

Recruitment: A division of Sales

By Natalie Pendergast

Student enrolment at UPEI is on the rise, but this trend is not a constant one.

This year, full time students add up to 2,631. That's not including the approximately 40 students who will drop out by Christmas-time, as estimated by John Crossly, Vice President of academic support.

Although these enrollment numbers are higher than in past years, they are still low as compared to 1992's full time population, an estimated 2,720 students. Despite this, UPEI has survived and surpassed the recent four-year decrease in enrolment, that occurred between 1994 and 1998.

"I think it's getting more competitive," Mike Read, Associate Registrar and former UPEI Recruitment Officer said of the ever changing recruitment conditions.

Read went on to describe the increase in aggressive recruitment methods of fellow colleges, universities, and even private schools.

"[They] all have representatives at fairs and at special nights, evenings, and whatever they can get," explained Read, "because all universities, colleges, and private schools are looking for students. For private schools, it's big business."

Read knows the recruitment business inside and out: His interest sparked as a student at UPEI when he volunteered to help with recruiting.

Then, from 1981-1991, as Manager of References and Conferences, he was involved with the recruiting of students once again.

His talents obviously took firm hold of his career, as he was given the position of UPEI Recruitment Officer. A year ago

Read was switched to Associate Registrar. He is intimately familiar with the fundamentals of recruiting.

"I'm kind of a pioneer of the new era of recruitment." Read said.

Read has experienced the growth and competitiveness of student recruitment. Recruitment is now a division of sales; only the salesmen are recruiters; the product is UPEI and the buyers are students.

A salesman is not often picky about the type of buyer he sells to, and the same openness is found in student recruiters.

"We're looking for any student who's interested in us." Read said.

This philosophy of acceptance shows if one analyzes UPEI's student body. For not only have the numbers of students grown, but the variety has as well. Students from all over the world are attracted to our quaint and original university, said Read.

According to Read, the recruitment process is a long one that goes through different stages at different times of the year.

"What we're trying to do is not bombard schools week in and week out, but to go as a mass." Read said. UPEI representatives also leave up-dated information with guidance counsellors, and they try to speak to, and answer the questions of as many students as possible.

"Once students have gone through the admissions process, which happens from February through early summer, we get them to take part in the first year advisement center." Read continued.

This allows students to visit the campus, register for their courses, learn the processes they have to go through, and to general-

ly acquaint themselves with the university.

"This year for the first time, we've had students from far away countries." said Read.

The internationalization of the campus will grow in the future, for International Recruiter, Shauna Garret is on the verge of leaving for a trip to Asia and the Caribbean for recruiting purposes.

Also, Liason Officer, Paul Cantelo is on the road visiting various schools across Canada.

Recruitment methods change every year, but in the last ten years, there has been no major change; yet a drastic drop in student enrolment was observed between 1994 and 1998.

"Demographics show there was a decreased number of students graduating from high school during that time," said Marion Haniferd, who currently sits in the Registrar's position.

Women make up approximately 61% of the UPEI population, leaving the males at 39%. This gap has been widening since 1985.

"Women find it more difficult to get a job that pays well enough to support a family." Haniferd said. Without higher education, women suffer with lower paying jobs, while men with the same education get paid more. "The average working woman will get paid \$.30 less per hour than the average man working." Haniferd continued. Many women feel that by having a university education, they are more likely to move up in the world.

Although the difference is smaller than it was in 1975, when the number of Arts students more than doubled the number in any other faculty, Arts is still the most popular. Last year, out of the ten different faculties available at

UPEI, 34.6% of students chose Arts. Though Science was a close second with 29.9%, that still makes a difference of 201 students.

"Arts tends to be more literal in their interest requirement, [the] Science faculty is very specific in what is required." Haniferd offered. The science students also have a narrower field of options for a major, therefore must have an idea of where they want to end up, when they begin.

"There are a lot of students who leave after second or third year to go on to other professional programs from science programs." Haniferd explained. Hence the tendency of the greater difference between the number of Arts versus Science students at later university years. Whereas first and second year numbers of the two faculties are much more even.

Engineering student, Pakin Pinto, chose UPEI over a university closer to his home in Bangkok, Thailand. He said he picked U.P.E.I. because of friends he had made over the last year at Bluefield High School.

"[UPEI] was really cheap and I was really lazy and I didn't get off my ass to apply to another university I wanted to go to." Said John MacKenna, a first year Arts student. Both MacKenna and Pinto admitted that UNB was their first choice. "But [UPEI] is really good, I like it." continued MacKenna. The students know the university has a lot to offer, and they are aiming to take advantage of it. Their main attraction to UPEI was the lower cost.

There can only be predictions made for this year's student enrolment patterns. John Crossly will have the results on December 1, 2000, when MPHEC finalizes them.