

# CAMPUS POLITICS: CFS debates nationwide strike

By Christine Vila  
(CUP)

ANYONE WHO STILL WONDERS ABOUT THE PASSION and intensity of the student movement obviously did not attend the Canadian Federation of Students' annual general meeting Nov. 7-14 in Hull.

Among other things, the CFS voted to stage a one-day nationwide strike in protest against the Liberal government's social security reform proposals on Jan. 25, 1994.

The CFS is a national lobbying organization that represents more than 50 campuses across the country. It is designed to give students a powerful voice in both tiers of government. It typically deals with student concerns such as tuition fees and social justice issues.

Many delegates agreed that action against the social security reform proposals was the single most important element of the general meeting this year.

"This year, students from across the country have joined together and agreed that one of the most critical things facing students is the social program review," said Chloe Burgess of Malaspina Students' Union. "We are going to strike."

She underlined the importance of the CFS's voice. "According to Maclean's magazine two years ago, we're one of the top 10 most powerful lobbying organizations in the country."

She added: "It's something that should keep people

going because if we don't join together at this point and fight what's coming up, people who will attend post-secondary institutions are going to be much different than people now.

"The motion to support a nationwide strike resolved that a national strike and action be organized on Jan. 25, 1995 as a result of the federal government's move toward privatization of students loans and the funding of education.

Andrea Harrington, chair of the Trent University Student Union, expressed her support for the strike.

"I think that our coalition partners are really counting on students who can get large numbers of people out, who can do effective media action to speak not just for our concerns, which is education -- but for theirs as well."

She stressed. "We're looking at a complete change in Canada's way of life, and if we just limit ourselves to lobbying... then I think we're letting a lot of people down. We really need to support this."

John-Henry Harty, CFS B.C. deputy chair of the North Island Student Association agreed. "I would really encourage people to support this motion. Anything less would be selling out the working class, the working poor, all the marginalized people.

"Every constituency group has a stake in this action. It's crucial. If we don't stand up for this, we may as well lie down and accept privatization of post-secondary education. This is so important."

Others such as Kelly Lamrock, president of the Univer-

sity of New Brunswick Student Alliance, was not sure if threats were the best way to broker an agreement between CFS and the federal government."

I feel like I'm being asked to vote for the Charlottetown Accord all over again. There seems to be a lot of, 'You have to vote yes,' and the feeling that if we don't, the sky is going to fall. That's not the way to sell this."

Objections to the strike were soundly defeated in a vote of 36-10, with seven abstentions.

Burgess explained, "The way we work, which is democratically -- one member, one vote -- results in some groups of students feeling that their needs weren't met. But that's what happens when you have a plenary that passes policies and directives by the majority, or in the case of policy, by thirds."

The University of Ottawa's initiative to protest Parliament Hill on Nov. 16 was widely supported by CFS members.

"I support a day of action on the Hill," said Burgess. "It's regional because only certain campuses can get there, it's also in Ottawa, where the politicians are going to be sitting that day, where the national news media is, and I think it can be a catalyst to get the momentum of the students up in the country, to get them angry, get them fighting."

"It will carry us all the way through to our Jan. 25 strike when it's nationwide. The U of O strike can be the first step in a domino effect across the country," she concluded.

## Duffocalypse -- The Morning After One Bio's View Through the Smoke

I AM A FOURTH YEAR BIO STUDENT WHO IS ALSO employed as a lab assistant in the biology department. Like many of my colleagues, I spent Monday morning wandering around campus like a homeless child, listening to whatever rumours or scraps of information I could glean about Duffy. I was lucky in that I had lost nothing in the fire except class time and possibly a job. Some students lost notes, discs, books and the hip-waders that were stored in the biology lounge. The professors whose offices and labs were in Duffy were the biggest losers.

It has now been determined that the fire was caused by an electric heater in the biology lounge on the third floor. Immediately above the lounge is the "fish room", which incurred the heaviest damage. The floor of the fish room buckled due to heat from the floor below and the weight of the aquarium. The floor in the centre of the room is now at least eight inches lower than the floor at the edges.

Dr. Ed Johnston had been doing research on Pacific salmon reared in this room for years. His entire stock of fish, approximately 50 animals, has been eliminated. These fish were also used for the cell and animal physiology classes, as well as Johnston's fish biology course.

Also damaged was the research lab on the third floor. The back of this lab is adjacent to the student lounge. A laboratory skylight had to be broken while fighting the fire. This lab was shared by virtually the whole biology department.

The remainder of the building is more dirty than dam-

aged. The walls will have to be repainted, carpets replaced, and scientific equipment returned to the manufacturers for a thorough cleaning. Some water damage was found on the lower floors of the building. Luckily, most if not all of the computers in Duffy will only have to be cleaned, not replaced. A heavy layer of soot covers everything and the air quality is very poor. For the first two days after the fire, security was allowing faculty

and staff into the building for short visits to see what could be salvaged. After half an hour inside, people were coughing and short of breath and found their throat sore for hours after leaving.

Some professors seem hopeful that laboratory periods in Duffy will resume before the end of the semester, others seem

equally sure that students will not be allowed in the building until 1995.

Classes have been relocated to various buildings across campus, including in at least one case to the actual floor of the gym in the sports centre. Some labs are taking place in the Atlantic Vet College. Others have been cancelled for the rest of the semester. Professors are either assigning extra class work to be completed during laboratory times, redistributing marks or doubling up on laboratory periods when classes resume in December.

For the time being, biology professors have been relocated to the fourth floor Dalton Hall and the department office relocated to the first floor of Memorial. Engineering profs are in Cass. Physics profs have also been relocated.



*In every disaster  
there are a few  
little miracles*

- 1) No one was hurt.
- 2) Andrew MacInnis' special studies project, which should have been in the fish room but wasn't because there was no room, was untouched by the fire.
- 3) Judy MacIntyre's honours project was also unhurt.
- 4) The marine fish that we collected by the Biology 300 class were released on Sunday morning.
- 5) Duffy is getting a new coat of paint.

-- By Kathy Giesbrecht