

# News

## Faculty signs deal, Strike Averted, but Students may pay the Price

By Nicholas Stewart  
News Editor

Fears of a faculty strike at UPEI have been eliminated as the faculty association ratified a collective agreement with the UPEI Board of Governors. On February 13, the UPEIFA held its ratification vote with 88 % of those voting approving the agreement.

Dr. Larry Hale, the president of the UPEIFA, described the significance of the deal in a press release: "This collective agreement establishes a good foundation for the faculty and academic staff at UPEI. In order for a university to grow and continue to offer quality programs to students and have a healthy research profile, the faculty and academic staff must enjoy good working conditions. This agreement goes a long way to meet-

ing the needs of the UPEIFA membership. It is a good start." Dr. Hale told the Cadre that he believes the faculty association did very well regarding 'non-economic' issues such as tenure and promotion, academic freedom and intellectual property rights. However, he added, "our salary settlement was not entirely satisfying." He adds that the salary is below what other faculties of small university in the region are receiving. "It is something that will have to be addressed in future negotiations."

While the deal is a relief to students concerned about a possible strike, it raises problems for the student body as well. Student Union President Brandon MacKenzie is glad the deal is now ratified and a strike averted, but is weary of the

economic consequences of the deal and the effect on tuition.

"Earlier the Board of Governors projected a 4 % increase in tuition next year. Due to the negotiation settlement it will likely go above 4 % now," he warned. He added that the university's financial situation is not very flexible and the increase in expenses will likely be recouped through tuition increases since there is no sign of increased funding from the government. After meeting with provincial treasurer Mitch Murphy, MacKenzie said Murphy's hands are tied. These concerns raise questions of what the agreement means for students. Without additional government support, a tuition hike is probable - this fact indicates the losers in the deal may be the students.

MacKenzie took a shot at the professors. "I beg to ask where the professors were when students protested outside the Minister of Education's office for an increase in operational funding - funding which pays their salaries. I'd hope that both students and professors are working toward the same ends."

In addition to an increase of tuition, the length of the agreement should be of concern to many students. The agreement expires on June 30, 2005 and the faculty association still believes it is underpaid. In just over a year, there will be another round of negotiations and perhaps fears of strikes may flare up once more at UPEI.

Editor's Note: Because of the timings of the contract signing, "White Juan", and our publishing deadline, UPEI administration officials could not be reached for comment at this time.

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