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Julie Bull
Reporter



It was chilly outside, but a community forum with MP Shawn Murphy got a little heated. A quaint audience sat quietly at first listening to the opening by Charlottetown's MP as he repeatedly said that "I am not here to give a speech, I am here to listen to your concerns." Also at the head of this meeting was Holland College Student Union President Jarod Colwill and sitting in for UPEI SU President, Clare Henderson, was SU VP, Mark O'Halloran. Both gentlemen voiced their concerns around the escalating financial difficulties for post secondary students.

Shawn Murphy assured us that the government is taking strides in the right direction with improvements to taxes, scholarships and loans. "But I am still not satisfied", he said. He continued to stress that the millennium scholarships should be revamped and based on need, not merit. It is an issue today that there are people that want to attend post secondary institutions but they cannot afford to do so. Murphy said that higher education should not become an elitist scenario as we have seen in the past. He informed us that "there are 80% of people that do not attend university, and 23% of those say that it is because of lack of resources." To choose not to go to school is one matter, but when a person wants to and the



Jarod Colwill, President of Holland College SU, MP Shawn Murphy and Mark O'Halloran, Exec. VP UPEISU at Nov. 10th's Student Financing Forum.

means are not available, there is a serious problem.

Nearly all people in attendance voiced their concerns, ranging from loans, to E.I. benefits and scholarships. Though the forum was by no means an end to the ever growing problem of money (or lack thereof), I strongly feel that our MP is concerned and he is a vehicle by which our voices can be heard at the higher levels of government. He made no promises (hmm, is he REALLY a politician????), but he was adamant in saying that he is concerned about our education and that it should be a concern for the country as a whole.

The night was seemingly successful, the man took notes and all! The only dampness that is evident is the low turnout rate. Common all, I hear the bitching and complaining everywhere I turn, if we could all come together and have a voice as one, it will likely not fall on deaf ears as it has been doing. We need to stand up and express our concerns now before we are taken over by the elites amongst us. We should all have the opportunity to further our education, and as Mark O'Halloran pointed out, our studies should be the most important thing, but most of us have at least one job to try to make ends meet, and our studies are often put aside.