

the FABric

UNIVERSITY OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND FACULTY ASSOCIATION

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, 23 April, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Location: TBA

All Members encouraged to attend!

The AGM will be followed immediately by FA Time in the Faculty Lounge, Main Building

State of the Union: The President's Report

I don't make New Year's resolutions. That said, I do make resolutions—just not on 31 December. Instead, I find the end of one calendar year and the beginning of another, is a good time for reflection. This year my period of reflection has been coloured by four events, in particular. The first was a conversation over the holidays with my 89-year-old “first cousin once removed” in BC. His tireless efforts in the labour movement countless years ago helped to put in place many of those benefits that employees in all sectors, unionized and not, take for granted today. The second was learning of the passing of my 103-year-old “third cousin once removed,” just four months after I had visited and enjoyed a lovely (and lively) conversation. This was a woman who, for most of her career, taught in one-room schoolhouses throughout NB (not the best of working conditions), only enjoying the benefits of union membership for a few years before she retired. The other two events which have influenced my recent reflections were the CAUT Forum for Presidents in mid-January and the strike/lockout at UNB and the strike at Mount Allison (along with the “near-miss” at Cape Breton University).



Betty Jeffery,
President, UPEIFA

While we are “between negotiations” here, this is not a time for complacency. Much work is required to ensure that we protect those rights (including that of collegial governance) for which so many have fought so hard—both in the past and more recently—nationally,

provincially, and locally. And as we're all well aware, there is much work still to be done work to protect post-secondary education—and to protect the integrity of our University.

As you know, shortly after our Fall General Meeting, the Faculty Association received the arbitration decision on the sabbatical denials. The arbitrator declared the Board's decision-making process to be "clearly misguided and flawed," and agreed with the Association that there were no legitimate reasons for the two sabbaticals in question to be denied. This was good news, to be sure. But what did the Board of Governors do at their next meeting? They proceeded to deny two sabbaticals planned to begin 1 July 2014. What do these applicants have in common with each other? Both had previously filed complaints with the PEI Human Rights Commission against the Employer (i.e., the Board of Governors).

This is starting to have an all-too-familiar ring to it.

I regret to report also that the Board of Governors has now taken upon itself a practice of designating a substantial portion of each meeting as "closed." When the Association finally receives the Minutes of the Board's meetings, these are stripped down. Most worryingly, these do not even indicate what topics were discussed during those meetings. Because of the Board's unwillingness to disclose any information about these closed sessions, the Association has had to officially invoke Article H5.2 of the Bargaining Unit #1 Collective Agreement, i.e., "Copies of all motions, resolutions and by-laws, or rules and regulations adopted by the Board which directly affect the Members of the Association shall be communicated to the Association President."

On a more positive note, our MLA Outreach Days were a great success. UPEIFA representatives met with 20 MLAs from districts across the Island. Several of the MLAs applauded the initiative of the Association and expressed the hope that this would not be a one-time event. The 17 UPEIFA Members participating in these visits were pleased to note that MLAs recognize the importance of the University to the Island, and appreciate

the value of post-secondary education in general.

We hope that we have established that the Members of the UPEIFA are uniquely well placed—and keen—to offer the government constructive input in its ongoing conversation about the future and the direction of post-secondary education in the Province.

As a further step, the UPEIFA will be making a submission to the provincial budget consultation process. And a joint invitation has gone out from President Abd-El-Aziz and myself for a caucus meeting to be held here on campus this term.

On the internal front, the UPEIFA has responded to the Draft UPEI Strategic Plan and also provided input into expectations for the Vice-President Academic (both documents can be read on our website).

In January Senate passed the "Responsible Conduct of Research, Scholarly, and Creative Work Policy." This is a revision of the "Policy on Integrity in Research and Scholarly Work" which forms part of the BU #1 Collective Agreement and cannot be amended without the consent of the FA. Much work went into the revision of this policy. To prevent any possible future problems, given the change in the title of the policy, a memorandum of understanding has been signed. This MoU and revised policy are available on the FA website. Article F6.22 also provides that the Fair Treatment Policy cannot be amended without the FA's consent. A joint committee completed revisions to this policy, and it has been in the hands of the Human Resources Committee of the Board of Governors since December 2012.

In this issue you will find calls for nominations for the Hessian Teaching Awards and for the Scholarly Achievement Award. I would encourage each of you to consider nominating a worthy colleague—we're certainly not short of worthy recipients! The schedule of upcoming social events can also be found in this issue. Plan on taking a break and coming together with colleagues at one or more of these events for some great conversation and mutual support. I will see you there!

In Memoriam

James Rodd

By Udo Krautwurst (Sociology and Anthropology)

In April 2013, James Henry Rodd—"Jim" to those who knew him—passed away during his third effort to contain the illness he had been living with, off and on, since 2006. As the campus nears a year of his absence it is fitting, I think, to reflect for a moment on the colleague we have lost and the kind of colleague he modelled. His sessional status pales in comparison to the kind of person, colleague, and educator he was.



James Rodd

Anyone who got to know him learned quickly how thoughtful, modest, determined and courageous he was. He took great care in all he did. He cultivated an attitude and relationship of care. It was his approach to the world and all he did in it. This quality made him a great, wonderful, engaging, and respected friend and colleague, and a much sought-after teacher.

Jim was a product of the Island, but with strong ties to British Columbia. He majored in the Sociology & Anthropology programme at UPEI, graduating in 1992 with one of the highest grade averages on campus. He went on to earn a Masters of Anthropology, a discipline he was passionate about, from the University of Victoria in 1998. He was working on his doctorate in the Faculty of Education.

From 2000 onward he taught sessionally in the Soc/Anth department. Over the years he taught in the neighbourhood of 40 courses, ranging from biological anthropology to tourism to economic anthropology to Maritime First Nations, among others.

His scholarly range combined depth with breadth.

As an Islander, he understood Island students and the importance of social justice growing up in a have-not province. I'm grateful that he collegially shared insights about Island life. My own teaching is better for it.

He understood how deep seated culture is, and how important education is as a vehicle of change. He always demanded that reflection and wisdom go with knowledge because he knew what happened if it didn't. The lengths Jim went to in making the classroom a place not only of bookish learning, but of respect, openness, tolerance, fairness, challenge, mutual support, empathy, and most importantly a place of sharing, were extraordinary. I don't say that lightly.

His expectations were high, of his students and himself. He didn't just help students learn, he took the time to learn about them. All of them. At a time when universities across the Western world are struggling to redefine themselves, he offers a model of engagement, retention, and learning that should not be too quickly discounted.

The anthropology he was passionate about, as the study of human differences, and the social justice he worked toward, having seen what its absence creates, made this all the more imperative. The result was overwhelmingly positive for his students. He made, and continues to make, a difference.

***For Jim Rodd ~ from
Kate Tilleczek***

I was Jim's teacher, and he was my teacher.

Jim was a skilled teacher. He was a passionate scholar. Four years ago we sat together in my office at UPEI to hatch a plan for his PhD programme—to continue his scholarship about things he loved and cared deeply about. It had to be a critical and anthropological project. It had to place the lives and struggles of people at the fore-front. It had to be rigorous and scholarly and tough. It had to tell stories and move people. We agreed. Our journey

took us along a path to a paper written together for a conference in Spain. We discussed important ways of doing our work and what it meant for the people with whom we converse and live. It took us to thinking through symbols and meanings of education and to discussions about the misuse and maltreatment of indigenous people in the name of education and religion (and both). The journeys led towards work in the south of Chile where the rituals of schooling would be explored. It took us to a conference in Scotland where the illuminations about young lives in modernity were presented.

In each discussion, in each case, and in each project, Jim was the quintessential scholar and teacher. He was a philosopher. His insight, intelligence, humour, wisdom and clear-sighted imagination are with me and in the work I carry forward.

I wish to thank and honour Jim with the words of the thirteenth-century mystical poet and dervish, Rumi:

Give us one clear morning after another
and the one whose work remains unfinished,

who is our work as we diminish, idle,
though occupied, empty, and open.

Dear FAbby

I'm worried that there might be something in my Official File which could be used against me. How can I find out?

The Official Employee File is covered in Article F-3 of both the Bargaining Unit #1 and Bargaining Unit #2 Collective Agreements. First of all, the Official Employee File can contain only materials relating to your employment (so nothing about your speeding tickets!), and no anonymous material (except the statistical results of student evaluations). It is only you, or the Vice-President Academic (or designates of either of you) who can authorize the placing of documents in the File. (If you are in BU #2, the Dean and President are added to this list). You have the right,

during "normal business hours" and with five working days notice, to examine the contents of your File. This would take place in the presence of a person designated by the Vice-President Academic. You will not be able to remove the File or any of its contents from the office. However, upon written request, you may obtain one copy of any document in the File, at no cost. You may also add to the file any documents you consider relevant, and also any rebuttal you wish to make about any documents in the File. If you want to examine the contents of your File, you can set the process in motion by emailing the Vice-President Academic.

Atlantic Queer Caucus Meets Cape Breton Pride

By Nola Etkin

In mid August I was one of twelve participants in the inaugural meeting of the Atlantic Queer Caucus on the University of Cape Breton campus. The Caucus is an initiative of CAUT's LGBTQ2S equity working group, and was formed to address issues of isolation among queer academic staff in the region. Close to 100 from across the Atlantic region have joined the caucus listserv, and members from seven regional universities as well as two CAUT staff attended the event, which coincided (intentionally!) with Cape Breton Pride Week. Over a packed two days we discussed the environment on our campuses for queer academic staff, and strategies to support faculty and students on our campuses and within our associations. There was considerable discussion of the challenges of teaching as queer faculty, and of incorporating queer content into curriculum, as well as opportunities for regional collaboration on queer-related health research. We came away from the meeting with great ideas and great energy, and plans to meet a couple of times a year. The highlight of the weekend was finally getting to see Caucus member Chris Frazer (St. Francis Xavier) as alter-ego C. Leah Cruise.

UPEIFA members who would like to join the caucus listserv can do so by going to http://lists.caut.ca/read/all_forums/subscribe?name=lgbtq2scaucus&page=all_forums or email me at netkin@upeu.ca for more information.

Academic Freedom and Equity – a Counterpoint

By Nola Etkin

Last February I attended the Harry Crowe Conference on the Limits of Academic Freedom. Richard Raiswell wrote in the September issue an excellent summation of the important (and often scary) highlights of the conference.

As Chair of the UPEIFA Equity Committee, and as a long-time equity activist, my primary motivation for attending Harry Crowe was the focus on Equity and Academic Freedom. This is a topic that has been discussed at length within CAUT's Equity and Diversity Council, including a joint meeting with the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee that I also attended in March. It is also a topic that raises many issues with no easy answers – and one that will perhaps be the biggest challenge to our understanding of Academic Freedom.

This particular session at the conference was actually very disappointing, from the lack of diversity on the panel, to the general avoidance of substantive discussion of the implications of equity on how we interpret and defend Academic Freedom. Repeatedly on the panel and indeed throughout the conference we heard that Academic Freedom is an absolute that must be defended at all costs, no matter how distasteful the circumstance. The sole spark on the panel was (now past) Vice-President of CAUT, Anver Saloojee, who delivered an impassioned challenge to the concept of Academic Freedom as an absolute, and a very real picture of the impact of inequity on the Academic Freedom of minority academic staff. He ended with the powerful statement that if CAUT were to today support the Rushton case, he would resign from the executive.

Reaction to the Equity panel and follow-up discussions showed that academics are deeply divided. Calls for discussion of an evolving definition of Academic Freedom, which recognizes the impact of inequity and discrimination on the freedom of minority faculty members to fully realize their own Academic Freedom, are met

with the very real fear that any attempt to erode the absolute nature of Academic Freedom will be used by university administrations to impose further limits.

There are indeed no easy answers, but I challenge us all to look at Academic Freedom through an equity lens, and to consider whether our current understanding will continue to serve academic staff – ALL academic staff – well.

Social calendar

Be sure to mark your calendars, and come out to join your colleagues from across campus for the following social events.

- Friday, February 28, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m., FA Time, Faculty Lounge, Main Building
- Wednesday, March 27, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m., FA Coffee Time, Faculty Lounge, Main Building
- Friday, April 4, 4:00 – 6:00 p.m., FA Time, The Wave
- Wednesday, April 23, 3:30 – 5:30 p.m., FA Time, Faculty Lounge, Main Building

Hessian Awards for Excellence in Teaching

The University of Prince Edward Island's "Hessian Merit Awards for Excellence in Teaching" AND "Hessian Merit Awards for Excellence in Teaching by a Sessional Instructor" publicly acknowledge individuals whose work has contributed to instructional excellence at UPEI.

The UPEIFA's Hessian Merit Awards for Excellence in Teaching Committee is currently calling for nominations for these awards. The deadline for nominations is **noon, Wednesday, February 26, 2014.**

Information about the awards and nomination forms are available at the Faculty Association Office (Main Building, Room #315) and also on our website: **www.upeifa.org**.

The UNB Strike: The Adventures of a Flying Picket

By Richard Raiswell

On 13 January, Faculty and Librarians at the University of New Brunswick went on strike after negotiations for a new Collective Agreement reached an impasse.

Although it is concerned with a number of irritants—including grievance procedures and matters around privacy, security and surveillance—the Association of University of New Brunswick Teachers (AUNBT) ultimately took the difficult step to strike over the issue of compensation. Since 2005, UNB’s Senior Administration has been engaged in a policy of cost-cutting in an effort to prevent the University from slipping into deficit. The effects have been profound: 48 Faculty positions have been eliminated; programmes shut down; class sizes increased; student fees raised; pensions cut. As a result, the salary and workload of UNB Faculty is no longer comparable to that at similar institutions.

But while Faculty now have to do more with less, the Administration does less with more, for over the same period, it created some 84 new administrative positions to oversee the dwindling ranks of the professoriate.

Yet, as the audited financial statements of UNB make clear, far from being on the brink of a fiscal apocalypse, 11 out of the last 12 years, have seen the University actually running a surplus! This has now ballooned to \$58 million.

Despite this enviable financial situation, within hours of the AUNBT’s decision to strike UNB President, Dr. Eddy Campbell, took to the airwaves calling for back to work legislation, cancelled all classes by contract workers, and locked out Association members. He then brought in a self-styled “elite security and risk management” company—AFIMAC—from Ontario, to guard University entrances, and to photograph and video picketers.

It is the presence of this private security firm that is the most sinister dimension of the Administration’s response to date. Apparently contracted two months before the strike was called, according to its website, AFIMAC focuses on providing security to “image conscious clients,” and offers a “strike security and labour dispute management team [that] can assist a client’s legal team by gathering evidence to obtain injunctions and temporary restraining orders” (see: <http://www.afimac.com/what-we-do/labour-disputes-and-plant-closures>). Predictably, the University has not disclosed how much student or taxpayer money it has spent hiring these security experts to protect itself from its middle-aged Faculty, with their intimidating bifocals and radical book smarts, but it is likely more than the salary of a professor—or two. But it is this image of a University under siege, alienated from its Faculty and sealed off from the Community it serves that “image conscious” client President Campbell apparently wants the country to see.

On 17 January, UPEI’s Larry Hale and I joined Members of the AUNBT, along with Members from CAUT-affiliated Associations from across Canada—and a large contingent of UNB students—on the picket lines. Although we were always under the watchful eye of AFIMAC guards, the mood was upbeat, friendly and confident. As we found in 2006, far from breaking an Association, a strike strengthens Members’ resolve. As we know from experience and as AUNBT Members are finding out, together, an Association is greater than the sum of its parts. And for the Members of AUNBT, a visit from flying pickets was a shot in the arm—solid proof to them that they are not out there alone.

The strike at UNB looks as if it may drag on, as the Association and the Employer have only just begun to talk about talking again. What’s more, there have recently been strike votes at both Cape Breton University and Mount Allison. This means that it’s likely that we’ll need more flying pickets in the weeks and (hopefully not!) months ahead. So if you are interested in volunteering to wave the UPEIFA

flag showing our support for the hard-pressed Members at these institutions, contact Larry Hale, our CAUT Defence Fund Trustee at: lhale@upei.ca

It's important work—we appreciated the support of other Associations in 2006. But we must also remember that the fight of other Associations across the country and the agreements they are able to negotiate could well have an effect on us down the road.

If you could take any course at UPEI, what would it be—and why?

Jason Pearson (Chemistry):

It is an interesting question. I suppose from a purely practical standpoint there are several useful options that I might consider. As an academic, much of my time is spent doing things that I've never actually had any formal training in. It's an interesting paradox that seems to always come up in conversations with my non academic friends and family. I suspect most of my colleagues find themselves in similar situations. Many of my daily activities include the overseeing of research funds, the hiring of research personnel, research mentorship, teaching and service on various committees (sometimes in leadership roles) and I've been "baptized by fire" so to speak in just about all of these. So, I imagine that some training in our School of Business might be worthwhile. I'd make use of some accounting training and I imagine they have offerings in leadership as well as conflict resolution. I'd also benefit from some time in our Faculty of Education. In particular, it would probably be useful to focus some time on digital literacy issues in education and emerging trends in the classroom. In retrospect, it's a shame I don't spend more of my time conversing with my colleagues across campus.

Finally, from a purely personal perspective as the father of two young children under 4, the thought of enrolling in "English 245: Introduction to Children's Literature" has recently become particularly attractive.

Come to think of it, "PSYCH 308: Child Development" might just come in handy as well!

Ed MacDonald (History):

For starters, I would fix two holes in my undergraduate arts degree. I'd take Introduction to Anthropology and I would take an introductory philosophy course [so that I can make better sense of Monty Python's "Philosopher's Song"]. To be honest, though, I'm constantly hearing about a colleague's course and saying, "Wow, I'd like to take that." As a closet English major, I want to re-visit Children's Lit, which I enjoyed so much as an undergraduate but which is now taught with, I think, even more sophistication and creative challenge. And I'd love to take Creative Writing again to stretch my writerly imagination beyond "This paper argues that. . . ." [In fact, one of my colleagues IS taking Creative Writing.] But the list of desired English courses goes on for some time. And it is not just a compliment to my departmental colleagues to say that I'm intrigued by many history courses outside my own area of expertise. For example, who wouldn't want to take Modern Irish History? But then, he said wistfully, I never did get to do any dissections in high school. Maybe I should take biology, too. . . ."

Karen Samis (Biology):

I would actually take a history course - maybe a course that explores the evolution of religion. As an evolutionary biologist, I find the reasons why people are drawn to religion curious, and would like to hear more about how various religions have become a part of different societies, and for what reasons they succeeded where potentially others failed.

Shannon Murray (English):

A few years ago, I took an Introduction to Biblical Hebrew course at UPEI and loved it. It was a way to mark John Milton's 400th birthday, by getting a small part of one of his many languages, and though most

of the detail of the language has left my aging brain, I learned enough to understand things in Genesis that otherwise I could access only by translation. So I think another language course, probably Greek, would be a sensible choice. If I were to choose a less than sensible course, I've always dreamed of returning to university for a BSc when I retire, so I'd take Math in anticipation of the Physics courses I've always wanted to try.

Nia Phillips (Psychology):

I feel like languages are always useful, so my first instinct is to say that I'd re-take all the Spanish I took (and then forgot) when I was in University. However, since I find little opportunity for Español in my daily life, I can easily imagine another round of learning then forgetting. Instead, I'd start from scratch and take a complete series of French. A quick perusal of the website tells me there's six basic French language courses, so that should keep me busy for some time.

Catherine Innes-Parker (English):

I'd take a course on European history, particularly Medieval. Believe it or not, I never had a chance to take history courses, and I love history!!!! I'd like to consolidate the bits and pieces into a "bigger picture."

Jonathan Spears (Biomedical Sciences):

Not having the time to go through the University Calendar, I would be interested in taking English Writing, History of Medicine and possibly a philosophy course. No doubt, the intent of this exercise was to encourage faculty to look through the Calendar so I apologize for circumventing this point.

Greg Doran (Theatre Studies)

UPEI does not offer any courses that I would be interested in taking. The courses I am interested in taking would be in welding and iron work. Additionally, I would be interested in an auto mechanics course. I am looking for courses in the trades. Looking through our calendar, I see nothing that interests me as much

as learning a skilled trade that requires working with my hands as much as my head.

Larry Hale (Biology):

I would love to have the time to take ENG 321 (English-Canadian Prose). I really enjoy CanLit, and the thought of exploring how this wonderful genre has developed is very intriguing.

Udo Krautwurst (Sociology):

I would (re-)take Tracy Doucette's Neurobiology course. (Full disclosure, I've audited the course before). As someone who is interested in the social effects of neuroscience discourse, having some level of understanding of the biological processes involved is vital to separating hype from reasonable possibility.

Richard Lemm (English):

This is a splendid question to ask and a maddening one to answer. Tough enough to narrow down to a top ten, let alone one. As well, I'm torn between "big picture" courses and ones with a more specific focus. So I'll imagine I'm an undergraduate for two years.

First year: A History of the Canadian Working Classes; European Intellectual History Since 1789; War and Revolution in the Twentieth Century; Myths of Love, Sex, and Marriage; Myths of Hate and Evil; Shakespeare; Brain and Behaviour; Ecopsychology; Earth's Physical Environment; Introduction to Music History.

Big picture second year: Philosophies of War and Peace; Philosophy of Science; Technology, Values, and Science; Understanding Music as a Socio-Cultural Practice; Creativity (Psych); History of Economic Thought; The History of the Environmentalist Movement; Identity and Popular Culture; Sustainability and Sustainable Development; Gender in Transnational Perspective.

Malcolm Murray (Philosophy):

Physics 221 Modern Physics. Physics 252 Introductory Astronomy II, English 281 The English Language, English 303 Contemporary Drama, English 304 Contemporary Fiction, English 392 Creative Writing II, English 393 Creative Writing III, English 415 Twentieth-Century Literature [and] maybe Biology 223 Genetics I

Don Desserud (Political Science):

If I could take any course at UPEI, I would take a course on singing, perhaps Music 115 "Sight Singing and Dictation." I love to sing, or more to the point, I would love to be able to sing; however, as I have already proven through my recent participation in an AIRS Research project, it's much better if I confine my signing to the shower, or perhaps when I am alone in my car.

Sarah Glassford (History):

I would be interested in taking ENG 301 and 302 (New English Lit of Africa, the Caribbean, Australia, New Zealand, and the Indian Subcontinent) and/or ENG 281 (The English Language). The former two would significantly broaden my reading horizons and my understanding of other people and places; the latter intrigues me because I know very little about linguistics but appreciate the beauties and quirks of my first language more and more as the years go by.

Richard Raiswell (History):

I have a few cats at home who don't always see eye-to-eye with each other, so "Animal Behaviour and Animal Welfare" might be the most practical option. I'd also be very keen to try "Sustainability and Sustainable Development," both crucially important issues as we consume ourselves out of a planet. Finally, I would like to take "Hindu Religious Tradition." Long ago, I spent a couple of years in India; it would be interesting to get a comprehensive and systematic examination of that which I learned about piecemeal.

Sandra McConkey (Biomedical Sciences):

That is an easy question. I would love to take art history or the history of western civilization.

Brenton Dickieson (Education):

How do you choose out of all the great courses? I would learn Spanish or wallow in Shakespeare for a semester. I would study evolutionary biology or the philosophy of technology. I would learn everything I could

about astronomy or take a monsters class from you. How can you choose? Thanks everyone. This'll help boost enrolment!

Welcome to New Members:

David Baranowski, Chemistry

Darrell Fisher, Engineering

Ralph Manning, Kinesiology

Gina Ramsay, Business

Janet Rudd, Theatre Studies

Daniel Rowswell, Music

Sandra Weiland, Nursing

***Call for Nominations ...
Merit Awards for Scholarly
Achievement***

The UPEI Faculty Association invites the nomination of candidates for the University's 2012-2013 Merit Awards for Scholarly Achievement. These prestigious awards consist of a cash prize of \$500 and a plaque. There are three awards, one in each of the following categories:

- i. Arts, Business, and Education**
- ii. Science**
- iii. Atlantic Veterinary College, and Nursing**

Nominations may be made by any member of the university faculty, including the nominee. The deadline for receipt of complete files is March 24, and should be forwarded to the Faculty Association Office, Room #315, Main Building.

For information on the nomination procedure, follow the links at <http://www.upeifa.org>

The Importance of Student Opinion

By Nola Etkin

As we reflect on the results of our teaching evaluations from last semester, it seems an appropriate time to consider the role of this ubiquitous tool in assessing and improving our teaching. Certainly we all know that the numerical results of the SOTS provide a limited snapshot of student opinion—the value of which has been much debated. In my experience, it is the individual student comments which give context to these numerical results, and that have allowed me to respond to the changing needs of my students. Although these comments are at times frustrating and conflicting (like my students' love/hate relationship with my extensive use of colour in my lecture notes!), I have over the years gained much insight into my own teaching and my impact on student learning.

In recent discussions with students, however, I have heard questions about the value that we place on student opinion, and about how the SOTS is used. I don't think that the majority of our students understand that the primary use of the SOTS is formative—that their evaluations and comments are an opportunity to help us improve our teaching, rather than a venue to bring attention to problems in teaching performance. While poor numerical evaluations certainly raise red flags during Faculty review and in the tenure and promotion processes, the most effective and timely way to deal with issues is through direct discussion with the Faculty member or her/his Department Chair.

I do think that as course instructors we have a role in ensuring that students understand the importance and purpose of teaching evaluation, and in reassuring students that their responses do have an impact. Before I hand out the SOTS, I always try to explain to students that I take their comments seriously, and that the constructive comments and criticism are essential to help

ing me improve my teaching. I do think that this makes a difference in the quality of feedback that I receive from the students. And, I follow through when I introduce my course the next time, explaining to students why I do certain things in my course delivery and the response that I have received from previous classes.

Finally, the role of the Department Chair in this process cannot be understated. As Chair, my job is to support the development of my fellow Faculty members, and through the formative review process to provide a safe and effective venue for the discussion of teaching effectiveness.

Although Faculty are required only to provide statistical summaries of the SOTS, we should feel safe if we choose to discuss comments from students with our more experienced colleagues. I would not be nearly as effective a teacher today if I had not been able to walk into a trusted colleague's office to say "what do you do when a student says....?"



UPEIFA supports AUNBT



Professor Larry Hale supports AUNBT



On October 23rd, the FA commemorated Fair Employment Week with a display in the SU highlighting the plight of the “invisible academic” contract academic staff who labour without job security, benefits, and fair compensation.



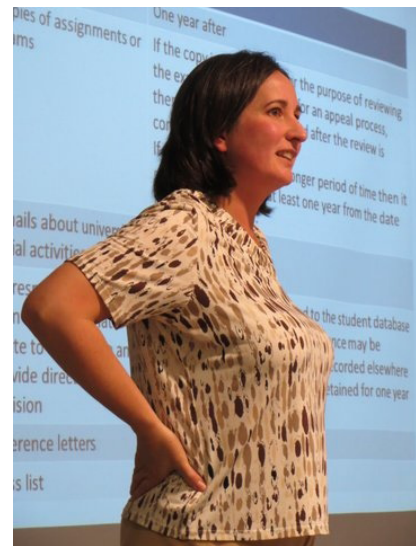
Professor Don Desserud with Kathleen Casey as part of the visit with the MLA initiative.



Professor Greg Doran with Minister Robert Henderson as part of the visit with the MLA initiative.



Professor Barry Linkletter meets with Robert Mitchell as part of the visit with the MLA initiative.



PEI's Privacy Commissioner Maria MacDonald gave a presentation to UPEIFA about the implications of extending provincial Access to Information laws to the University at the Fall General Meeting.

We want your input

Feedback, comments, articles, letters, images, etc. for future issues are always welcome! Contact the Newsletter Editor, Richard Raiswell, if you are interested in contributing a piece to the FABric, rraiswell@upepei.ca, 566-0504. The Newsletter Editor would like to thank all those who contributed to this edition of the FABric.

the FABric Editorial Policy

The FABric is the newsletter of the University of Prince Edward Island Faculty Association. The primary intent of the FABric is to keep all members of the UPEI Faculty Association up-to-date and informed. It is also the intent of the FABric to communicate UPEI Faculty Association activities and perspectives on issues to a wider community. The FABric is published three times per year: September, January, and April, and serves the following purposes:

- to provide a means for the exchange of ideas, views, and issues relevant to the Association and its members;*
- and to provide the Association's membership with information relevant to the operations of the Association;*
- and to provide documentary records of matters pertaining to the Association; and to serve all the functions of a newsletter.*

The UPEI Faculty Association

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Contributions (letters, articles, article summaries, and other pertinent information) are encouraged, but anonymous material will not be considered for publication. However, under special circumstances, *the FABric* may agree to withhold the author's name. The UPEI Faculty Association Executive retains the right to accept, edit, and/or reject contributed material. The opinions expressed in authored articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the UPEI Faculty Association.

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