

Fundraising for the new Student Centre: Questions & Answers

By Sarah Murphy
NEWS EDITOR

Slow and steady is all that can be said for UPEI Student Union fundraising efforts.

Student Union Executive Council admits to being unsure about the start of the construction of the new Student Centre.

"Nothing is definite anymore," admits Stephen Lewis, Student Union Vice President Finance.

To hasten and to ensure continuity of the Union's fundraising endeavour, UPEI administration was encouraged to participate.

"The project is led by the Student Union," says H. Wade MacLauchlan UPEI President and Vice-Chancellor. "The administration is happy to work in cooperation with the SU on a project that means so much to students and to the whole University community."

Cathy Gillan, of UPEI Advancement Services, believes the university's participation is much more important.

"The univer-

sity's commitment to the Student Centre is a lot bigger than what was originally negotiated [a naming gift of \$ 3000]," says Gillan. "About a year ago, the president of the day said 'you know what, it's going to be years before we get a Student Centre if the university doesn't take this on' and that's what happened."

Gillan added that the Union's fundraising campaign for a new Student Centre has become the top fundraising priority for the university. This comes as a way of thanking students for their commitment to the renovation of science facilities on campus and the construction of the K.C. Irving Chemistry Centre.

"Just for

[the] faculty and staff campaign, and we are not finished, we are up to almost \$50 000.00 for the student centre," says Gillan.

Administration and Student Union executive members all agree that much is still in the planning stage, although students are pushing for fast results.

What started out as a 3 million dollar endeavour may now be closer to a 4 million dollar project. The services to be offered in the new building will dictate it's price tag, and therefore the goals of the ongoing fundraising campaign.

"Details of what would be included in the building, of finishes, of design, etc., are still to be determined beyond the

preliminary stages. As with any construction project, there are design and bidding phases that ultimately determine the resources required," MacLauchlan says.

Marjorie Brown, former President of the University of Regina Student Union warns UPEI about administration involvement.

"The struggle to get the new building was long and arduous and if we have one piece of advice it would be to be wary in trusting the involvement of the university administration in any such endeavour," Brown says.

Lewis remains confident. "I think what will happen is that we'll end up raising enough money, we just don't know how long it will take," he says.

Gillan

agrees.

"We [will] just keep asking until we come up with it. The goal is certainly to raise this [money] as quickly as possible but it is pretty hard to predict right now exactly when that will happen," says Gillan. "The campus community has kicked in, so now we will go to the wider community and ask."

At this point, Gillan hopes to raise at least \$150 000.00 from the campus community, including faculty, staff, and alumni. Gillan concedes that students have made a major contribution.

No requests have been made upon the PEI government, who previously donated 2.5 million dollars toward the Science Centre's 7 million dollar cost.

This may come as a surprise,

when compared to Memorial University's fundraising efforts in view of their soon to be completed new University Centre.

A strong private and public sector partnership has supported MUN and their Opportunity Fund in making much of their fundraising goals achievable. As individual, foundation and corporate donors contribute to the campaign, their gifts are being matched dollar-for-dollar by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

No corporate donors have approached the Union or the Administration.

"There is a lot of talk about that [corporate donations]," explains Gillan, aware of the university community's apprehension towards corporate involvement.

"When we launched the campaign to build the new Science Centre the first person who came along with a million dollars got to put their name on that building. That was it, no strings attached, they have

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