

What on earth is the CFS?

The Canadian Federation of Students- where does our money go?

The Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) is a student organization of which U.P.E.I. students become members when they pay Student Union (SU) fees. CFS was formed in 1981 to defend students' rights and interests.

CFS lobbies government to raise such issues as student aid and funding of post secondary education. They do extensive research to be on top of all government policies and legislation. This helps students to be well-informed when they take an active stand on issues at the local level.

CFS has a number of regional field workers to maintain contact with students. It is a member of the International Union of Students. It directs a number of campaigns each year, and also provides many ways for students to save money.

The student saver card is produced by CFS and can be used at a number of businesses to get a student discount. CFS helps student associations design and implement good health insurance plans. They provide a work abroad program, SWAP, and CFS also owns and operates

Travel Cuts, Canada's only national student travel bureau.

Despite the organization's benefits, students sometimes wonder what CFS has done for U.P.E.I. lately. Its most important activities are not immediately visible on campus- for example, how CFS lobbies on Parliament Hill for student aid. Regardless, U.P.E.I. students stand to profit from these efforts.

One CFS accomplishment at U.P.E.I. this year was the Hillsborough candidates debate, organized by Tara O'Connor, VP External and also the councillor responsible for CFS at UPEI. The SU also provided a van for students to get to their polling stations to vote.

Todd King, president of the SU, believes that the most important thing that CFS does for students is the lobbying. "It's something that we can't afford to do alone ... before CFS was formed there were only big corporations there [Parliament Hill]." He also mentioned the student saver card, the SWAP program, and CFS's help with our medical insurance as ways that CFS is beneficial for us at UPEI. Each student pays six dollars a year for these pro-

grams and money savers.

When asked how she felt about paying six dollars a year for CFS, one third year student said that she didn't mind at all: "I don't really know much about it, but having the Student Saver card and the use of Travel Cuts is great."

V.P. O'Connor thinks that many students have no idea what CFS is or does. There was a crowd of over 100 people at the candidates' debate, but whether or not they knew that CFS helped make it happen is questionable, though the SU did receive a positive response from students about the debate.

Perhaps the greatest problem faced by CFS is the fact that most students seem to know little or nothing about the organization. Another problem, O'Connor says, lies in the a national organisation attempting to serve all the regional needs: "Because it is a national organisation we see many views and ideas, which is often good, but it can also be hard. The West has different concerns and views than the East so there can be conflict." Despite its flaws, though, CFS provides a lot for only six dollars a year.

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