

# Extra! Extra! Douglas to change the face of UPEI Student Union

*New SU President looks to make changes, for the better to the University*

By **Cheryl-Lynn Murray**  
*The Cadre*

What do you expect from a president?

Presidential qualities? Of course.

But does Justin Douglas, the newly elected president of the U.P.E.I. Student Union, embody these qualities?

One would expect charisma, passion, a real ability to rouse the troops, inspire, and instill hope into the hearts and minds of the people who elected him (well, maybe from the president of the U.S.A.). Charisma is most definitely lacking

and, in shorts and a baseball shirt, he certainly doesn't dress the part. So how did he become el presidente?

Douglas is articulate, definite, and possesses a shy confidence that could only be defined as timid, yet he's not.

Is he an enigma? Oh, please. No one is that complicated. But he is intriguing.

However, those opinions can be expected when assessing the "newbie". Decide for yourself.

## **ELECTION DAY**

Returning students know all about last year's election fiasco that had every media

outlet on the Island buzzing. For those of you who are new on campus, Douglas was disqualified from the initial round of Student Union elections last spring.

Allegedly, Douglas and his campaign team broke election rules by starting a Facebook group in support of the candidate, and by failing to remove campaign posters from the vicinity of

**"I want to make sure students feel proud to be a UPEI student."**

v o t i n g p o l l s before the deadline.

Over the summer, Douglas spoke with Elections P.E.I. to have them look over the union's election laws.

"The whole process fell victim to election laws that didn't quite work in the realm of elections," he said. It was not an individual or group out to get him, as many of you may have thought.

"The way I look at it is, they allowed me to run again, and they didn't have to. It was taxing, and it did take a toll on my school-work, and myself financially, but in the end it worked out well, so I guess I can't complain."

## **NO MINUTES?**

The last time council minutes were posted on the stu-

dent unions webpage was April 2008. During the summer months, councilors away and the executive is down to a thin roster, with just the vice-president of activities, Shawn Younis, and the president working full-time.

"I've been looking at the organization as a whole and figuring out ways to make it more transparent, make it more accessible, and making sure the organization meets the needs of all the students."

Douglas' intentions for the transparency of the SU include opening up the lines of communication between the union and the population it represents.

Those lines were down in previous years, especially concerning the SU budget. This year, Douglas wants to make sure students are aware the budget is being presented and they are more than welcome to be there for the presentation.

"I want to be more open with the student newspaper, and there will be more information available online."

Whether or not it will be published in the student newspaper is yet to be decided.

"We don't really have anything to hide, the budget is squeaky clean."

Douglas says all salaries and expenses are posted online and he has full confidence in the bookkeeping and transparency of the

## **Justin Douglas**

- Elected April 2008
- 4th year psychology student
- Working on honours project
- Hopes to go to Grad School in the area of Social Justice

union's finances.

## **SCHOOL OR STUDENT?**

Douglas believes the stu-

dent body believed the union did more for the school system and the administration than it did for the students.

"It's tough you know, you've got a lot of strong-minded people knocking on your door, and you want to help them all," he says.

"It's one misperception that I certainly want not only students, but faculty and staff as well, to know. We are independent, and we will always have the best interest of students at heart."

Douglas believes the problems with the student union in the past stemmed from not being – here's that word again – transparent.

"But we have strong personalities on the executive

this year who aren't going to fold under every pressure that comes up. You can be sure that this year the student union will be independent of all other organiza-

**"We are a democratic organization that's supposed to be transparent and we will be."**

tions. That's not what I was elected for. I wasn't elected to work for the administration, the provincial government, or to work for the federal government. We're just here to work for the students."

## **THE CADRE**

Again, new students might not be aware of

past issues regarding the student newspaper.

Former editors printed cartoon depictions of the prophet Mohammed (a serious no-no in the Islamic tradition), printed the union's budget without express permission from the union to do so, and challenged every issue raised, sometimes just for the sake of controversy.

*See Douglas, page 13*