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## CFS Ousted From UPEI Campus

by Aldera Chisholm

Last week, UPEI students faced one of their most important political decisions; a referendum was held to decide where thousands of student dollars would be spent. The question posed to students was: "Are you in favour of the UPEI Student Union remaining a member of the Canadian Federation of Students (-Services)? A majority of voters said no, choosing to leave CFS.

ability of information, students seemed uniformed about the issues central to the CFS debate. This may have been a factor in the voter turnout. The unofficial count was 362 ballots, or approximately 13% of students. Of those, 72% voted to leave the Federation, with 25% checking "yes" to CFS. The remaining ballots were abstentions.

A 10% turnout was required to verify the referendum results. While

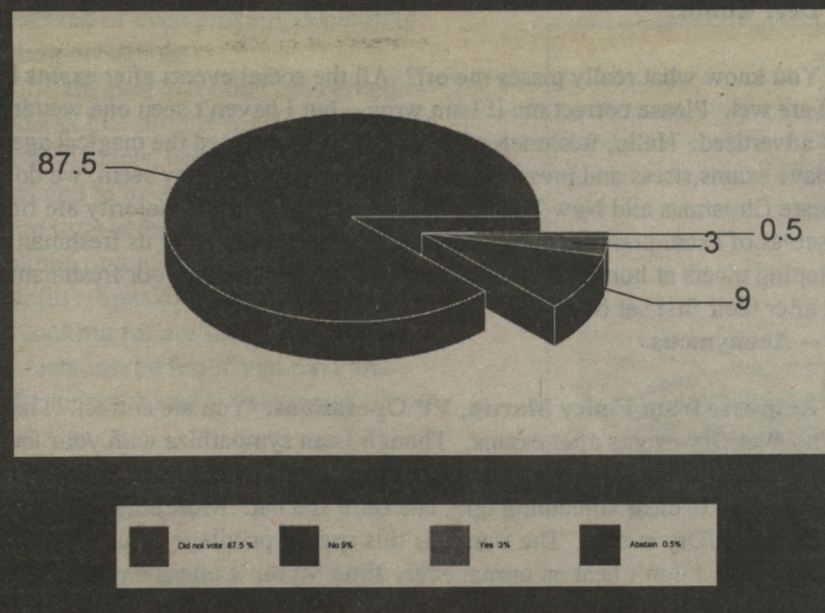
Embleton welcomes input on how to improve the process: how to better get the information out to students, and how to get their votes. She would also like to thank all parties involved in the referendum, particularly those who were present for the counting of votes.

There will undoubtedly be mixed reactions to the referendum results. Some students will be reluctant to lose the services of CFS, while others are ready to strike out on their own. How CFS will react is unknown. PEI's CFS fieldworker Joe Byrnes declined to comment on the referendum outcome.

The decision to leave CFS will result in changes at UPEI. Students must now consider lobbying alternatives, and replacements for CFS services. Their options include other lobby groups such as CASA (Canadian Alliance of Student Associations) and Amnesty International. The Student Union is also considering the development of a UPEI version of the popular Student Saver Card. President Amber Allin stated "we need to look at reallocating the six dollars per student [that was paid to CFS], a portion of which may go into a student lobby group. . . it's going to be a lot of work."

Although voting is completed, student input is still needed. 1996 is presenting a volatile political situation on national and provincial levels. Upcoming events that will be of importance to students include the National Action Day, and the PEI provincial elections. The SU needs ideas and suggestions on how to make the student voice heard. As VP External Fidel Murphy comments -- "we have to go on from here."

CFS Referendum Voter Turnout



UPEI students have been members of CFS for many years. The Island is also represented by the Graduate Student Association, and Holland College. CFS provides a lobby voice for students across the country although most students are familiar with them through their services -- such as the StudentSaver Card, and Travel Cuts. The last few weeks have seen posters strewn across campus, heated debates, and visits from both CFS workers and No campaigners. Despite the avail-

13% may seem low, this is an improvement over the fall elections, which drew less than 200 voters. Chief Returning Officer (CRO) Patricia Embleton acknowledges that although this was a good referendum, it could have been better. "This is a major issue -- where our money is going -- yet only 362 [students] decided the future." She stated "for other campaigns we have to figure out what is the best way -- the most effective way -- of campaigning to the students."