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"Fighting the oppression of our fellow sub-organizations since 1969"

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Council Kills CIMN

by Aldera Chisholm

"BE IT RESOLVED THAT the UPEI Student Union cut funding allocated to CIMN in the 1996/1997 Student Union Budget." Moved by Fidel Murphy, seconded by Amber Allin.

The UPEI Student Union Council -- the organization elected to represent students -- decided on Sunday, March 24 to cut funding to CIMN. This decision was based on over two hours of heated debate, until an secret ballot vote was held. During the discussion to go into secret ballot, VPO Finley Martin argued that councillors must be accountable to students, therefore an open vote should be held. VPE Fidel Murphy argued that "it's not about representing constituents, it's about making the decision."

A record 54 people showed up for the council meeting, including the 18 voting members of council. In an obvious concern for safety, campus security police were present. Early in the meeting, some councillors attempted to clear the room by calling for a closed session. This motion was defeated.

The move to cut funding effectively turns CIMN into a club rather than a sub-organization. This has many ramifications for CIMN. Most importantly, their attempt to become a FM station has been quashed. According to council, CIMN may still function as a radio station, but they have no funds for staff and operating costs.

Councillors voted to cut funding because they felt CIMN was not ready to go FM. CIMN's draft proposal plan of action -- the "red book" -- was felt to be insufficient. In reference to the book, SU president Amber Allin stated: "it just didn't do it for me."

Aside from difficulties within the red book, the majority of problems seemed to arise from the CIMN by-laws. The only official copy has not been updated since 1981. Their major point

was the possible liability of the executive as members of the CIMN Board of Directors. This argument was countered by Waye Mason, a guest speaker with extensive student media experience. He argued that minor changes to the Board of Directors structure would eliminate this possible problem.

Matthew Aiken summed up the issue by stating that voting to cut funding was a "quick fix solution." Rather than sit down and discuss the proposals given to council by CIMN, a

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campaign spearheaded by Fidel Murphy "was intended to slam the financial door shut on the radio station." During the discussion Murphy argued that solving the problems within the CIMN FM proposals could only be achieved by going back to "square one." It was also suggested that CIMN needed to "prove itself at the grass-roots level."

Fidel was enthusiastically abetted by President Elect Chris Burns. Chris Burns is presently the Ombudsman for the university, a position which is intended to be a non-biased advocate for students. According to Article XII, section A, subsection 7: the ombudsman shall "not assume any other position on campus during his/her term of office."

One would assume speaking as President Elect would be considered another position on campus.

CIMN countered the attack point for point to no avail. No effort was made by the Council executive to negotiate with CIMN management over contents of the "red book." Rather than using the document -- a draft intended to encourage discussion and input -- to open debate, the Student Union used it to close the door on further debate. Melissa Buote, CIMN station manager, commented "Their arguments had no basis, and there are things that could have been discussed and changed... I think the actions of Chris Burns were very corrupt and that he shouldn't be President next year based on those actions."

The money which would have been budgeted to CIMN next year will have to be reallocated. Dave O'Connell, CIMN volunteer, questioned "now that CIMN has been cut, I would like to know where the money that they will save will go. Will we get lower [student] fees?" Tara Inman as VPI is the council representative for CIMN. She wonders if this means council will still implement the proposed three dollar increase to student union fees.

Upon hearing the vote, Waye Mason commented that "I have worked with lots of student unions over the last seven years, and this one takes the cake... This student union couldn't manage its way out of a paper bag."

Inman stated: "this is an issue which really should have been brought to a referendum vote. It directly affects students, and student fees. We had a petition with over 400 names in support of CIMN, and the final decision was left to be made by 18 people which in my opinion is completely unfair to the students of UPEI."