

INTRODUCING: PRESIDENT C.W.J. ELIOT

FINDING HIS WAY ...

FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATION

Dr. C.W.J. "Willie" Eliot is the new President of U.P.E.I., appointed for a term of six years.

Dr. Eliot was born in 1928 in Pakistan, of Canadian parents. He pursued his post-secondary and graduate studies at the University of Toronto, where he earned his B.A., M.A., and Ph.D.

As a professional archeologist and a professor of archeology Dr. Eliot's vocation has taken him to both Greece and Turkey for various periods during the past 15 years, where he has been involved in excavation projects.

Eliot's hobbies include collecting books such as those written by the Scottish writer, John Galt, and the works of Byron, specifically those concerning Byron's stay in Greece.

As an educator, Eliot has taught both within Canada and abroad: At the University of Toronto, the University of British Columbia, the American School of Classical Studies, in Athens, Greece, and most recently at Mount Allison University. He is currently teaching a course in Greek History at U.P.E.I. during his Presidency, because he "wants to teach ..." and he "doesn't want to get out of the habit."

At his first press conference in August, Dr. Eliot described himself as "... a President trying to find his way, listening rather than talking."

During his first weeks in office, Eliot has been going over files, attending meetings, and familiarizing himself with the U.P.E.I. Campus, in an attempt to get the full picture of what is facing him in the coming term. Dr. Eliot now feels that he is in a better position to identify the questions and problems at U.P.E.I. He also feels that "an overall plan" is needed at the University, but that this plan will not come quickly or easily.

As President of U.P.E.I., Eliot defined that his primary goals of office are to make the working parts of the university integrated and balanced, and to ensure a progressive direction for the University.

Dr. Eliot has experienced the workings of small Maritime universities, but does not claim to truly know the people of P.E.I. He has, however, taught P.E.I. students; had brief visits to P.E.I., and has worked with people from P.E.I. Eliot states that "every part of Canada is unique," but explained that many universities share similar problems.

Eliot recognizes the need for small universities as a better alternative for some students who don't wish to attend the larger universities.

THE STUDENTS

"learning about themselves ..."

As an educator, Dr. Eliot commented that he is more interested in bringing out students' imaginations and creativity than he is in preparing them for the job market.

Eliot felt that the most important, unique quality students can leave university with, besides "learning about themselves," is knowledge about people, and learning how to get along with them - interacting with other people and working together to decide on things. He also stated that a great deal of students' education comes "from talking, arguing, and playing (interaction), with other people."

Dr. Eliot observed that the university-educated person's place within society is that of an elite. He qualifies this feeling by explaining that people with an above-average education have acquired special skills and judgement which they can utilize in order to direct society. Eliot added, however, that even though academics are an elite in society they "can't walk out and own it."

Dr. Eliot stated that he "is glad to be here." He also invites students to come and speak to him, especially when he is walking (he likes to walk) around the U.P.E.I. Campus.

"Unnecessary tension ..."

When asked for his feelings about the tensions which may exist between faculty and administration at U.P.E.I., Eliot stated that since many of the administration also teach, that in a sense, "we're all members of the faculty." He went on to explain that to separate faculty and administration is to create "an unnecessary tension" between "those who must work together."

Concerning what position faculty and administration should play at U.P.E.I. Dr. Eliot stated that as President "he gives intelligibility to that whole," while others, such as faculty and administration, give intelligibility to parts, through communication, consultation, and respect for that person's right to his own opinions.



ATHLETICS

Dr. Eliot has played both soccer and cricket during his undergraduate years. When questioned about the importance of athletics within the university community, he stated that athletic participation gives students the opportunity for interaction which is different than that of the classroom, and can be tremendous fun. He also said that activities such as athletics "all conspires to make us better."

Eliot, however, does not want to put a priority on any activity. He encourages students to try to find the activities which give them enjoyment because it "makes the university a better place," to experience.

When questioned about his thoughts on the poor state of the U.P.E.I. Gym and Rink, Dr. Eliot stated that this is "not a concern which is ignored." He went on to say, that he does not yet know enough about future plans for the two sports facilities to provide any firm statements about their fate. Eliot did indicate, however, that his conversations with the Board of Governors have indicated that there is "a strong awareness" of this concern.

SABBATICALS

Dr. Eliot said that he "... associates research with teaching." In this respect, he supports Professors who leave on sabbatical to do research. When questioned about the disadvantages the sabbatical professor's absence may create for students, such as the lack of quality education, course selection and available expertise, Eliot stated that "over the long-haul I defend it," (sabbaticals) as advantageous to the university. He realizes, however, that rarely are replacements found for absent professors because many universities are underfunded. Eliot described the absence of professors on sabbaticals as "a condition of universities," large or small.

He feels that many professors who have the time to try out theories and to do research come out of the experience better teachers. In Dr. Eliot view, if this absence creates difficulties for students, that is the price they have to pay as part of the university community in order to have professors contribute to knowledge.

NEW PROFESSORS

When questioned about ... short-term contracts being offered to new professors, and the resulting possibility of losing potentially good professors because of these contracts, Eliot commented that every university loses good people because it has become "a less mobile profession". Dr. Eliot also stated that the "universities finances are very, very tight." He felt that as a result of this lack of finances, the university has to keep its options open, and this frequently means that new professors will not get the job security they seek.

GOVERNMENT

Eliot plans to meet with the Government on a regular basis because U.P.E.I. is "the Province's University," but at the same time he wants to protect the universities' freedom. When questioned as to whether he had yet established a working relationship with the Provincial Government, Dr. Eliot replied "no, not yet." He also stated that he had a "pleasant meeting with the Minister of Education", and has attended a formal meeting with Premier Lee.