des Etudiants du Quebec as well as the growth and development of the Ontario Federation of Students indicates a growing awareness of the problems facing students across this country.

Our priority should be the maintenance and extension of liaisons with these and other student groups. We must strive for co-operation and attempt to complement each other's efforts in the defense of students' rights and interests.

SUMMARY

In summary, one must say that our most important action this past year has been the initiation of a national campaign on student assistance. The research completed is NUS/UNE's preliminary effort to present a documented report on this issue. The topic has been approached on a relatively broad base dealing especially with the concept of equality of opportunity as it relates to higher education. To support our attack on student aid programmes for not contributing to accessibility at the post-secondary level of

education, we have outlined the major weaknesses common to all regions of the country of the present systems and future trends.

This report should make it apparent that the issue is highly complex. We must deal with both federal and provincial governments, the overall funding of education, the numerous areas of requiring change within aid programmes, the value of education, as well as the thesis to support our stand on education as a right of all citizens regardless of their economic background. All these areas must continue to be discussed, researched and developed.

Given the scale of these tasks, we recognize the need for competent persons to study and articulate these various areas. If students are all committed to protecting their own interests, and the interests of all Canadians, they must be prepared to express this commitment by providing the necessary resources, both in terms of economic and political support and co-operation.

The increased recognition of NUS as the national voice of students is some evidence of positive development of the organization. We must now assume additional responsibilities. We must be prepared to present a position on the other major issues that relate to students. Both housing and unemployment are vital areas of concern. We must respond to these issues by beginning discussion and research which could well lead to a well organized national campaign. NUS has reached the stage where it is capable of winning support and credibility to cope with such problems.

The financial situation of NUS/UNE is still critical but no longer desperate in view of NUS/UNE's development as the nationally representative organization of Canadian post-secondary students, and our growing capacity to initiate extensive cross-country support for the CSLP lobby effort. The central committee supports the adoption of the treasurer's deficit budget.

It must be remembered that fee referenda were successfully run at six member institutions in 1974-75, and with the prospect of more victories in 1975-76, this deficit can be met.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) The Central Committee recommends that the priority for expenditure of extra funds of the union be the hiring of additional staff.
- 2) Given that the CSLP Campaign requires continued research and lobbying support in 1975-76, the Central Committee recommends that the issue of student assistance remain the major priority of the NUS/UNE.
- 3) Whereas NUS/UNE has made a number of representations to the Federal-Provincial Task Force on Student Assistance and Whereas these efforts have been effectively stalled by government bureaucrats, and Whereas there remains only one scheduled meeting of this Task Force,
BE IT RESOLVED that NUS members discontinue efforts to make formal presentations to the Federal-Provincial Task Force.
- 4) Given the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) recommendation that the fee component should at a minimum remain stable in the mix of financial resources and recommends that the fee component be tied to an annual cost of living adjustment,
The Central Committee recommends that:
 - NUS member institutions organize at the local level to pressure members of the CAUT to change their proposals on student aid and adopt the NUS/UNE policies calling for abolition of tuition fees and adequate living stipends for all students, and that
 - NUS present a formal brief to the CAUT executive.

NATIONAL UNION
OF
STUDENTS

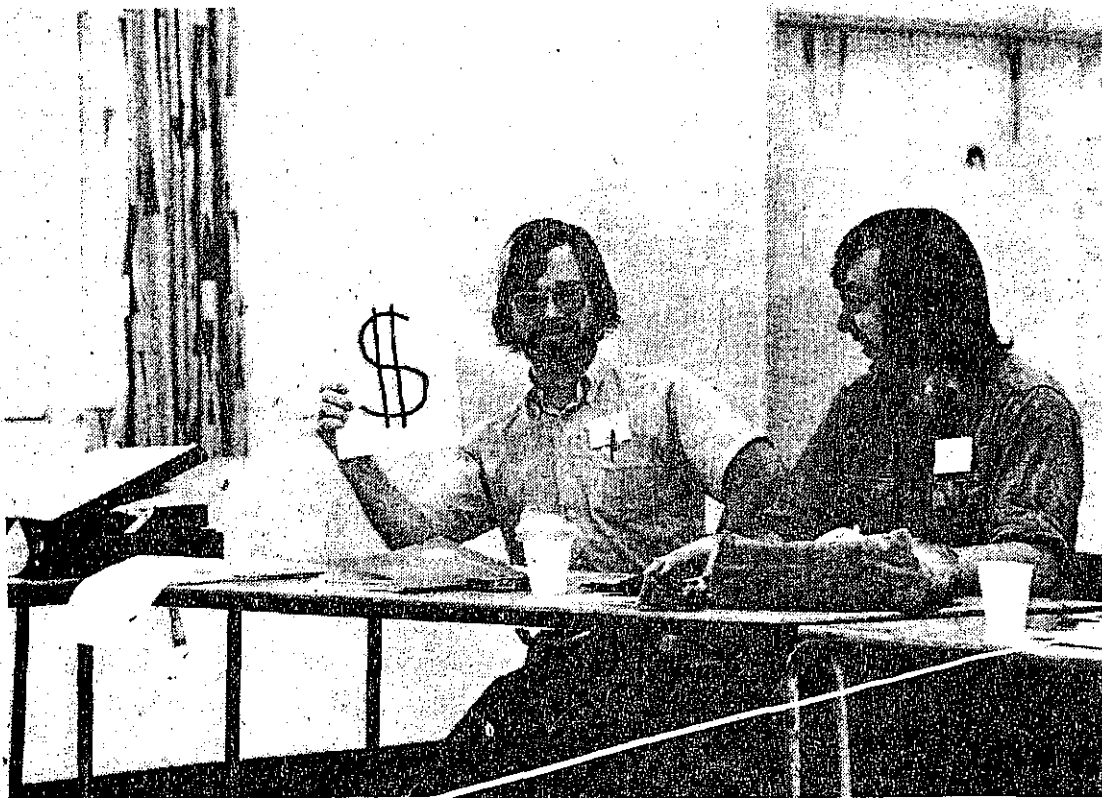


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The Meliorist

Monday, April 14, 1975



Don Thompson displaying the prime concern of the last NUS Conference.