

Related themes on National Student Day

by Dan Keeton
Canadian University Press

In the face of increasing cutbacks in government spending on post-secondary education, student unions across Canada are planning their "day of Discussion" on the issue and its ramifications.

"November 9 is National Student Day" is the slogan for the locally-initiated but provincially and nationally-coordinated action on rising tuition, decreasing student financial aid and record unemployment.

The plan was adopted at the May conference of the National Union of Students, at the urging of the NUS Central Committee who claimed the "historical Context" was favorable for a nation-wide student action.

NSD activities will mostly consist of seminars and workshops on the individual campuses, with little emphasis placed on some provincial levels, meetings with cabinet ministers are planned by student leaders.

The national and provincial student organizations have concentrated on promoting NSD through extensive poster and leaflet campaigns, and through a series of background papers which will form the basis of discussion of the four major themes: cutbacks in government funding, tuition fee hikes, regressive changes in student aid, and high unemployment.

Students in every province have experienced or will experience rises in tuition fees this academic year.

Post-secondary institutions in Alberta have increased fees 20 to 150 per cent, and further rises of 25 per cent are expected next academic year. The minister of colleges and universities in Ontario will likely announce an anticipated 15 per cent hike soon, province's colleges and universities starting January 1977.

Nova Scotia plans to eliminate the difference in tuition at its various post-secondary institutions and raise them to the level of Dalhousie University's, the highest in Canada.

In all provinces where tuition varies from institution to institution, one or more schools have hiked fees. The University of New Brunswick raised fees 10 per cent this year while fees increased an average of 9 per cent at the University of Manitoba. In Quebec the Université de Montréal raised its fees 2 to 8 per cent and McGill University charged agriculture students 15 per cent more, in the face of a province-wide increase expected soon.

Increases were 10 to 32 per cent at the University of Prince Edward Island and between 9 and 12 per cent across Saskatchewan. Notre Dame University in British Columbia charges 41.2 per cent more for international students. Fees were recently hiked at Memorial University in Newfoundland.

The provincial and national student organizations have argued for some time now that rising tuition, coupled with regressive changes in already inequitable student aid programs, act as a deterrent to the government's professed desire to see universal accessibility to post-secondary education a reality.

While fighting tuition increases and increased loans over grants in the various student aid schemes, the organizations all have as their long-term goal the abolition of tuition and the institution of grants for living stipends.

Chris Allnut, a researcher with the Ontario Federation of Students, argues for the abolition of tuition on the grounds that it acts as a financial barrier to many who desire a higher education and a type of "regressive" taxation.

Tuition is regressive, he argues, because all students, regardless of their financial circumstances, pay the same amount. Rather than set up student aid structures which aim at increased financing for "poor" students, governments should abolish tuition and replace it by a reformed tax system which ensures that those who benefit most from post-secondary education pay for it through their increased incomes.

Allnut's main argument

is that an increased share of the costs of higher education should be borne by the sector that benefits most from a skilled labor force: private corporations.

His paper shows that while corporate profits rose 250 per cent during 1967-74 - the "boom" years for education -- the corporate contribution to public revenues through taxation dropped from 11.3 per cent to 10.7 per cent. Personal income tax contributions rose from 16.2 per cent to 18.3 per cent.

The figures show that "the corporate sector depends on a constantly increasing level of education in society as a

whole to maintain its relative position in the world economy..."

Rather than responding with demands that tuition be increased to lighten the tax burden on working people, organized labor has joined student groups in demanding the abolition of tuition, Allnut notes, pointing to the recent support for this position from the 2.3 - million member Canadian Labour Congress. While social and environmental factors also determine who gets a higher education and who doesn't both students and labor see the abolition of tuition fees as the first important step in eliminating social inequities, says Allnut.

Student Federation Endorses NSD

Sackville (CUP)--With only nine days to go, the Atlantic Federation of Students endorsed National Student Day as an opportunity to inform students and the general public as to the complexities of the common problems of students. They hope that "the grass roots of Canada's student population will develop a heightened awareness of their situation" through educational work being done by student organizations in the region. Delegates to the October 31 conference of AFS were urged to return to their respective campuses and hold general meetings on the day of concern where common issues and proposals could be discussed. This would give student leaders the mandate they need to confront the government with the concerns of students

done enough homework on. Unfortunately, too few student leaders in this region had NATIONAL STUDENT DAY and at this conference they were forced to admit that very little work had been done on their campus to prepare for the day of concern. These delegates were urged to return to their campus and organize for the day as best as they can within the short time remaining. They were told "at the very least, a general meeting of all students should be called and the students informed of the issues."

National Student Day is November 9 and is being observed by students across the country as a day for educational work about the fundamental issues facing students: the rising cost of education, government cutbacks in education, student unemployment and the quality of education.

helluva hallowe'en

Once again the festive student body of UPEI turned out in full force to enjoy a little bit of good ol' fun.

At least thirty people crowded into the barn Saturday night to show off their costumes and join in a little revelry.

The merrymaking continued well into the night while those amongst us to mature for such antics must have been off in the pursuit of more intellectual occupations (throwing eggs perhaps).

Faculty too proved their interest in promoting a better link with students by being conspicuously absent.

It was indeed another evidence that we do have something in common we are equally uninterested.

eng. book wanted

Attention students who have taken English 381-American Literature to 1860. One of the texts for the course is out of stock and there are several students in the class without copies. The book is American Literature Survey Volume 2, 1800-1860, edited by Stern and Gross.

If you have this text, the bookstore will buy it from you, or you can take it to the course professor, Brendan O'Grady, Main 101.