

After the opening: Students Voice Their Opinions on New Student Centre

By Julie VIENOT

The smell of fresh paint, plaster and chipboard still fills the air at the new Student Centre at UPEI and already university-goers are offering their thoughts on the \$5.8-million investment.

Some say they dislike the name of the student bar, The Wave.

Some say there aren't enough chairs and tables surrounding the cafeteria.

Some say the north and south parts of the second storey should've been connected. As it stands, students must use the elevator and stairs if they wish to stop at offices on opposite sides of the building.

An informal survey by the Cadre yielded comments like, "The new bar should have kept the name the Panther Lounge or the Barn. The Wave is a stupid name."

Another said, "Very limited seating. Lots of wasted space."

Student Union President Chris Power says students have been offering their suggestions from the very beginning as to what should be in the new building, including what the bar should be called. Students were asked to fill out a ballot with their suggestion for the bar moniker, but when Power and other Student Union officials sifted through the papers, they couldn't find the right name.

"Nothing really jumped off the paper," he says, sitting back in his new office on the north end of the building, where all the student-run services reside.

When he looked at the architecture of the Student Centre - a design that features wave patterns - the name Wave came into being.

"At that time, we were on a pretty tight schedule," he says, adding, "You're not going to get a name that pleases everyone."

Students were even involved in the design of the two storey facility. In 1998 a survey was given to stu-



dents, asking them to check off what they'd like to see in the centre. The checklist included a cyber café, lockers, drug store, hair stylist/barber shop, dry cleaners, along with the services that eventually ended up in the blueprints.

The centre includes a cafeteria called the Courtyard Café, a huge room with a stage and the Wave, complete with games and a jukebox. The UPEI Bookstore also resides in the centre. Students services, Student Union and the Cadre are just a few of the offices set upstairs in the north and south sections.

And as for the lack of chairs around the cafeteria?

Power says that though the Student Union doesn't deal with the seats, he knows the university has more on order.

"There's going to be a lot more seating in the next few weeks."

In fact, it was a problem he noticed from day one, but he looks at it as a sign people like the building.

"If you can't find a seat, it means the place has been quite popular."

Overall, Power says the students' investment in the new centre has been worth it. He has heard more pos-

itive than negative comments about the centre, finished for the beginning of classes this year. He says he's pleased with the centre, which students have helped build with \$20-a-semester fees for the last twelve years.

"The opening of this centre was long overdue," he says.

Future students may see more changes to the centre, depending on the needs that develop over the next few years.

Here's a just a sample of the responses the Cadre received.

What is the best feature in the new student centre?

- Bookstore

- The Wave, despite its name
- Almost everything is in the same building.

- Cafeteria (slushie machine) and games room and love the new bookstore.

Are there any facilities you may use more often in the future?

- The Wave. By the way, the name sucks.

- Yeah, most likely I'll go to the Wave more. It seems like fun and it's cleaner than the Barn.

What is your favourite feature of the Student Centre? Place to hang out?

- Couch sitting spot

Any problems or concerns about the centre?

- None

- The whole place could have been designed a lot more efficiently.

- The new food court is not as inviting as the atmosphere in The Pit. Since everything is under one roof, are we expected to run across campus every time we need a study break if we're pulling an all day session at the library?

- Not enough places for people to hang out. (Chairs and tables)

- They should have connected Student Services and the Student Union.

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<http://www.upei.ca/~Library/about/tours.html>