

The Road to education

Making UPEI more accessible

By Stacy Dunn

MANY PEOPLE DEVOTE THIS TIME of year to planning for the upcoming university or college semester: selecting courses, preparing timetables and so forth. Students with disabilities, though, may find this process more difficult. For instance, a course might be in an inaccessible building, or a visually impaired person may have to wait months for books to be changed into Braille or audio tape. Fortunately, institutions such as UPEI recognize these problems and are slowly but surely seeking ways to help persons with disabilities have a successful university career.

UPEI Access-Ability is a group devoted to upholding the rights of students with disabilities. This sixteen-member committee includes faculty, staff

and two students with disabilities. A chairperson is appointed for one year and reports to the Director of Student Services on the group's progress.

For the 1993-94 school year, UPEI Access-Ability set up a bursary and promotion campaign; the bursary is available for a full-time student with a disability who is in financial need. Other financial aids are obtainable, and UPEI Student Services has a financial aid advisor (for the school year only) who is informed about the latest national, regional, and local awards available to any student.

The advisor publicizes scholarships through the UPEI *X-Press* the student newspaper. The committee hopes to use the *X-Press* to promote

disability awareness and issues, as well as events sponsored by UPEI Access-Ability. The group also plans to report its activities to the PEI Council of the Disabled's newsletter. This inform people outside the University of UPEI's commitment to persons with disabilities.

At present, a brochure for students with disabilities is UPEI Access-Ability's main promotional tool. This brochure advises students on how to inform the university of their needs before enrolling. Student Services conducts a summertime orientation program in which a faculty advisor aids prospective students in course selection and a summer student provides tours of the university. During the school year, Student Services' counsellors and faculty chairpersons help students choose courses, and a liaison officer promotes the campus. Further information about academic advisement and campus tours is available by calling Student Services at 566-0423.

The financial aid advisor, the learning assistance centre, and UPEI Access-Ability can be reached through Student Services. UPEI Access-Ability's brochure also lists the phone numbers of campus security, medical services, the residence manager, and the Sports Centre (whose staff assured UPEI Access-Ability they can accommodate people with disabilities).

Two of the most accessible buildings at UPEI are the Sports Centre and the Veterinary College, since both were constructed recently. Two years ago, many of UPEI's buildings were assessed on the basis of their entrance and interior (i.e. elevator use) accessibility. Factors such as accessibility of equipment and washrooms were not considered, but the study did assess the buildings as follows:

Main Building

Sick of cLAsSeS? bOred of sTudYing aLL The TiME? ThE sOmETHiNG nEW AND EXciTING... eAT Raw eGGs, piCK YoUR NOse iN puBLiC, sNeeZE iN sOmEoNE'S fAcE...WRITE FOR THE X-PRESS! Meetings are every Tuesday evening at 6:00 in room 06 main. Hope to see you there!

--ramp to main entrance;
-- elevator to all floors

Duffy Building

-- wheelchair lift at one side of building
-- elevator service from second to floor

Robertson Library

-- automatic doors
-- ramp to snack area

Kelley Building

-- door on ground level
-- elevator to all floors

Steele Recital Hall

-- recently installed automatic doors and elevator to all floors

Dalton Hall

-- steep-looking ramp at entrance
-- narrow entrance doors
-- only accessible on first floor

Blanchard Hall

-- only accessible on first floor
-- narrow halls and doors

Unfortunately, the Student Union Centre and the Chaplaincy Centre are not accessible to students with disabilities. Even the accessible buildings are imperfect. For instance, the elevators may be too slow, and people who use wheelchairs or are visually impaired may have difficulty reading the room numbers above the doors. UPEI Access-Ability is aware of these imperfections and is constantly advising maintenance staff of such problems.

UPEI is committed to reconstructing older buildings, as well as constructing a new student centre and chemistry building, but these commitments will require large amounts of time and money. In the meantime, people with disabilities who are interested in a post-secondary education should inquire about the services UPEI provides and speak out if service accommodation is lacking.

TEAM DEAL




Team up with Pizza Delight to **WIN one of 2** 1994/95 P.E.I. Senators Season tickets. Get your ballot to win with each TEAM DEAL.

12" PIZZA with your favourite 3 toppings
12" Garlic Fingers with cheese
750ml Pepsi FOR ONLY

13
99

The #1 PIZZA choice of the P.E.I. Senators

DELIVERY 566-1911

Offer valid at participating locations for a limited time only. Valid for Dine-in, Take-out and Delivery where applicable. Not valid with any other discount offer.

October 4, 1994