

Canadian Federation of Student Services

By John MacDougall

In early December of 1981, Terry Palmer and myself attended a meeting of the Board of Directors of CFSS (Canadian Federation of Student Services). Terry is the treasurer of the organization and I am our provincial representative. The Board of Directors consists of a chairman, a treasurer, and a representative from each province in Canada with the exception of Quebec and New Brunswick. P.E.I. and Ontario are in the unique position of having two members each on the Board. Since the Chairman is from Ontario and the treasurer is from PEI an additional provincial rep. is allowed; therefore representation is strong.

CFSS is the newly incorporated name of the former AOSC (Association of Student Councils). CFSS is a non-share, non-profit Canadian corporation "owned" by most of the post-secondary student councils in Canada. Canadian Universities Travel Service - CUTS Travel is our largest wholly-owned subsidiary.

CUTS Travel is designed to give the travelling student the best deals possible both at home and abroad. With the recent acquisition of a license to sell travel in Quebec, CUTS now has nine offices across Canada. The services of CUTS are wide and varied. Examples range from the upcoming ski trip to Mount Ste Anne to a program of trips to China will be set up this summer. Transatlantic flights are a strong product with CUTS due to the arrangements made with British Airways for travelling students.

At this time, the closest CUTS office to serve Island students is in Halifax. However, attempts at establishing referral services, toll free numbers, and mail order business are being made and hopefully will be available very soon.

CFSS has many other services available to the Canadian student and I will briefly outline some of these here.

In 1977, AOSC/CFSS

started to develop a national student discount program by talking to businesses that already offered discounts to students locally, and also soliciting new discounts on behalf of all Canadian students. The medium used to obtain these concessions is the International Student Identity Card (ISIC), the only common card available throughout the country. The ISIC is issued in 45 countries besides Canada and the benefits available in any country are applicable to every Cardholder. CFSS is the only company in Canada with the rights to distribute the card.

Currently, there are approximately 1500 discounts available in Canada and a program has been initiated to increase this number tenfold in the near future. The card and a listing of discounts is available at the Student Union Office in the Barn. The card is issued free of charge to students of an institution that is a full member of CFSS. At present, UPEI is a prospective member and to become a full member a referendum must be held within the student body and a majority vote of a quorum must be achieved. Discussions of this are underway and you will hear more about it later.

Other programs of CFSS include:

Student Work Abroad Program (SWAP)

Last year approximately 370 students participated in the four SWAP programmes. 265 of these went to jobs in Britain, 75 to New Zealand and 25 to Belgium. For this year, programmes in Australia and Mexico are also being investigated. Direct Mail Programme

This operates as a CFS information distribution service to keep the members of CFS informed of the happenings within.

Debentures

This is an important part of capital financing for CFSS. Student unions are encouraged to participate in this program to help CFSS maintain its current level of services and to initiate new ones.

These have been some of the ongoing projects of CFSS. There are also new projects being developed some of which are in operation on a trial basis. Some of these include:

Entertainment Booking

This would include a national booking agency giving student unions access to and information of more groups, acts, etc.

Insurance

CFSS is currently studying the possibility of setting up a national insurance program for students. This would include a comprehensive package covering such things as health, accident, drug, life, fire, contents, tenant and legal needs.

Co-operatives

Locally organized operations having potential for supplying students with a variety of services e.g. food, books, clothing, appliances, and even taxis.

Credit Unions

Offering a wide range of financial services to students.

Career Recruitment and Resumé Distribution

Studies are under way in this area to determine the need for services which are supplementary to those provided in this area

through existing placement centres.

Translation Services

Could be provided through making use of the large body of bi- and multi-lingual students within our membership.

Canadian Programming Service (CPS) is another

program of CFSS worth mentioning. CPS is a lecture bureau designed to develop and encourage Canadians to share their expertise by becoming regular speakers as well as providing audiences with booking services in the area of speakers. CPS is currently booking out speakers; from Maurice Tugwell - an expert on international terrorism - to Dr. David Suzuki who needs no introduction. This area should prove to be valuable not only to student associations but also to faculty associations and to the general public as a whole.

There are many more aspects to CFSS - far too many to include here. Terry and/or myself would be very happy to tell you about them and to expand on those mentioned. Please feel free to contact us through the Student Union Office.

Mature and Part-time Students

An Association has been formed to promote the interests and objectives of degree orientated part-time and mature students. The executive members are Marjorie Wood as President, Muriel Walsh as Vice-President and Jewel MacDonald as Secretary-Treasurer. These members, as well as all members of the Advisory Committee, are part-time or mature students.

Some concerns and ideas that were raised and discussed at a January 20th meeting were: the need to encourage academic excellence through greater use of course evaluations and the need for better planning of part-time academic degree programs. A cyclic program for

evening credit courses is seen as crucial if the student is to logically plan ahead. Such planning can only be done by knowing that in certain years, certain courses will be offered and that more core courses be part of the program. The Harris Report of UPEI notes this need to "develop coherent part-time academic programmes". Other issues raised were: library hours, books on short reserve, lack of evening labs, - all real problems to the student whose time on campus is limited.

Anyone desiring information or input in future policy and direction can call Marjorie Wood at 569-4605, Muriel Walsh at 566-2911, or Jewel MacDonald at 894-5224.