

## Student Union Council Launches "Vote for Education Campaign"

Tuesday, March 2nd, 1993 - the U.P.E.I. Student Union Executive today launched a campaign that it hopes will encourage Islanders to make post-secondary education a major factor before they cast their ballots. Voters are being encouraged to only vote for candidates who will end the funding freeze at U.P.E.I. that is resulting skyrocketing tuition and other factors that are making it ever harder for students to make ends meet and continue their education. The problems students face in continuing their educations are made worse still by a provincial bursary program that is totally out of date.

The statement released by the Student Union Executive read as follows:

### *Students Ask Islanders to "Vote for Education"*

The U.P.E.I. Student Union today launched a campaign to make education a major election issue. Students are asking Islanders to vote only for candidates who will work to keep post-secondary education possible for ordinary people.

Both action and inaction by the Provincial Government is making university education more difficult to earn. "Access to U.P.E.I. is slipping out of the reach of ordinary Islanders. If we are serious about bettering our economic situation, we cannot afford to let that happen," commented U.P.E.I. Student Union President Michelle MacCallum. "We are faced with a government that thinks U.P.E.I. can continue to be available to ordinary students without proper funding and that post-secondary education is a cash cow that can be raided at will," added MacCallum.

The present government's lack of meaningful emphasis on post-secondary education has never been more evident than through the "clawbacks" imposed on the University budget over the last two years. During 1991-92, the Province had the University give up a staggering \$600,000 of its already granted but inadequate budget. This year the Province is trying to get an additional \$375,000 out of a University budget already strained to the last penny. Justification for such a move escapes students who are struggling to shoulder increasing tuition fees and many other necessary costs.

The situation with Student Aid is equally serious. The Provincial Bursary Program provides needy students with inadequate amounts of money, and only those who are able to qualify for a full Canada Student Loan are eligible to apply for a bursary. Serious reform of the program is long overdue. "Even a relatively modest increase in the program would help many students who are struggling. Students are not looking for a free ride, they only want a chance to get an education," added MacCallum.

"What we are asking Islanders to do this election is to remember education when they vote. P.E.I.'s future is being mortgaged as U.P.E.I. moves out of the reach of ordinary Islanders. While we appreciate that the Government is cash-strapped, none of us can afford the consequences of U.P.E.I. being available only to the richest and luckiest. For the sake of P.E.I.'s future, we are asking Islanders to only vote for candidates who are prepared to keep education accessible to ordinary people, starting by increasing U.P.E.I.'s budget instead of a freezing it and establishing a more realistic student aid program," concluded MacCallum. For more information: contact Michelle MacCallum or Bruce Davison at (902) 566-0530.

### *Forum on Post-Secondary Education*

The Student Union Executive also plans to organize a Forum on Post-Secondary Education on campus. It is hoped that the Forum will involve all three party leaders and be held on campus at 1:30 PM on Wednesday, March 10th. All students, faculty, and people who are interested in education are invited.