

# The Case of the Missing Employment Centre, Part II:

## Some options for the future

BY BRUCE DAVISON

**UPEI NEEDS AN EMPLOYMENT CENTRE.** In the last issue before Christmas, I used this column to explain the research I had conducted last summer for the Canada Employment Centre on the employment and career information needs of UPEI students. This report showed that a majority of the students and faculty contacted felt that a dedicated office for employment and career information was needed. This information had been provided by the Canada Employment Centre on Campus (CEC-OC) at UPEI until it closed in the spring of 1992. Despite the efforts of the Student Union Executive and University faculty and staff, the level of assistance provided to students on career or summer employment has not even approached what was provided by the CEC-OC. In this week's article, I outline what I see as the options for the establishment of a centre to provide the employment and career information and assistance that is so badly needed by UPEI students.

In my opinion, students deserve and need to have an office on campus that is dedicated

to helping students find career and summer employment. Virtually every other Canadian university (excluding those in Quebec) has recognized this need and established student employment centres in place of the now largely extinct CEC-OCs. In most cases, these offices are funded by the administration. The only exceptions I could find to this were Carleton University, where the centre is cost-shared between the university and students (through a yearly fee of about \$10), and Acadia, where the centre is funded entirely by the Student Union (through what are quite possibly the highest Student Union fees in Canada). At universities roughly UPEI's size a typical centre would include one or two full-time staff with possibly one or more part-time positions held by students.

There are three scenarios that could provide relief from this situation in UPEI's case.

(1) The university administration could decide to fund an employment centre on campus. The centre would most likely be part of Student Services. PRO: The centre could be established

without a student referendum, without a student fee, and with the administration's full backing. CON: The university is likely to face a very difficult financial situation for years to come. An employment centre might make an inviting target at budget time.

(2) An employment centre could be cost-shared (perhaps using a 50/50 split) between students and the administration. Students would pay a small fee yearly or each semester and students would presumably have as much say in the centre's management as the administration would. PRO: The centre would presumably be more responsive to students' needs as it would be controlled in part by students and would still have the administration's official backing. CON: A student referendum would first be necessary (perhaps this is a good thing) and students would have to pay extra for a service that is available without an extra fee at practically all other universities.

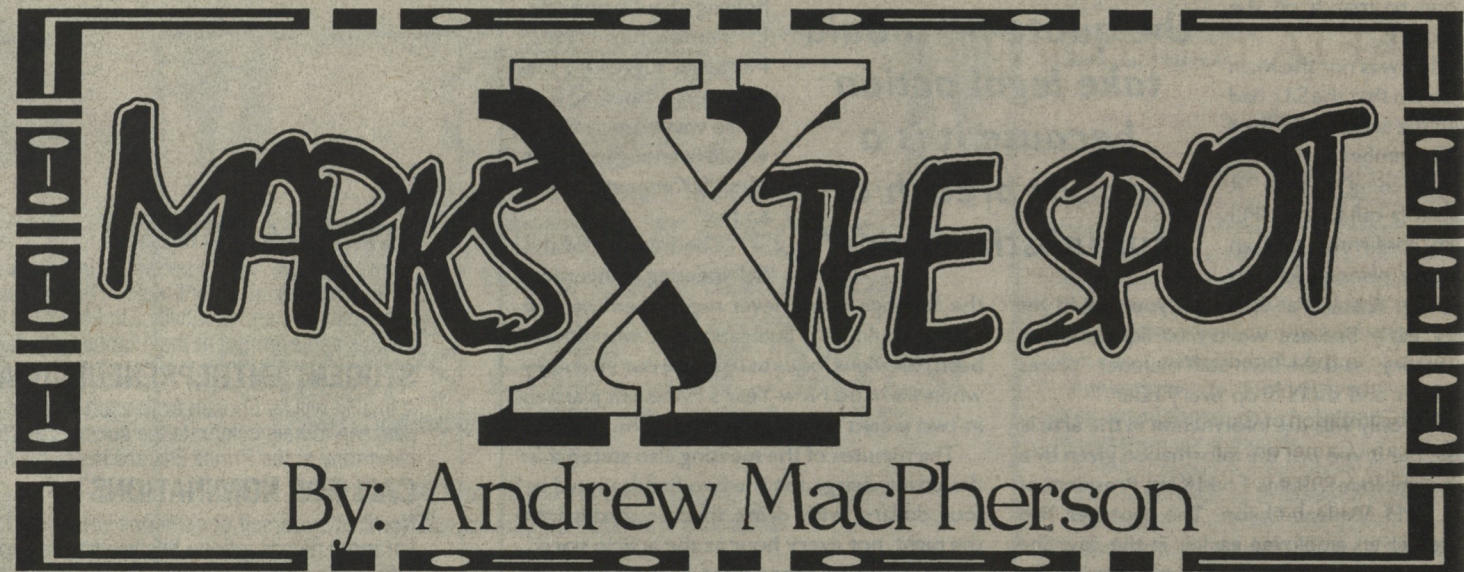
(3) An entirely student-funded employment centre could be established. The centre's staff would most likely (and easily) be Student

Union employees and the centre would be funded by a larger yearly fee or by an increase in the overall Student Union fees paid by all full-time students (which have not risen for some time). PRO: The centre would be entirely student-controlled and free from the future financial difficulties of the administration. CON: A student referendum would first be necessary (perhaps this is a good thing) and students would have to pay extra for a service that is available without an extra fee at practically all other universities -- overall, don't we pay enough already?

My reason for writing this article is simply to say that something has to be done -- UPEI students need and deserve a student employment centre's personalized help. The presence of such a centre would also help UPEI and its graduates remain competitive. Regardless of what course of action is taken, this campus needs a student employment centre.

**T**HIS ISSUE MARKS THE RETURN of an old standby from the 1993 Winter Semester of the X-Press. Yes, "X-Marks the Spot" is now back, folks, in a new and improved form. Instead of just giving you little bulletins of news as I endeavoured to do last year, this year I am going to express my thoughts on almost any topic each week. I will express my views on subjects in the local and national news that catch my interest. The fact that I am no longer an employee of this paper also gives me the opportunity to comment on the content of what is written in these pages. The new style of the X-Press is not a real change, but I do see that there is more 'meat' in the paper. The first issue of this term tackled a lot of very pertinent issues, in contrast to some less readable editions we have seen in the past.

Let's start on campus, I guess. The Order of Canada has chosen to honour the president of our institution, Dr. C.W.J. Eliot this year. Having served on Senate and having met him on numerous other occasions I can't think of any one better to name to the Order of Canada. I will also embellish the president further by adding that unlike the Evening Patriot, which in an article published last week said that Dr. Eliot was a scholar-turned-



administrator. I believe he is still very much a scholar and that he has not let administrating change him too much.

In other news, the city of Charlottetown has recently passed a bill-- or rather has decided to uphold a law which was established ten years ago, forbidding the use of moveable signs in Charlottetown. These signs are possibly the biggest eyesores on this Island and the city is going to look much better without them; however, we are all going to miss the one on University Avenue beside the Dunkin' Donuts store which has been advertising 'Fresh Salmon' 365 days a year for as long as I can remember. These are the little things which build character in a city.

Speaking of signs, there is an especially funny episode at the Student Union this year involving the marquee which was donated by the Confederation Centre. The sign was originally acquired by the Student Union in August and was supposed to be installed by October or November. Unfortunately, there have been a few snags in the process. Actually, that is a great understatement. There have been an endless number of snags in the process. The first came from the city of Charlottetown, who decreed that the sign could not be placed anywhere visible from University Avenue. Next, it was the university administration who couldn't decide where it would be placed. In December the cement base for the sign was

finally poured outside of the barn. The artwork on the sign was completed at roughly the same time, but under close inspection it was found that the trees were missing from the Student Union logo. The current delay is a technical problem: the lights on the sign are powered by transformers containing a tar-like substance which acts as an insulator. When the sign was turned on for testing purposes, seven of the eight transformers blew. The new date for installation of the sign is February. Hopefully!

Anyway, I hope that classes are going well for everyone in this brand new semester when no one should be behind yet.