



THE PEAK: SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER SINCE 1965. ON-LINE SINCE 1994.

News - issue 11, volume 127 — November 12, 2007 — hmmm what you say since 1965.

nat'l: CFS sues Acadia Students' Union

Angela Wilson, CUP Atlantic Bureau Chief

WOLFVILLE (CUP) — The Acadia Students' Union (ASU) and the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) have a court date in December, potentially ending a decade-long saga.

The CFS sued the Students' Union at Acadia University following the Union's departure from the national lobby organization in 1996.

The CFS alleged that the union did not follow proper procedures when they "de-federated," the term used by the national lobby group for leaving its organization.

Ten years later, however, the case has become complicated due to a lack of records from both sides.

The main argument is based on the fact that two de-federation referendums were held at Acadia University: one in 1995 and the other in 1996.

Although the 1995 referendum to leave the CFS did not pass, the second, which was held within a year of the first, passed by a vote of 1077 to 319, with voter turnout at nearly 40 per cent of the student body.

In between these two referendums, however, the CFS passed a motion dictating that de-federation referendums could not be held within 24 months of one another.

The ASU went ahead with their planned referendum, and subsequently left the CFS.

Because the CFS did not recognize the departure, though, they are seeking to collect two years worth of student fees they claim are still outstanding.

Kyle Steele, current president of the Acadia Students' Union, said that since the first referendum was held before the CFS changed their de-federation by-laws, the second referendum was lawful. According to CFS National Chairperson Amanda Aziz, however, the fees that the CFS is seeking were misappropriated by the ASU, who collected the fees from students in the two years of the referendums but never sent them to the CFS.

An article in the January 30, 1996 issue of Acadia's student-run newspaper, The Athenaeum, claimed that the ASU was contributing approximately \$30,000 annually to the CFS.

Further complicating the suit, however, are questions about the way the motion dictating the 24-month waiting period was passed.

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According to Julia Carroll, ASU president at the time of the May 1995 CFS General Meeting, 18 delegations, including the ASU, walked out of the meeting in an attempt to strip the meeting of quorum.

Breaking quorum would have meant that any motions passed after that point would have been passed without the approval of the membership and in violation of the organization's bylaws.

However, it is unclear whether or not the motion dictating a grace period of 24 months between referendums was passed before or after this point in the meeting.

Minutes from the meeting were not available from either the ASU or the CFS as of press time.

The meeting's chairperson ruled that the tactic was of no effect, however, and that quorum was based on the number of delegations registered at the conference (50), as opposed to the number of member delegations in the CFS (66).

However, the ASU and some other members disagreed with the ruling.

"Everything that was passed after that was illegal; it wasn't a proper meeting," Carroll said at the time.

Lawyers from both sides of the decade-old lawsuit are currently trying to reach a settlement. If none is met, the two sides will appear in court in December.