

NEWS

Student Voices Heard in Duffy Kerfuffle

Kimberley Johnston
Reporter



Student voices were heard amid the hammering and banging in the Duffy Science Centre kerfuffle which saw many students and faculty members complaining about the noisy conditions which made it nearly impossible to learn and teach in the building.

As of March 14, some classes were moved to the Atlantic Veterinary College and construction times were changed to find a compromise between construction workers and the UPEI population, ensuring the job gets completed and students get their money's worth in tuition.

Michelle Arsenault, a mature student who is currently taking first-year courses, became fed-up last week and sent e-mails to Student Union President Clare Henderson and Jackie MacPhail from UPEI Facility Management. Arsenault, who attended UPEI 13 years ago said it was a combination of horrible conditions and the realization that increased tuition should mean increased service as well.

"Aside from the basic smashing and banging of construction, and the noise of power tools, during my class alone we have had probably three to four days with absolutely no heat; two days where there were fumes so bad that class had to be cancelled; and one day where water was pouring through the ceiling in about four or five places. That same day, another student reported that her class had to be cancelled because the water-logged ceiling tiles were falling in... I had a class quiz a week ago last Thursday and the noise was so bad I couldn't concentrate, and I know that I got several questions wrong because

of it. Many other students said the same thing," she said.

"Those things I just said combined with the fact that in the 12 years since I last took classes (at UPEI), tuition has almost tripled. I felt that for the amount of money I was paying to be here I deserved much better than this. I am a business owner and I feel that my customers deserve quality service. If they have a complaint I do my best to answer it immediately."

Arsenault did not get an immediate response after her preliminary phone calls, but a well-worded e-mail to Facilities Management describing the above occurrences seemed to do the trick. A response from Jackie MacPhail followed, apologizing for the situation. MacPhail also explained that a meeting was held with key people involved in the construction and changes would be made in order to alleviate the inconvenience the construction was causing.

Arsenault also received an e-mail from Student Union President Clare Henderson in which another apology was issued and a reassurance was given, ensuring a solution was forthcoming. Henderson's e-mail read "regarding your concerns with Duffy, I have attached an email that I received from facilities management about the changes that were to be made to the construction schedule. I have already been in communication with Greg Clayton, Director of Facilities management and Gary Bradshaw, VP Finance and Facilities to express the student concerns that we have received and both individuals were very displeased and hope that the changes that are being made will improve the

situation."

The changes were as follows: Psychology 102B and Biology 206 on Tuesdays and Thursdays were moved to AVC Lecture Theatre "A". On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, all construction work remained the same with the exception of a total shut down from 11:30am - 12:30pm. Tuesday and Thursday construction work is now starting until 1 p.m. This began on Monday, March 14 and will continue through the end of the year.

"This will take care of a lot of problems people are experiencing," wrote Henderson to Arsenault. So, have the changes made Arsenault a happy customer?

"Yes! We now have classes in lecture Theatre A of the AVC and it is like a whole different planet over there. I am sure that everyone in the class agrees and I know that Dr. [Colleen] MacQuarrie has said so herself. I took

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Dominican Republic Faith and Justice Experience

All interested 18-26 year olds are invited to an information session on Sunday, April 3rd at 7:15pm at the U.P.E.I. Chaplaincy Centre, on the *Dominican Republic Faith and Justice Experience 2006*. The program is a challenging, first-hand experience of how most of the world's population must live. The goal of the program is to provide an opportunity for youth to experience life in a developing country in the context of faith and justice. Youth are then encouraged to take the experience and apply it to issues of faith and justice in Canada.

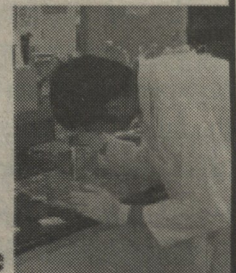
The highlight of the Faith and Justice Experience is three weeks in the Dominican Republic, including group time and time spent living with a Dominican family.

All are welcome to the information session, which will include questions and answers for/from facilitators and past participants. For more information please contact Joe Byrne at the Diocese of Charlottetown at 368-8005.

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