



# University of Prince Edward Island FACULTY ASSOCIATION

January 6, 2004

To the students of UPEI:

In August of 2001, the faculty, librarians and academic staff of UPEI entered into a new relationship with the university's Administration when the UPEI Faculty Association certified as a trade union under the laws of this province. We took this step to assure UPEI's continued evolution as a vibrant university that we can all be proud to be a part of.

Our goal for a contract has been simple. We believe that the academic staff of UPEI deserve wages and working conditions that are at least on par with other primarily undergraduate universities in Atlantic Canada.

To be clear, wages are only one of the items that are up for discussion. The FA is seeking a deal that

- 1) will allow our members to achieve a more realistic balance between teaching and research;
- 2) will allow our members to control the fruits of their intellectual activities, developments and discoveries;
- 3) establishes commonly accepted procedures and standards for the assessment of career development and advancement;
- 4) assures that all our members, both faculty and others, enjoy the important right of academic freedom in all their endeavours for the university.

Why are these important? For the most part, the quality of your education at UPEI (and, indeed, the education of UPEI students of the future) depends on the quality of the professors, librarians, and instructors that come here to

teach, do research, and serve the community. For UPEI to remain a leader in quality post-secondary education, the university must offer an attractive environment in which to establish a career. The points listed above are vital components of that environment.

Since certification, the UPEIFA has been negotiating a first collective agreement with the Board of Governors. Like any such set of negotiations, there have been periods of great progress, along with ones where the talks have been a bit rockier. This past fall, we hit one of those rougher spots, and sought third-party assistance from the PEI government in the form of conciliation, which ended in mid-December. Once conciliation is over, under PEI law, the UPEI Administration is in a position to lock-out members of the UPEIFA, and the FA can consider taking strike action to back our contract goals.

It is important for you to know that collective bargaining has not ended, and we will be returning to the table with the Board of Governors very soon. We believe that a deal is achievable, and we will be doing all we can to conclude a contract that gives academic staff at UPEI a working situation that is comparable to, and competitive with, other small Atlantic institutions.

Unfortunately, that process may necessitate either a lock-out on the part of the Administration, or strike action by the FA. We certainly hope it does not come to that, and will do all we can to avoid it. We will only do so if it become obvious that it is needed to achieve a fair deal for our members.

We understand, and sympathize with, your concern about any interruption to the academic term. As your teachers, we desperately want continue to be with you in the classroom, laboratory, studio, library, or elsewhere that academic staff and students get together to pursue the advancement of knowledge. We must, however, also think about the long-term future of UPEI, and our role in building that future.

We encourage you to talk to your professors and instructors about the important role that both teaching and research play in their careers, and in the educational experience of the students that they work with. Ask them about the outstanding issues in this process, including the ones listed above.

We invite you to visit our web-site at <http://www.upeifa.org> to learn about our activities and perspectives in this process. Virtually all of our documents are publically accessible; we see no advantage in being very secretive. The FAQ under the Job Action Committee page is particularly informative.

Finally, tell us what you think. The single most important thing that we do at UPEI is provide an education to students. Were it not for you, there would be no reason for a university. Your opinion is important. You can write to me c/o the UPEI Faculty Association, Main Bldg. UPEI. My email is [LHALE@UPEI.CA](mailto:LHALE@UPEI.CA).

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Sincerely yours,  
Lawrence R. Hale, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Biology, and  
President, UPEI Faculty Association