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Mandatory Retirement: A Serious Mistake

by Marko Peric

Probably everyone has heard that UPEI has introduced some new rules regarding the retirement of professors. There is an early retirement package for faculty over the age of 55, and a mandatory retirement clause applying to those 65 and over. This means that a number of professors will not be returning next year.

The current plan involves replacing the retiring instructors with sessionals, most of whom would only be here on nine month contracts.

In this age of shrinking budgets, clearly UPEI has to cut costs in some areas. But this strategy is not a wise way to save money. Sessional instructors are paid less than tenured faculty, but the old cliché holds true -- you get what you pay for. There is no substitute for experience.

This is not intended to slight those instructors whose Phd certificates are still warm -- many are good teachers. But it takes a wide variety of educators to create a quality institution. UPEI needs sixty year old pros just as much as it needs thirty year old ones. It's sad when youth needlessly displaces experience.

What's more, if these new sessionals are only here for one year, it will be difficult to have any sort of a relationship with them. After taking a class or two with a prof, a student can build a rapport with the instructor. It will be impossible to have any such relationship with someone who is only here for a single year. What would be the point of getting to know a professor who isn't going to be around in the fall?

With enrollment falling, UPEI is trying to build a good reputation. We already do poorly in the *MacLean's* rankings. Gutting the ranks of tenured faculty certainly won't help.

These new rules are a serious blunder. Hopefully the administration will see that it is a mistake before any more of our faculty are put out to pasture.

Do you have an opinion that you want to express? Submit to our letters to the editor column by dropping a letter off at room 06 Main, or by emailing us at newspaper@upei.ca

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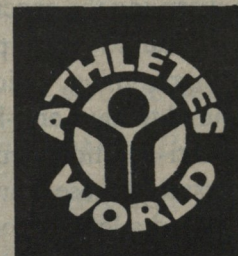
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