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A debate presented by the

Wednesday October 28 at 8:00 pm
AVC Lecture Theatre "B"

WILL STUDENTS BE CELEBRATING NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES WEEK?

OTTAWA (CUP) - It's time for the hard sell again as university P.R. departments wind up for National Universities Week, and once again students are being left on the side-lines.

"It's a university celebration," said Dr. Kenneth Ozmon, co-chair of the National Universities Week programme and president of St. Mary's University in Halifax. "We're not trying to get involved in student or faculty issues specifically. It's not a political activist type of event, so that's why students take less of an interest."

This is the third time the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) has organized the Week, which is set for October 23 to November 1. The two previous Weeks, held in 1983 and 1985, were criticized for not involving students enough in the planning and the events.

Ozmon said that students were involved in planning the Week this year through the participation of the Canadian Federation of Students.

But CFS Information Officer Catherine Louli claims CFS "had only minimal involvement in the planning of National Universities Week." She said CFS will be a participant in the Week, "but a minimal participant."

In fact, Louli questions whether students have any cause for celebration, considering government underfunding of universities, accessibility problems, overcrowding and high tuition fees.

"My question is, if students were involved in the Week, would they be calling it a celebration?" said Louli.

Louli added however that the CFS Policy Manual encourages its members to participate in the Week.

"We are encouraging our locals to hold forums or debates or whatever works. We think it's a good thing that people will be focusing on post-secondary education," said Louli.

This year the scheduling of the Week has also created problems. The National Forum on Post Secondary Education in Saskatoon is set for October 25 to 28 - right in the middle of National Universities Week.

"In some ways (the overlap of the Forum and the Week) will be beneficial. On the other hand it, might drag a lot of people away who would have been organizing events on their campuses," said Ozmon.

"It has created an overabundance of problems," said Less McAfee, who was hired by AUCC to coordinate a Speaker's Bureau for the Week. "Of the 31 university presidents who offered to participate in the Bureau, 25 are going to the Forum."

He said most of the presidents had to schedule speaking engagements outside of the Week because of the Forum.

McAfee said the presidents are being booked by such community clubs as Rotary and Kiwanis but that student response to

the project has been weak.

"We have heard nothing from any student groups, which is surprising because we anticipated they would ask one or two of the presidents to come and debate on campus," said McAfee.

The Week is being marketed heavily by AUCC through glossy inserts in *Maclean's* and *L'Actualite*, 30-second spots on radio and television networks, and print advertisements and fillers in major daily newspapers and other national publications.

Public Relations departments at the different campuses are expected to organize specific events during the Week, while AUCC will host the official launching in Ottawa on October 23.

But the emphasis seems to be on improving relations between the community and the administration, rather than students. Ozmon said St. Mary's University invites community members to attend classes during the Week and hosts a "Block Party" for people who live near the university.

"We have hotdogs and hamburgers and people bring their kids. We get a magic act and clowns for the kids and my wife and I walk around and meet the people. It's usually a very pleasant day."

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