

Late cancellation angers students, profs

By Jonathan Orlowski

Winter and snowstorms go hand in hand, but who had a hand in not cancelling Wednesday morning classes until 11:30 on January 11? Some students don't have a clue, others suspect that a committee of four was circulating in the business office that morning.

Now all speculation can be put to rest: it is the President himself who drops the axe on the classes. This was learned from Registrar Michael Hennessey, who acted as an advisor to the President, "I did the best I could to follow the policy and procedure of closing due to bad weather."

This policy includes these points: "... The University is closed for bad weather when downtown businesses and provincial government offices are closed ... Before a decision is announced, the Registrar or his designate checks with *some or all* of the following: weather bureau, snowplow dispatcher, RCMP, maintenance, Security, Civil Service Commission, Unit Three School Board, a contact in Morell, a contact in Emyvale and ... the Director of Extension ... every effort will be made to have notices of cancellation or delayed openings on the air by 7:30 a.m. Cancellation of evening

classes will be aired about 5 p.m."

Hennessey says he followed these instructions.

"At 6:00 a.m. I checked with the snowplow dispatcher, weather office, and contacts in Emyvale, Morell, and Marshfield," he says. "At 6:30, I checked with the RCMP and asked a specific question, 'Are you advising motorists to stay off the roads?' The answer was no."

By 7:00, Hennessey wasn't recommending closure of the University to the President. "When I went to work at 8:00, there was a more than usual amount of government office traffic, which lessened my worries about

cancellation."

One must note that the government office parking lot was cleared *before* 8:00, so that those cars had a place to park.

Derek and Alan, students who attended classes that morning, made these comments, "I was told when I phoned Wednesday at 8:30, that the parking lots and roads around the university were plowed, but when I came, there wasn't anything done! ... There's a lack of communication between the Registrar's office and maintenance ... This place is not logical."

They both expressed concern that a policy should be set up to handle situations

like this, this indicating the lack of knowledge the students have of the Faculty Handbook, where the policy is given.

One student who was in Summerside that morning, Ron, said, "No way was I going to risk my life on a day like that." Other students who braved the wind and snow said, "There was nowhere to park" and "There was a sense of disorder around the university."

"You couldn't know whether your professor was here or not," said a student who didn't make it. Another student, Ruth, put it plainly, "If the majority of the class can't make it, classes should be cancelled."

"I didn't come," said a professor who lives in town, "because I know that the majority of the students would not show up. I also kept phoning the University and other professors to see what was happening."

He went on to say, "It has been traditional at UPEI that the university closes late."

This tradition has serious implications, especially for the dedicated scholarship student who doesn't want to miss class, has no concrete information about the immediate situation, and takes a chance by venturing out onto the hazardous roads.

Hypothetical or not?

The student newspaper of the University of Prince Edward Island

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MAPUS pleased at recognition

By Carolyn Ryan

Mature and Part-time University Students president Olive Bryanton calls a decision by the UPEI Student Union Council to officially recognize MAPUS an "excellent move and a very important step."

The decision, made early in December, means the Student Union acknowledges that it is not, as the UPEI Calendar says, the "official organization among the students of the University of Prince Edward Island", and that MAPUS performs a similar function.

That news comes as no surprise to Bryanton. There are presently 710 part-time and about 200 mature students enrolled at UPEI, and she feels the Student Union is not representative of their interests.

"They're geared more toward the traditional young, full-time student ... Mature students don't always feel comfortable dealing with them," she says.

MAPUS, while working in conjunction with the Student Union, aims to ensure that these students are an acknowledged part of the university, to provide a

vehicle to represent their concerns, to inform them about services the university offers, and to be a centre of social activity for UPEI mature and part-time students.

This is the first year an official organization like MAPUS has existed here, so members are now engaged in writing a constitution and trying to define "mature student". They're considering setting it at "23 years and up" or "out of school for two years or more".

Throughout the fall, they held monthly meetings, presented speakers on different topics, and had a Christmas party to finish off the term. When MAPUS meets next, on January 23, they'll be discussing the constitution and hosting a tour of the Robertson Library.

Since October, they've maintained a lounge/office in the Student Services area of Main Building where mature and part-time students can meet to study or talk.

Publicity to attract members, and thus suggestions and ideas, is a primary concern. The campus Telidon system has a program describing MAPUS, and an interview

with Bryanton was aired on CFCY last weekend.

Bryanton, a Canadian Studies senior, lists problems specific to part-time students:

1) most scholarships and bursaries are offered to students with a five-course load, so even if a part-time student obtains the highest mark in a class, he or she may not qualify for an award.

2) in the present student loan system, part-time students must begin to pay back their loans only 30 days after getting them.

3) students taking only one or two courses do not feel part of the university community, and often know little about UPEI.

Quoting the theme of the Canadian Organization of Part-time University Students conference being hosted by MAPUS this June on the UPEI campus, Bryanton comments, "They're part-time students, but full-time people."

Bryanton dismisses comments on the small visible membership of the organization by saying, "Every mature and part-time student on campus is a member of MAPUS. What we need are more active members and more participation."



(Photo: Grimmer)

News Flash

Recently, a senior Chemistry major at UPEI was offered a job with a major research company, where he would be working with acetates. The student refused. When asked for the reason, he shrugged and answered, "Everyone knows that he who acetates is lost."

You don't mean to say you need an explanation of what this phot is! It's obviously a picture of people out in the snow at UPEI. You didn't really need help with that, did you?