

UPEIFA
UNIVERSITY OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
FACULTY ASSOCIATION

January 19, 2023

Dr. Greg Keefe
Interim President
University of Prince Edward Island

RE: EDII Collective Bargaining Update

Dear Interim President Keefe,

On January 17, UPEI faculty and staff received a message from UPEI Administration once again purporting to explain the difference between bargaining proposals submitted by the UPEI Faculty Association and UPEI Board of Governors. While we have refrained from publicly responding to these misleading communications, we feel compelled to make an exception in this instance.

In this communication, UPEI Administration chose to focus on *Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Indigenization (EDII) at UPEI* – a subject that you’ve indicated is of particular importance to you personally and to both parties in this round of collective bargaining.

To be clear, the key difference between our EDII proposals and yours revolves around our competing view of the role of *accountability* in various processes that aim to make our workplace fairer and more equitable for members of historically disadvantaged groups. Whereas the FA’s proposals offer detailed and specific requirements, and outline measurable outcomes with enforceable processes, your proposals consist of vague “aspirational” language about taking EDII “into account”, with no direction or accountability for how this is operationalized, and consequently no enforceability. In sum, your EDII proposals allow you to claim you are meeting targets, without ever identifying the targets or how you are meeting them.

Of course, our focus on holding UPEI Administration accountable to its public EDII commitments is born from experience. On May 4 of last year, over fifty (50) members of the campus community reached out to you to raise concerns about UPEI Administration’s failure to properly implement the *UPEI Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy*. To address this, they requested among other things that you call a special meeting of UPEI Senate to review the EDI Strategy and outline what steps UPEI Administration has taken to implement the Strategy.

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In response to this letter, rather than immediately call a special meeting of UPEI Senate to address these concerns, you committed to scheduling an update on progress made in implementing the *UPEI EDI Strategy* for a meeting of UPEI Senate in the “early fall period.”

It is my understanding that no such Senate update ever occurred.

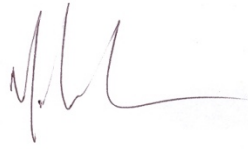
As we approach the two-year anniversary of the UPEI Board of Governors and UPEI Senate adopting the *UPEI EDI Strategy*, it is also our understanding that:

- no formal review of the implementation of the *UPEI EDI Strategy* has been shared with the Board, Senate, or campus community
- the Joint Equity Committee has not been consulted on the implementation of the Strategy since it was adopted.
- the UPEI EDI Officer remains a part-time position
- UPEI has not collected demographic information despite it being a key component of the Strategy
- no annual report on the implementation of the *UPEI EDI Strategy* has been shared with the campus community

With all due respect, if UPEI Administration wishes to use the *UPEI EDI Strategy* as a basis for collective bargaining positions, it should ensure that it is following that Strategy and that it is not celebrating its own commitment to EDII at the same time as it is failing to meet its commitments to members of the campus community who continue to face injustices on a daily basis.

This round of bargaining is about many things. But in a context where a large portion of UPEI Senior Management continue to occupy their positions without going through any formal hiring or review process and members of the campus community remain in the dark about the status of an independent review of the culture of secrecy that continues to permeate our campus, concrete measures to introduce accountability and transparency remain paramount.

Sincerely,



Michael Arfken, PhD
President
UPEI Faculty Association

cc: Mr. Pat Sinnott, Chair, UPEI Board of Governors