



Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

UPEI will be a priority item for Liberal Leadership Candidate Ian "Tex" MacDonald. The University is Charlottetown's biggest business, the direct impact and the spin offs are critical to the economic development of the capital district. Anytime you have a business that involves over 3500 people then you better make it a priority.

I believe that our city compliments the university like no other city or college town. Although the university has its own boundaries and identity, it is being molded into the community. The setting is indeed attractive and the amenities that Charlottetown has to offer can only enhance the entire university scene.

I would like to see our university marketed with the city. We should also strive to promote UPEI in conjunction with city amenities, factors like a "safe city", affordable housing, proximity to the campus and an overall "good environment" for learning.

The Provincial Department of Tourism promotes and markets our Island at the national and international level. Maybe its time we emulated tourism and marketed our university so that we can attract more students. The benefits of this strategy are numerous and could have an impact on maintaining current tuition fees.

On the other hand there must be some incentives offered to our local high school graduates to attend our university.

Why do so many high-school graduates opt to attend other schools? This is a tough question to answer but it could be a good assignment for some business students! In my opinion McLeans Magazine has not helped our overall reputation

considering the excellent staff and administration that we possess at UPEI.

I think that the construction of a university student center [sic] would be an enticement for local students and should be a priority item. There is a move toward community integration on behalf of the university, which can only have positive results. The university has so much to offer but is rarely tapped by the community. The library would, could and must come up with a fund raiser. As the only university we should have a more expansive and extensive library.

The issues of tuition fees and the cost of books are for the student the most crucial of all the concerns.

The current cost of \$292. per course has jumped \$50. in the last three years, the cost of books is astronomical and difficult for the non student to grasp. "I just can't believe the price of books". Student fees and food add to the cost and makes attending any university very expensive.

There is no easy solution to tuition fees, but maybe one could make it [tuition fees] a priority item and look at the ramifications of a 2 or 3 year freeze, like they've done in British Columbia. Maybe the government should return to the business of student loans and bypass the banks and their interest rates. Any bank that makes a profit of \$400 million per year could/should consider low interest to future customers. It's good business.

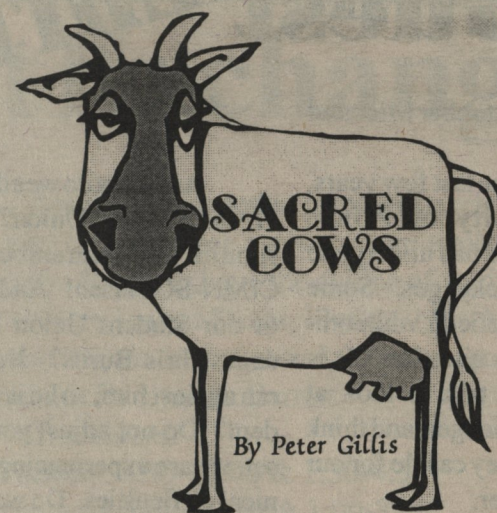
UPEI is like many universities across this nation, there are some issues that are constant, there are problems that can be solved and there are adjustments that must be made in order to ensue a positive future for our university.

Tex MacDonald

Editors note: Letters to the Editor are not edited for grammatical errors, spelling, or content. Nor do the views expressed in Letters to the Editor represent the views of the editor, the Panther Prints, the Student Union or UPEI.

I was recently approached by another student and asked to join the upcoming protests against rising tuition costs. I was told that the government is breaking the backs of students, forcing us to sink in debt, and denying us our right to an accessible education. I agree that every Canadian has a right to post-secondary studies. One cannot be denied access to university due to colour, class or sex. Everything else though, must be earned. It is my opinion that our ridiculously low tuition fees are the main causes for the cost cutting measures, made by universities across the country, which have resulted in a poorer course selection and a lowering of the basic standards of our education. (Take for example the loss of some talented professors under the university's "Freedom 65" policy.) It is time for a radical change, just not the one everyone thinks. Over the years, I have come up with a few ideas that I believe will truly better our education. Approach them with an open mind.

First, students are to be responsible for the full cost of their university education. No more 4 or 5 per cent increments. Raise tuition fees all the way once and for all. Second, universities must be made open



to mature students only. Currently, this means anyone over 21 who has been out of school for a couple of years; and I see no reason to change it. How many bright first year students have lost scholarships, dropped courses, or failed due to lack of experience in life? Suddenly given absolute freedom, they suffer a sensory overload that can only be dimmed by late nights and Windex colodas. (At least, this is what happened to me and many of my friends.) So, upon completion of high school our government will give each graduate a one-way ticket to any country they choose; and then deny them re-entry until they learn a little bit about life and other cultures. It does wonders for one's study habits.

Third, anyone receiving an 80% average at the end of high school goes to university for free. Everyone else pays. Those of you who pay the first year, yet manage to reach the 80% plateau, will receive full tuition scholarships for the following year; and these scholarships will remain as long as your marks stay high. Students in the 80% plateau whose marks fall below that line, lose their scholarships and get to pay just like everyone else. This way, university education becomes a reward for

hard work, intelligence, and consistency. Furthermore those who don't get the scholarships, yet choose to attend, will have a greater appreciation for what they are paying for. At a cost of over \$10,000/year, they had better be absolutely sure that university is where they want to be.

What are the results of these proposals? For one, universities will be cost effective; and thereby able to offer the best education. No more concerns about salaries, computer paper, or free parking spaces. They can concentrate on what matters - the teaching of their students.

Next, our society will be guaranteed that each and every graduate falls into one of two categories. They are either the brightest minds, or the hardest and most dedicated workers. We will go from being university graduates to "University Graduates."

Perhaps these proposals seem a little harsh. I could even be accused of creating a class system of the 'have and have not's.' This is not my intention. I am merely trying to say that, maybe...just maybe, we should stop begging for degrees and start earning them.

Then maybe... just maybe, our degrees will be worth something again.