



Concerns Regarding “University Question re Fees”

Shortly after 11am on Friday, April 5th the University of Guelph Administration sent an email to students entitled “University Question re Fees”. It asked students if “CFS fees” should be collected in the Fall 2013 semester. The release of this question and the manner in which it was delivered to students raised a number of concerns for your CSA because the Administration provided you with incorrect and incomplete information and put a disingenuous and self-serving question to you.

Over the past 10 months your CSA has been in negotiations with the University Administration concerning their decision to no longer collect CFS fees from you. We continue to be members of the CFS and your CSA is legally required to pay your CFS membership fees to the CFS each semester. These negotiations have also included ongoing discussions and proposals to survey undergraduate students. Your CSA submitted a proposal to the Administration to survey students on April 3 and, instead of replying, the Administration sent you an email survey without notice or consultation with your CSA.

It came as a surprise to your CSA that the University Administration made the decision to email you this question, especially after the Administration received our request. Our request included questioning you on whether you wanted your CSA to continue legal battles with the CFS at your cost, and not whether CFS membership fees should be collected..

The question put to you by the Administration was not a proper or fair question. It did not take into account the real issue facing your CSA. Had your CSA's position been taken into account, you would have been presented with a clear and proper question, which was meant to address the Administration's concerns.

The “[additional information](#)” provided by the University Administration with the question contained incorrect dates and information. The Administration's stated reason for ceasing to collect CFS membership fees was that – in its sole view - there had been no “perceived movement on this matter” – the matter being the CSA's legal battle with the CFS – a matter in which the Administration is not a party and has no legal interest. Quite to the contrary, your CSA has been in the process of addressing its legal battles with the CFS through mediation, countless meetings and communications to attempt to find compromises with both the Administration and the CFS for your benefit.

The statement of facts presented by the Administration also included an incorrect motion as passed by your CSA. The correct motion, which was passed on Wednesday, March 27th, 2013, reads as follows:

Be It Resolved That, the CSA pursue a joint application with the CFS against the University regarding the collection of CFS membership fees,

Be It Further Resolved That, the joint application seek court orders for the university to:

1. Remit the CFS membership fees collected in trust to the CSA,
2. Resume the collection of CFS membership fees immediately, and
3. To remit the equivalent of any uncollected CFS membership fees to the CSA

Be It Further Resolved That, the CSA Board of Directors task the Executive Committee to coordinate this application until a court decision is made with regular updates to the Board of Directors,

Be It Further Resolved That, this motion be made public and the CSA executive draft a press release publicizing the Board decision and its rationale in consultation with legal counsel.

Your CSA has no understanding as to why the motion as presented in the Administration's "additional information" omitted the final resolution highlighted in red above.

When your CSA coordinates ballots and survey questions, we have "decline", and "abstain" options. The University Administration's question did not provide these options to you.

The question delivered by the Administration was also emailed on Friday April 5 and ended two days later on Sunday April 7, 2013, the night before exams. The Administration took this action without consulting with your CSA. The timing of the Administration's ambush survey practically prevented your CSA from providing you with correct information in order for you to make an informed choice as it took place when most of us are not on campus. This ambush survey also occurred at a time when studying is a priority for many of us. This is why, in the usual course, CSA voting and referenda take place on weekdays earlier in the semester.

As this question pertains to your greater representation as students in the CFS, we were also disappointed to see that the Administration made no effort to provide you with information about what the CFS is or does. As our membership status with CFS has been debated over the last three years, there has also been no meaningful opportunity for this student organization to interact with you on campus.

The [CFS](#) and [CFS-Ontario](#) are the largest student organizations in Canada and Ontario. They advocate for the rights and interests of students, provide services, lobby at the

provincial and federal levels, and run campaigns on issues including tuition fees, environmental sustainability, and safer campuses. Your CSA has been a member of the CFS since the 1980s.

The results of the Administration's survey is not binding on your CSA or the CFS. Discontinuing the collection of CFS fees means that your CSA must find other monies to pay your fees or risk being sued for the non-payment of membership fees. The Administration was aware of these facts prior to launching its survey. Resolving the issues between the CFS, your CSA and the Administration is not as simple as voting "yes" or "no" to the collection of membership fees. In order for the 2010 referendum to be binding, it would be necessary for your CSA to engage and be successful in a lengthy legal process. This legal process will take 2-3 years more and will cost hundreds of thousands of more student dollars in litigation, and is not assured of success.

The CSA Board of Directors as your representatives, have considered and reviewed the 3 years of history regarding the CFS membership status and debate. We have dedicated countless hours to resolving the issues to your benefit and are dedicated to doing the same going forward.

For more information on the decisions made by your CSA Board of Directors, please visit: <http://www.csaonline.ca/cfsdispute/>

For further questions, please email csatalk@uoguelph.ca.