

# The case of the missing employment centre:

*We need an employment centre on campus. . .*

In the Spring of 1992 the Canada Employment Centre on Campus (CEC-OC) at U.P.E.I. was closed by the federal government, despite a great deal of opposition from UPEI students, the Canadian Federation of Students, and the university administration. The elimination of the CEC-OC also occurred, it seems, despite the fact that the centre was widely used by students.

The U.P.E.I. Board of Governors later declined to commit itself to assuming the funding of a similar centre on campus, as was done at many other universities. Ms. Laurie Murphy was employed by the Department of Student Services for the fall semester to develop a recruitment plan for U.P.E.I., to assist in the establishment of an on-campus committee to work through the period immediately following the removal of the CEC-OC, and to arrange for appropriate physical support. Ms. Murphy met extensively with individuals and groups on campus and submitted her report to U.P.E.I. President Dr. C.W.J. Eliot and the Canada Employment Centre in December. Her report contained the results of the work she had done to maintain the recruiting on campus, and a proposal for a University Employment Career Committee. Despite her report and the clear recommendation that the committee meet in January, it did not convene. The committee did, however, meet during the first half of this semester.

Ms. Murphy also encouraged Student Services and the Student Union Executive to attempt to take over some of the services that had been provided by the CEC-OC. Student Services posted as many career postings as possible on the bulletin board outside of its offices. Recruiting on campus was largely maintained by Student Services and individual departments and faculties (with the bulk of on-campus recruiting taking place through the Business Faculty). Ms. Murphy also did a great deal of work cataloguing the career and employment resources available in the Student Services Resource Centre and documenting the graduate recruiting done by employers on campus through individual departments in the absence of the CEC-OC (a complete listing of the publications in the Resource Centre is available in the booklet *Employment and Career Publications at UPEI Listing* and recruiters are listed and de-

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tailed in the booklet *UPEI Fall Recruitment Manual*). The U.P.E.I. Student Union Executive concerned itself with distributing information on Summer employment information. This was attempted using the summer employment files left over from the CEC-OC and new positions that were mailed to the closed CEC-OC. Jobs were posted on bulletin boards in the Robertson Library and the Student Union Centre (the Barn). These measures appear to have continued this year.

Although these efforts by academic departments, Student Services, and the U.P.E.I. Student Union Executive helped greatly, it appears that the overwhelming opinion among students, faculty, and staff is that the present level of employment and career placement information at U.P.E.I. is *far from adequate* and *must be improved*.

How do I come to say this? Last summer I was a Student Placement Officer in the Canada Employment Centre for Students in Charlottetown. Through that job I undertook a study of the gap left at U.P.E.I. by the removal of the CEC-OC. During the course of that study I contacted students and faculty in order to find out what they felt was needed to replace the services that had been provided by the CEC-OC.

From talking to the people I contacted this summer it became clear that the most widely held opinion among the people I contacted was that an office and staff dedicated to employment and career information on campus was needed. It is for that reason that I write this

article -- in hopes of generating some discussion over the as-yet unaddressed need for some coordinated effort to provide students with employment and career information.

It is unreasonable to expect that the need students have for such information has decreased in the year and a half since the CEC-OC was removed. With student unemployment in the Atlantic provinces up to an average of about twenty-five percent, U.P.E.I. students need all the help they can possibly receive. Canada Employment Centres on Campus were closed throughout the country. I support my assertion that we need a functioning employment centre on campus with the fact that almost every campus has provided funding for the establishment of administration or (in a few cases) student association funded employment centres. I contacted a number of these relatively new centres and asked them about the services they were providing and how they were funded. Most often, these centres provided job listings, job and career counselling, and seminars on résumés and job search strategy -- needed services for U.P.E.I. students by any reasonable standard.

The Acadia University Career Employment Centre, the Carleton University Employment and Career Centre, the Dalhousie University Student Employment Centre, the Saint Mary's University Student Employment Centre, the University of Ottawa Placement Centre, and the York Career and Placement Centre were all contacted. All of these centres indicated that they provided services that were formerly available through Canada Employment Centres on Campus. My reason in writing this article is simply to make the point that students, faculty, and the administration have to find a way to provide students with a source of employment and career information and counselling. The removal of CEC-OCs on other campuses has led to the establishment of new student-oriented employment centres on many campuses. The need for such a centre at U.P.E.I. is just as serious and action needs to be taken. I'm not saying that students need a carbon copy of the Canada Employment Centre on Campus, but U.P.E.I. students deserve and need a level of service close to what was provided by the CEC-OC and widely used by students.

**BRUCE DAVISON**