

# Student Union denies association with CFS

## *Organizations clash over representation issue*

By Jarrod Yeo

A small fortune.

That's what the Canadian Federation for Students (CFS) is accusing the UPEI Student Union of owing for unpaid membership fees dating back to last year.

Amanda Azid, the national chairperson for the CFS said her records indicate UPEI owes for two years of membership fees.

"UPEI's student union is behind in remitting membership fees for 2005 and 2006, so that's going to have to be taken care of."

The CFS charges UPEI \$7.64 per student per academic year. With 3,321 full-time students enrolled, it equals \$50,000 for the two years, not including part-time student fees.

However, this contrasts sharply with the SU's stance on the issue. SU president Willy Gauthier says UPEI owes the CFS nothing.

"The student union holds the position that we are not and never were members of the CFS and the CFS does not provide us with any service."

Relations between UPEI and the CFS, which date back to the early 1980s, have always been the subject of debate. In 1981, the CFS expressed interest in recruiting UPEI as a member, and the feeling was reciprocated. In a report to council dated Jan. 31, 1981 to then SU president Terry Palmer and John MacDougall, an elected representative to the CFS, reported if the UPEI SU wished to become a full-time member, the student body would have to hold a referendum and gain two-thirds of the popular vote.

Although no official UPEISU records exist detailing the outcome of the referendum, media accounts of the referendum results, as printed on Feb. 10, 1984, indicate the pro-CFS position received 182 votes in favour of joining the federation while 140 votes were against, representing less than the two-thirds requirement.

In January 1996, a referendum for deconfederation was held under the leadership of then president Amber Allin. The pro-deconfederation side won in a landslide, 261-91.

Azid, who has held her position since last year, said she was unaware of any previous efforts by UPEI to sever ties with the federa-

tion.

"The process for leaving is the same for joining. The student body holds a referendum, needing two-thirds of students to vote yes to act either way.

"I'm not aware of this ever happening."

However, in a letter dated Feb. 16, 1996, the former national chairperson of the CFS, Guy Caron, said the CFS would not accept the results.

"The Federation cannot recognize the results of this referendum because of the fundamental flaws in the process."

He went on to cite problems with voter lists and polling stations attendants and indicated the CFS's willingness to go to court. The referendum results were subsequently overturned.

Further efforts to cut ties in the 2000s also proved ineffective. In 2002, the then SU President Brandon MacKenzie filed a 35-page report indicating interest in severing ties once and for all. MacKenzie's report scathed the CFS for lobbying on issues not pertinent to education. It also reported that at the time, the SU paid approximately \$18,090 annually for services including ISIC Cards, Student saver cards, as well as the use of a Maritime field worker.

It was demonstrated how the SU could obtain better service from other national representation for one-third the cost

Matters were further complicated when students voted to join the Canadian Alliance for Student Associations (CASA) in October. The goal of both organizations is to defend the interests of post-secondary students across Canada to federal and intra-provincial levels of government. UPEI is a member with both organizations, according to their respective websites.

Other Maritime members of CASA include Acadia, Dalhousie, St. Mary's, St. FX, St. Thomas, UNB and UPEI.

Today there is no record of a signed contract or any other legally binding document within the UPEI SU regarding membership with the CFS.

At this time, Azid says the organization won't legal action against the SU.

"I'm sure the student union will live up to their legal and contractual obligations."

April 8th, 1970 -  
UPEI SU founded.

1981 - CFS  
founded.

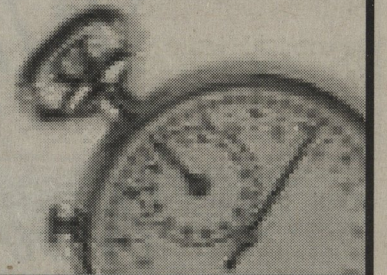
1984 - Original partnership  
between UPEI Student Union  
and the CFS is formed, with  
students voting 182-140 in  
favour.

1995-1996 - UPEI hosts  
referendum to sever all  
relations with the CFS.  
The pro-defederation  
position defeats the  
CFS 'yes' position by a  
margin of 261-91.

2002 - UPEI  
renews efforts to  
terminate relations  
with the CFS.

2004 - UPEI SU  
President Brandon  
MacKenzie prepares a  
35-page report examin-  
ing the relationship  
between UPEI and the  
CFS. It criticized the  
CFS for lobbying on  
non-educational issues,  
from the war in Iraq to  
supporting illegal  
strikes.

2006 - Students  
vote to join CASA.



## Anderson House seeks charitable donations for Christmas Season

### *What is Anderson house?*

**The Anderson House is the provincial emergency shelter for abused women and children.**

### *How you can help:*

- Donate an in-need item
- Drop off in-need items by Dec. 24 into the Christmas boxes located at the front desks in: student services, the sports centre and the library.