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## One Chris to Another

### Burns Resigns -- Chris Gray to become UPEI SU President

By Jennifer Caseley

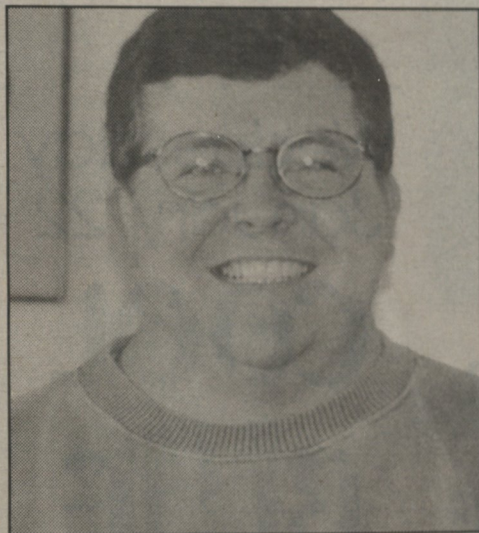
Chris Burns officially stepped down from his position as President of the University of Prince Edward Island's Student Union at the January 12 Student Council meeting.

Burns stated on January 10, when he made the decision to resign that "I'd rather be a failed president than a failed student."

Acclaimed in May of 1996, Burns cited academic reasons for his resignation. Burns was initially put on probation just after the end of the 1996/1997 academic year.

Although university officials could not confirm that Burns was academically dismissed, it is alleged that Burns was dismissed but appealed the decision and was placed back on academic probation. Academic dismissal is enforced when a student fails a semester or does not pass at least one half of the courses completed in a semester with a mark of 60 per cent or better while on probation, the decision may be reviewed by the Dean, the results of which may be academic dismissal.

"I didn't get back in because I was President of the Student Union, I was allowed back in because I can do the work...I just wasn't. I'll only be taking three courses and with the extra hours I'll have I expect to get 80's in all my courses."



Former SU President Chris Burns

He cites his position as ombudsperson at the time combined with running his election campaign and the closing of the radio station as some of the outside factors in placing him on probation initially last spring, while presidential duties were to blame for his continued poor academic performance.

Although on probation for academic reasons, Burns did not really expect to step down as President. "I hadn't really thought about it, [being on probation]...I hadn't really considered it [resigning] an option." Burns assumed he would just return to presidential duties and do his best balancing school with SU work.

Chris Gray, also acclaimed to his position as Vice-President External, has taken over as President of the Student Union. Gray will now be responsible for

duties of the president and those of VP-External "I think we [myself and the other student union executive members] can pick up the workload." Other members of the executive refused to comment on the situation.

In some larger schools across Canada the President of the student union does not take classes the year they are in power. Although UPEI is not at the point where such a drastic step is necessary, Burns can see the day coming in the near future.

"[Students] expect these people [SU executive] to do a great job at what they're doing...and also there is this expectation that they'll be leaders in whatever they're doing academically as well and I think that is unrealistic. I know that now. I didn't know that a year ago."

With no major regrets about his time in office, Burns would like to see changes in the conditions of being a member of the SU executive. At present, students must be a

full-time student to be a member of the student union. Part-time students are not being represented. "If the President only wants to take 2 courses that person should be able to do that."

Burns's resignation came as no surprise to some students who had earlier in the week started a petition to have Burns impeached.

The students only needed 250 signatures to have Burns impeached. One student who signed the petition said "We don't seem to be having any problems getting signatures. Everyone wants to sign."

John Robertson, 3rd year Arts, felt the petition was unnecessary.

"He resigned for the right reasons. I'm glad he placed academics before his president position. That is after all what we are at university for -- to learn."



Chris Gray current SU President

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