

the FABric

UNIVERSITY OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND FACULTY ASSOCIATION

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Welcome to “the FABric” – a new name and look!

As you know, we held a competition last semester for a new name, and among the excellent suggestions we received, we ultimately chose this one – submitted by Dr. Godfrey Baldacchino, UPEI's CRC in Island Studies. And Glenda Clements-Smith over in Graphics put together the look for the name. Thanks to both of them for great imagination! For Godfrey – as for us – both the name “the FABric” and the weave you see in the letters “FA” connote the ideas of unity, density, and strength in being well woven – while the letters “FA” themselves stand for “Faculty Association.” It's a name the Communications Committee felt really captured the spirit and community of the Faculty Association – and one we're proud to now display on the new UPEIFA newsletter.

In this issue you'll find...

- *an article about our Maclean's rankings*
- *an interview with Dr. Thomy Nilsson*
- *some thoughts on the highlights of working at UPEI*

... and much more..!

State of the Union: the President's Report

by Wayne Peters

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the Association's new newsletter, “the FABric”. Thanks and congratulations to Godfrey Baldacchino for his creative winning effort in suggesting this name. So, why this name? I'm sure that Godfrey can add further to this but for me, the word “fabric” means the “essential structure or framework of a system or organization.” As I see it, then, beyond the obvious play on the first two letters, the name is doubly appropriate. First, UPEI's academic staff is certainly an essential structure which truly makes us a university. Second, the Faculty Association itself forms an essential framework which is critical to each of us in supporting and advancing the rights of academic staff, ensuring that the above first point continues to be true. The word “fabric” paints a picture of unity and strength in working together, a theme that is woven like a thread through each of us and all that we do to bring excellence, expertise, energy, commitment, and passion to this place. Well done, Godfrey.

At last count for this semester, the academic staff at UPEI totals approximately 375 people strong, including faculty, librarians, clinical nursing instructors, sessional instructors, and clinical veterinary professionals. As we know, the success enjoyed by UPEI is due, in large part, to our combined and significant efforts in teaching, scholarship, research, and service.

These activities are the primary pillars of a university, as stated in UPEI's mission statement, and are, according to our Collective Agreements, the primary and exclusive duties and responsibilities of UPEI's academic staff. We should be proud of this and should rest assured that we are the essential "fabric" of UPEI, building both its present and its legacy.

Of course, no essential framework can exist without the commitment, support, and effort of the people it represents. So, my sincere thanks go to all those individuals who continue to put so much time and effort into the activities of the Association. But there is always work to be done! And people needed to do it! The Association is currently looking for two people to sit on its Finance Committee, one person to sit on our Joint Committee for BU #1, and someone to chair our Awards and Scholarship Committee. Additionally, as we all know, this is an especially busy and important time for the Association and its Membership, as we negotiate our next Collective Agreement. A number of people are needed both now and in the future to support this effort.

I want to remind us all that we should not think of work in the Association as extra "volunteer" work, on top of all our other duties and responsibilities. Participation in Faculty Association activities is contribution to university governance and service, as much as is sitting on a hiring committee or a departmental review committee. Our Collective Agreement, Article A11.7, says that "*All Members shall have the right to participate actively in the Association. Such participation shall be recognized as constituting a legitimate form of committee service.*" So when you are committing one of your most precious and valuable resources – your time – please consider actively working for your Association.

Faculty Time!

*Join us for the official launch of "the FAbriC" ... Friday, March 3,
4:00-6:00 p.m.,
in the lower level of the Wanda
Wyatt Dining Hall.
See you all there!*

What is the highlight of working at UPEI for you?

We recently asked the Membership what the highlight of working at UPEI was for them... scattered throughout the newsletter are some of the many wonderful responses we received....

The opportunity to watch my students grow and develop as they move through my courses from year one to year four. Seeing that "a ha" moment happen is worth all the time and effort I put into teaching.
Stacey Nairn

*so many highlights... #1 student epiphanies ! really !
ok # 2 potential to effect change - we CAN make a difference !*
Rob Haines

The people: students, colleagues, staff.
Colleen MacQuarrie

The camaraderie and support of my colleagues.
Malcolm Murray

One Prof's Frustrations...

(The following is an email from a Member which was sent to Dr. Doug Dahn, the Association's Chief Negotiating Officer, following the BU # 1 Membership meeting held on January 18, 2006. They have agreed to have it reprinted here.)

Hi Doug,

I was hoping to get a chance to say thank you at the meeting yesterday, but an email is probably better anyway, as an affirmation of support for everything you, the bargaining committee and the executive are doing on our behalf. I was amazed, and encouraged, by the high level of support for standing firm (especially on parity issues like workload and salaries) that was evident at last night's meeting. Those are certainly the two main issues for me, and ones I would go to the wall for.

I think that the admin. is underestimating the degree of "p***ed-offness" (if you'll pardon the expression) among faculty these days. It is rooted partly in all the little things we are sacrificing or putting up with in order to ensure that what funding we have goes into keeping our academic vision alive. We buy our own office furniture with our PDA, instead of using it for books etc. I am working on a computer that cannot take the software I need to communicate with my colleagues in Britain (or sometimes even my students) and I often can't open their attachments -- and whenever I try to print from email or the web, it shuts down. I do all my WebCT work at home, because the computer I paid for myself is the only one I can use that can do the work. This is not good -- but if it means that we can keep our teaching and research funded (and acknowledged) well, maybe that's one of the costs of working at a small university.

But now, after all these "small" sacrifices (which add up to big ones, and to much frustration), we are being asked to do more work (larger classes, more research) for even less pay (in terms of cost of living etc.) -- and these are *big* sacrifices. We

have worked our hearts out for this place, in less than ideal conditions, because we believe in it -- in the value of our teaching, our research, our students. But we are wearing out -- and the cost of this over-work is showing up in our health (physical and mental) and in our unwillingness to continue working 70+ hours a week and be paid at the bottom level of our region (not to say our country).

I think much of the frustration stems from the attitude that the admin's "offer" reflects. Our teaching is not valued (we can teach 3/3 and still be excellent, and still get research done, because, after all, it's only undergrad courses). Our research is not valued (we are primarily a teaching institution, and don't need any more time for research or resources). Yet, at the same time, the admin. brags about our achievements to the public, those very achievements they undervalue when dealing with us -- for example, the success of the labour intensive English 101 program, our #1 ranking in research grants in our category in Maclean's (and, if you look at the numbers, in teaching we outrank most of the "big" universities, like UofT, McMaster, Western, and so on). We are told we are primarily an undergrad teaching institution, yet we are pressured to do more and more research -- and we do it, because we love it, and because most of us can't conceive of separating teaching and research. We are asked to broaden our international profile -- yet when it comes down to it, "international" seems to mean developing countries (India and China rank high), but not, heaven forbid, the US or Britain -- because it won't bring in a flood of international students.

I know you know all this (and I apologize for wittering on) -- my point is that I think we have all hit a wall here, and we aren't willing to go on this way. We want to be respected for our skills and expertise, for our successes in teaching and research, and for the hard work and commitment we have given to this institution (not to mention the hard work and commitment it took to get here in the first place). We want that work to be valued. And we don't want to go into debt every

month to pay for the oil bills that are increasing at an astronomical rate compared to our salary!

Keep going -- we are all behind you. I think we are all willing to do whatever it takes to get a fair settlement (how can 4% be seen as unbelievably huge!). We know we won't get everything we ask for -- that is what collective bargaining is all about. But we want negotiation -- we want "give and take," where both sides do some giving on some things to get a bit more taking on others. We all hope that it won't come to a strike -- but I think most of us are willing to take it that far if that is what it takes. So keep doing what you are doing -- we feel well-represented (at least the people I've been talking to!) and we are grateful for all the extra work you are putting in on our behalf.

Thank you,

A frustrated Prof.

Getting unsolicited messages of thanks for a job well done from both students and the powers-on-high. Makes for superlative job satisfaction.
Godfrey Baldacchino

Interdisciplinary connections and stimulation and collegiality. I feel that I have developed considerably (in ways that I may not had I remained at a larger university) as a scholar and teacher since working at UPEI.
Fiona Papps

The fact that you get to know people outside your department and that students have a chance to get to know you too. In short a 'true' community of individuals.
Christian Lacroix

parity: 1.a. the state or condition of being equal, or on a level; equality. 2. Equality of rank or status, social, political, or ecclesiastical

Interview with Dr. Thomy Nilsson, Department of Psychology

Dr. Thomy Nilsson is being retired from UPEI this year as a result of the University's mandatory retirement policy.

He is fighting this move and has filed a complaint with the Human Rights Commission of PEI. In addition, the UPEIFA has taken a stand against the policy of mandatory retirement, which is also currently part of our contract negotiations. (Our statement is available at www.upeifa.org). We recently sat down with Dr. Nilsson to ask him a few questions about his retirement and this university policy.

Why is fighting mandatory retirement important?

First, let's not hide the truth. "Mandatory retirement" is an euphemism for "firing people because of their age." It is used to force persons out of their jobs on bases that have nothing to do with their ability. Just like racism and sexism, this ageist anachronism takes away a person's civil rights on the basis of prejudice. The United Nations', Canada's, and PEI's Human Rights Commissions prohibit such discrimination. That some business and institutional administrators still scoff at the law hinders society from fulfilling its potential.

Why is it important to fight UPEI's administrators on this issue?

I believe universities have a special role in leading our society when it comes to "what so ever things are true, what so ever things are right." Most universities in Canada have now

recognized the implications of their social responsibility and have eliminated mandatory retirement.

What are your personal goals in fighting mandatory retirement?

It destroys my life goals. From a decade in research, I know how teaching enhances creativity. In turn, my teaching is kept vital by my research, which needs laboratories. I am warned that my labs may be torn down when I am forced to retire. With 1/3 of my career in low paying research jobs, my pension will be modest compared to those who went directly into teaching. Women who take time out to raise a family find themselves at a similar disadvantage when turning 65.

How do you think your personal fight influences your colleagues at UPEI?

It gives them hope. I have received many words of encouragement and support from both faculty and staff, and also the Island community.

How do you feel about retired colleagues continuing to teach as sessional lecturers?

Either UPEI's administrators don't really believe their own claim that professors over 65 are no longer effective, or their claim about the relationship between age and quality of education is not accurate.

Well, there is ample evidence for the latter. The causes behind Dr. Weale's recent offer to his students reveal the Administration's lack of concern for undergraduate education: overcrowded classes, lack of classrooms, the rush to replace our most experienced teachers with younger professors. It can't all be due to financial exigencies because new administrative positions, athletic facilities, and specialized research buildings burgeon. Since I arrived in '83, the number of students taught in my department has more than doubled, yet faculty and staff numbers remain the same. Meanwhile, the Administration has significantly increased its own numbers!

On the positive side, though, the willingness of our retired professors to continue teaching shows that our senior professors love

their work and that UPEI needs them!

Welcome to more academic staff...

Bernice Bell, Sociology/Anthropology
 Emily Bryant, School of Nursing
 Corinne Chappell, Faculty of Education
 Roberta Clark, Faculty of Education
 Brenton Dana Dickieson, Religious Studies
 E.W. Dickieson, School of Business
 Robert J. Gray, Faculty of Education
 Judy Hughes, Faculty of Education
 Robin Laird, School of Nursing
 Aaron Landry, Philosophy Department
 Roberta Larsen, Family and Nutritional Sciences
 Al Ledgerwood, Faculty of Education
 Nancy MacIntosh, Faculty of Education
 Earline MacKinnon-Gray, Family and Nutritional Sciences
 Ronald MacNeill, School of Business
 Robert MacRae, Faculty of Education
 Lori Mayne, English Department
 Brian Murray, Computer Sci/Information Tech.
 Leisa Nogler, Faculty of Education
 Dawna Noonan, School of Business
 Alan Paquet, Sociology/Anthropology
 Geoffrey Read, Philosophy Department
 Patrick Reilly, Sociology/Anthropology
 Abder Sahouli, Psychology Department
 William Whelan, Physics Department
 Rosemary White, School of Nursing
 Lillian Yu, Engineering Department

The breadth of people you get to talk to and work with everyday. I have good friends in every faculty. I know (well) several students from every stage (1st to 4th year, and graduate). This doesn't easily happen at larger institutions.

Larry Hale

When students decide to pursue a field of study and a profession/calling/dream that they love and believe in, rather than a field and occupation they feel compelled toward primarily for the security.
Richard Lemm

The Maclean's Committee Puts Our Best Foot Forward

by Barry Linkletter

Five years ago, UPEI ranked 15th among the primarily undergraduate pool of universities that were surveyed as part of Maclean's magazine annual ranking of universities and colleges. Many people grumbled about how the survey did not measure the "true" value of an institution and that UPEI should just pull out of the exercise entirely. The leadership at UPEI took a different tack. Rather than put the blame wholly on the arguably flawed survey, the University decided to make sure that the strengths of UPEI were accurately communicated in the survey.

The Maclean's Committee was established to collect the information requested by the survey and to dig for the under reported strengths of this institution. For example, the committee learned that we had never reported any of the national awards that our talented faculty members were winning. This was because there was no direct flow of information between the various groups of the university and the previous reporting system for the survey. As we are all aware, UPEI faculty have been very successful at winning a number of awards, which are an element of the Maclean's ranking system.

The committee went about gathering many other facts and figures that had otherwise stayed within the walls of the University. Previously established definitions were examined in light of the survey and adjustments were made to how we reported class sizes and full time students. For example, foreign students are frequently strongly encouraged to avoid a full course load in their first

year while adjusting to life in Canada. As a result, many foreign students were not full time students in the traditional definition, even though they were as full time as they could possibly be. The committee, in consultation with the people at Maclean's, redefined the definition of a full time foreign student for the purposes of reporting to the survey. This enabled the population of foreign students at UPEI to be included in the reporting of full time students.

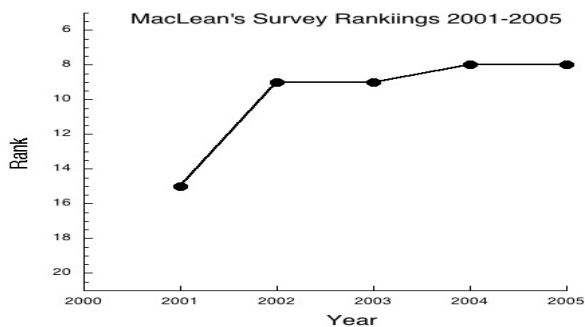
UPEI is not the only institution to have established this type of committee. Many other universities began this process before us, which is one reason why the earlier surveys showed lower rankings for UPEI. Other institutions were reporting their strengths well and we were not. As a result of the efforts of the Maclean's committee, though, and as a result of the overall renewal and reinvention of UPEI that has been taking place over the past five years, UPEI's rankings have risen sharply. As the chart below indicates, the more accurate reporting of our situation resulted in an immediate and dramatic change in our ranking.

Of course, the increase in our rankings is not only because of improved reporting procedures. In large part, this rise in our rankings is also due to the continued—and ever increasing—success of our Members in acquiring research funding and contributing in numerous ways to their academic disciplines!

Thanks to the establishment of the Maclean's Committee, our ranking now is probably more accurate than it has been until recently. However, one serious problem remains...reputation. An unfortunately large segment of the ranking calculation is based on a reputation survey among business leaders and university administrators across Canada (read "Bay Street"). This survey has traditionally been unkind to small institutions like UPEI. Reputation is a self-fulfilling prophecy and it is difficult to change. Most of the survey participants are unfamiliar with these recent

changes at UPEI. The result is that this part of the rankings reflects the distant past rather than the "now" at UPEI. And one could argue that while some universities benefit from a historical strength that no longer exists, others do not get credit for these important changes.

So what is the solution? One solution lies with the Members of the Faculty Association. Our unceasing efforts in research and teaching have maintained UPEI's rise in the Maclean's rankings. We must do our best to get the message of our achievements to more people than the editors at



Maclean's. As the success of our faculty members grows, and as the message about this fact continues to spread, our reputation will improve. So let the world know how good you are and what a great university you work at. Make sure that your department is aware of all funding and academic awards that you have received. Support the UPEIFA Negotiating Team in its efforts to ensure that we have both a working environment and a compensation package that can continue to attract and retain the best faculty members to UPEI.

If teaching is to continue its traditionally high quality at UPEI, even as research becomes more important to both the administration and faculty, we must push for lower teaching loads so that the two activities are not in such conflict with each other. Teaching and research cannot be separated from each other, and quality teaching produces quality students who are the true flag bearers of our university's reputation. As a faculty

association, we are very pleased to be a major drive behind UPEI's success, and our current negotiations are striving for the type of working environment that will allow all of our Members to be as successful as they can be in their fields. The request for parity, which is a central mandate of the current UPEIFA Negotiating Team, is a first step towards ensuring that UPEI's national reputation reaches and remains as high a ranking as possible.

For me, the highlight of working at UPEI comes each fall when I watch the changes in our first-year students. From September to January, everything changes in each of them. They sit differently, they walk differently, they speak differently, they even listen differently as they evolve from teenagers to young colleagues. I love having a role in their awakening.

Andrew Trivett

... and don't forget... the deadlines for nominations for both the Hessian Merit Award for Excellence in Teaching and the Merit Award for Scholarly Achievement are coming up fast. See the FA website for complete details on nominating procedures.

Articles, feedback, comments, letters, etc. for future issues are always welcome! Contact the Newsletter Editor if you are interested in submitting something.

the UPEIFA

President:

Wayne Peters
Engineering
566-0495
wpeters@upei.ca

Vice-President:

David Seeler
Companion Animals
566-0886
seeler@upei.ca

Past-President:

Currently vacant. An additional Member-at-Large has been added as per the Constitution/By-laws.

Secretary/Treasurer:

Debra Good
Business
566-0348
dgood@upei.ca

Members-at-Large:

David Buck
Classics
566-0403
dbuck@upei.ca

David Groman
Diagnostic Services
566-0830
groman@upei.ca

Betty Jeffery
Robertson Library
566-0741
bjeffery@upei.ca

Gordon MacDonald
Mathematics and Statistics
628-4329
gmacdonald@upei.ca

Art Ortenburger
Health Management
566-0820
ortenburger@upei.ca

Office Manager:

Susan Gallant
Main 214
566-0438
sgallant@upei.ca

Newsletter Editor:

Ann Braithwaite
Women's Studies
628-4312
abraithwaite@upei.ca

UPEIFA Email:

facultyassociation@upei.ca

UPEIFA Website:

www.upeifa.org

UPEI Faculty Association

Room 214, Main Building
University of Prince Edward Island
550 University Ave.
Charlottetown, PE C1A 4P3
Tel: 1-902-566-0438; Fax: 1-902-566-6043
Email: facultyassociation@upei.ca
Website: www.upeifa.org

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