

(For immediate release)

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UPEI Faculty Association Secures National Backing to Challenge PEI Government's Interference in Collective Bargaining

The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) Defence Fund (<https://defencefund.caut.ca/>) has voted unanimously to provide the UPEI Faculty Association with funding to support a legal challenge to the PEI Government's unprecedented interference in collective bargaining.

UPEI and the Faculty Association (FA) have been in negotiations for a new contract since April. In August, having made no meaningful progress, the FA filed for conciliation.

The PEI Labour Act envisions conciliation as a short and focussed Government intervention in collective bargaining, by appointing a neutral third-party to efficiently and effectively clarify prospects for moving past an impasse in negotiations. Instead, Minister Bloyce Thompson (Economic Growth, Tourism, and Culture) has repeatedly used his discretion to extend this intervention well past the legislated ten (10) day timeline. According to Dr. Michael Arfken (UPEIFA President), "as the conciliation process enters its fourth month of government intervention with no end in sight, it has become increasingly clear that the provincial government's actions are substantially interfering in contract bargaining and creating the conditions for an extended labour dispute at UPEI".

With CAUT Defence Fund support and in solidarity with unions at UPEI, in the region, and across Canada, the UPEI Faculty Association is prepared to defend the constitutional right to a meaningful process of collective bargaining for its members and for all Island workers.

Because UPEI Faculty working conditions are Island students' learning conditions, it is imperative that UPEI academic staff are well positioned to negotiate fair and reasonable employment terms and conditions. The UPEI Faculty Association is prepared to use any and every legal avenue to preserve the educational quality of our institution and to build a better UPEI.

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