

Should I pay Tuition? Students can now rest assured that it is safe to do so

by Brandon MacKenzie

Public attention to this issue, raised by the Student Union, has led to a promising development. In response to concerns from both students and the public, the university has indicated that every effort will be made to make up for time lost in order to complete the academic term in the event of a strike. More importantly though, they have also indicated that refunds would be available for those students who are inconvenienced to the point where they

would be unable to finish their term.

Understandably, I am relieved to have received this assurance and now rest comfortably with the understanding that those words have been put to paper and made public by the university President.

I initially stated that many students would be hesitant about paying for their tuition during uncertain times. We now know students will not lose their money, in fact could even be refunded if required. To that point, I am now comfortable in paying my student fees and I hope many others will be comforted by the same developments. Incurring late penalties and interest charges would be unwarranted at such times as this one concern has now been alleviated.

A great deal of anxiety still hangs in the air. A large majority of professors on campus seem to support their union and its discussions concerning a strike. However, in the face of this overwhelming threat, I believe we should all take the high road and go about busi-

ness as usual. We need not add fuel to the fire nor beat the drums of civil disobedience - at least not yet. Instead, let's encourage our professors and the university Board of Governors to return to the table and work towards a solution. Let's follow their actions closely, and respond only in the eventuality that our union, the students of UPEI, are negatively impacted by the actions from either side.

I leave you with the assurance that everyone at the Student Union is deeply concerned with the recent events and the breakdown of conciliation. In this case, our futures are tied to the outcomes of the faculty negotiations just as much as yours and we will act with the best interest of all students at mind over the coming weeks. If push came to shove, public support

from all students at UPEI could be enough to tip the scales for either side. In recent days it has been suggested to me that perhaps the Student Union should remove themselves from the situation. To those people I counter with, "Are you crazy?". Any decisions in this process will effect every single student on campus. I can guarantee you that while both parties are looking out for their best interests, so will we.

Indeed there remains many uncertainties in this process and only time will provide the answers; however, in the meantime I encourage everyone to follow very closely yet remember what we are here to do - to advance our education.

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MEMO: TO ALL UPEI STUDENTS

DATE: January 6, 2004

In light of recent media attention regarding the state of negotiations between UPEI and its Faculty Association, we have been receiving many inquiries from concerned students.

The prospect of a strike by the UPEI Faculty Association, if it does occur, does alarm students, and this is understandable. Everyone involved recognizes that important student interests are at stake if there is a strike.

We would like to assure you that the University is placing the interests of students above all else. The University is making every effort to avoid a strike and is optimistic it will do so via the resumption of amicable negotiations with the Faculty Association.

UPEI will continue to provide students with current information about the status of the labour negotiations with the Faculty Association and matters of concern to students.

Please report to your classes as per normal and have a good semester..

UPEI STORM WATCH

Information about campus closures or delays in opening

If a decision is made to close or delay opening the UPEI campus, details will be available as follows:

Radio Stations: Radio announcements by 7:00 am if possible, and throughout the day when required: CFCY/CHTN/Magic 93, CBC Radio, and C102 (Summerside).

UPEI Hotline: A recorded message, by 7:00 am if possible, on the UPEI hotline with updates as necessary throughout the day at 894-2882

UPEI Web site: An urgent notice, in red, at the top of the news and events bar of the UPEI website, **www.upei.ca**