

Masters for the new millenium.

UPEI adds new Masters of Science programs in biology and chemistry.

By Sarah Murphy
News Editor

By January, students will be able to earn an M.Sc at UPEI.

On September 20, 1999 the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) approved UPEI's proposal to offer master's programs in biology and chemistry.

"I guess people may be surprised that it has come about so soon after the university act was changed. But the faculty of science had for some-time now wanted to present graduate pro-

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grams, and so we were well prepared for the change in the act," say Dr Roger Gordon, Dean of Science at UPEI.

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ence had already undergone some planning, and had a good idea of the type of program it wanted to offer.

"We asked all the departments whether they thought they were ready to present graduate programs, and whether that was the next mission in mind for them. Biology and chemistry felt that they had a sufficient number of faculty members and that they were ready to present [graduate] programs in their departments," says Gordon.

Gordon insists that other departments in science will be able to take advantage of the biology and chemistry graduate programs. The Family and Nutritional Science department has already shown interest.

The programs will be research-based, with an emphasis on developing students' research and communication skills. The graduate courses will be presented by faculty members within the biology and chemistry departments, incorporating external expertise when appropriate.

Students will take graduate-level courses

already established at the Atlantic Veterinary College (AVC). Master of Science programs were previously limited to the AVC; students will now have many new options.

Graduate studies

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is not new at UPEI. In recent years, a number of graduate students have been supervised by UPEI faculty members.

"I think perhaps what a lot of people don't realise is that we have been supervising graduate students for a long period of time at UPEI," says Gordon. "These students have been supervised by faculty members who have had adjunct appointments at other institutions and at the AVC. Institutions such as Memorial University, Mount Allison, Dalhousie and l'Université de Sherbrook."

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"Two students are ready to join immediately and another two students are likely to be entering the program early in the new year," says Gordon, who explains that the number of graduate students enrolled in the program is likely to fluctuate. "It is a bit like a sin curve. About a year or so ago we had twelve graduate students in science in various departments and we only have a couple or so now."

"This is very good news for PEI and the University," says UPEI President, H. Wade

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MacLauchlan. "These new programs will broaden UPEI's research capacity and raise our profile in important new areas of innovation."

Gordon agrees. "I think the more likely advantage from UPEI's

perspective is that I think it will enhance the quality of our program. Our undergraduate students will have the opportunity to mingle and be mentored by graduate students and this is a very valuable role at an institution."

Graduate students will be present in the laboratory, and facilitating tutorials. The faculty believes that even the social interaction between graduate students and undergraduates will be excellent for all students in the faculty.

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Gordon believes the graduate program is a win-win situation.

"The students benefit because we are going to be able to offer students the opportunity to do graduate work here."

Of course, Gordon is aware that there is a lot of value in students getting their undergraduate degree at UPEI and then continuing on to another institution for their own careers and professional development but as he points out, some students are unable to do that.

Also, incoming students will enhance the graduate program, making