



University of Prince Edward Island Student Union

W. A. Murphy Student Centre

550 University Avenue

Charlottetown, PE C1A 4P3

External Policy Book

Accessibility . Accountability . Affordability



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Accessibility



Policy Statement ID: A01

Category: Accessibility

Status: Active

Ratification: September 8, 2013

Review Date: September 8, 2016

Creating a Needs-Based Provincial Student Grant Program

Most provincial governments offer non-repayable subsidies, grants, or bursaries to recipients of their student loan programs or attendees of their public institutions. At the University of Prince Edward Island, this typically takes the form of the George Coles Bursary, the Island Student Awards, and the George Coles Graduate Scholarship.

The George Coles Bursary, available to every first-time, first-entry Island student, is valued at \$2,200 for the student's first year of study¹. For the same cohort in the next two years, the Island Student Awards are awarded. The ISAs are valued at \$400 in the second year of study and \$600 in the third year of study². If the student graduates in their fourth year, they will receive the \$2000 George Coles Graduate Scholarship. If the student does not graduate in their fourth year, they will instead receive the previously awarded \$600 in their fourth year, and the additional \$1400 in their graduating year³.

These bursaries and awards are distributed only on the condition that the recipient is an Island resident, and do not discriminate based on economic status or background. Similar programs exist in other provinces, such as Nova Scotia and Ontario.

The Nova Scotia model provides bursary money to not only Nova Scotian students, but those from other provinces in Canada as well. In Nova Scotia, the government provides a bursary to reduce tuition for Nova Scotian students in the amount of \$256.60 per course. For domestic, out-of-province students, the amount is \$52.50 per course⁴.

¹ "Student Financial Services: George Coles Bursary" Accessed:

<http://studentloan.pe.ca/index.php3?number=1039551&lang=E>

² "Island Student Award 2012-2013" (p. 2) Accessed: <http://www.gov.pe.ca/forms/pdf/2069.pdf>

³ "Student Financial Services: George Coles Graduate Scholarship 2013-2014" Accessed:

<http://studentloan.pe.ca/index.php3?number=1041556&lang=E>

⁴ "Nova Scotia University Student Bursary Program" Accessed:

<http://www.msvu.ca/en/home/beamountstudent/money/tuitionandotherfees/tuitionotherfees/novascotiauniversitystudentbursaryprogram.aspx>



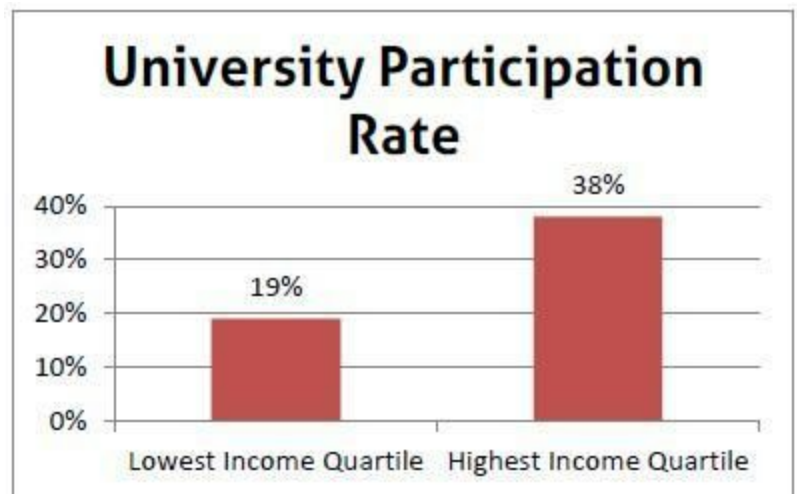
The Ontario model involves a grant which pays 30% of a student's tuition during their years of study at post-secondary institutions in the province, provided they are residents of Ontario. The grant is available regardless of eligibility for student loans, in a similar fashion to PEI's George Coles Bursary and accompanying awards. However, students with parents who, combined, make over \$160,000 per year are ineligible⁵. While this income cap is quite high, it demonstrates that the Ontario government recognizes that not all students require assistance.

It is the opinion of the UPEI Student Union that the funding allocated towards the George Coles Bursary could be better spent by targeting the funding to those with a demonstrated need. Creating, or transforming the George Coles Bursary into, a needs-based grant would better ensure that those having trouble accessing post-secondary education have sufficient funds to pursue it.

Research has shown the link between the likelihood of attending university and ones' family income. Those who come from a lower socioeconomic background are significantly less likely to attend university, compared to those who come from a background with more income. In fact, only 19% of those who come from the lowest income quartile will attend university, compared to 38% of those in the highest income quartile⁶: those from the highest income quartile were twice as likely to attend.

Figure 1: University Participation Rates by Family Income⁷

Provincial needs-based grants are not a new thing in Canada. In fact, the New Brunswick student aid system provides up to \$3,000 for students from low-income families who have



⁵ "30% Off Ontario Tuition." Accessed: <http://www.ontario.ca/education-and-training/30-off-ontario-tuition>

⁶ Participation in Post-Secondary Education: Evidence from the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (StatsCan 2005) (p. 15)

⁷ Ibid.



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unmet need⁸. In Ontario, the Ontario Access

Grant provides between 25% to 50% of a student's tuition, up to \$3,000, to students from low- and middle-income families for the first two years of study⁹. In Alberta, the government recently introduced a new grant for those from low-income backgrounds in one-year certificate programs which provides \$120 per month of study for those eligible¹⁰.

A targeted spending and support program is better at supporting those who need it, and although the George Coles Bursary and accompanying programs are good for students, the money can be better allocated. A needs-based provincial grant would be money better spent. Supporting the students who need it most could boost attendance levels among those who are traditionally underrepresented in the university environment due to difficulty in accessing education.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the Government of Prince Edward Island either create a new program, or modify existing programs, to provide needs-based financial grants to Island students.

⁸ New Brunswick Student Aid Guide 2012-2013. Avail:

<http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/petl-epft/PDF/SFS/guide-12-13-e.pdf>

⁹ Ontario Student Assistance Program webpage. Avail:

<https://osap.gov.on.ca/OSAPPortal/en/A-ZListofAid/PRDR007084.html>

¹⁰ Student Aid Alberta webpage. Avail: <http://studentaid.alberta.ca/before-you-apply/types-of-funding/>



Policy Statement ID: A02

Category: Accessibility

Status: Active

Ratification: September 8, 2013

Review Date: September 8, 2016

Expansion of the Eligibility Requirements for the Graduate Mentorship Program

The *Graduate Mentorship Program* is a program introduced in April 2012 by the government of Prince Edward Island¹¹ that is “designed to encourage employers to hire post-secondary graduates and provide a valuable work experience and mentorship opportunity in their field of study.”¹²

“Research indicates that graduates are finding it difficult to secure a career in their field of study, and private sector employers are challenged to match qualified candidates with job vacancies,” said Minister Allen Roach (Innovation & Advanced Learning) at the program’s launch in 2012¹³.

“The new Graduate Mentorship program, which targets individuals with a post-secondary degree or diploma, will provide graduates with a work experience in the private sector related to their education and career aspirations in Prince Edward Island.”¹⁴

At the launch, Minister Roach also indicated that the program may prevent the ‘brain-drain’ of educated young Islanders from the province. Currently, the program is only open to Island residents – those that reside on PEI before the beginning of their education.

It is the opinion of the UPEISU that the Graduate Mentorship Program is a very effective retention tool, but that the program should be expanded to include all graduates of post-secondary institutions on PEI. In this way, those youth who have chosen to come to PEI for their education are incentivized to remain on the Island. Those who choose

¹¹ Government of PEI News Release (12 April 2012): “Graduate Mentorship program to provide work experience for recent graduates”

¹² Graduate Mentorship Program Information Sheet. Skills PEI 2013.

¹³ Government of PEI News Release (12 April 2012): “Graduate Mentorship program to provide work experience for recent graduates”

¹⁴ Ibid.



to come to PEI and make a temporary home here deserve support to stay, should they so

choose. One of the most effective ways to encourage retention is to provide employment support.

Youth unemployment on PEI during the fourth quarter of 2012 was 18.5% - compared to an all-ages average on PEI of 11.4%¹⁵. Nationally, the youth unemployment rate was double that of the all-ages average in March 2013¹⁶. With youth unemployment at these high levels, government must assist youth in obtaining meaningful experience and employment

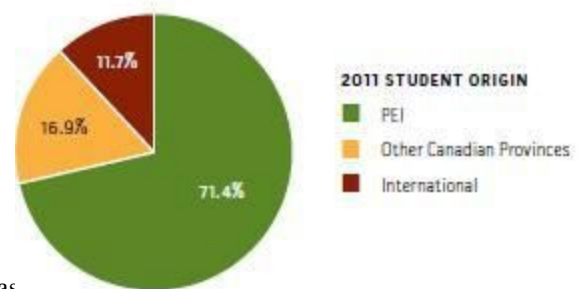
According to a report authored by Martin Schwerdtfeger, a senior economist with TD Economics:

“Being unemployed at a young age can have a long-lasting impact on an individual’s career prospects. Economic research indicates that a period of unemployment at the time of entry into the labour market is associated with persistently lower wages many years thereafter.”¹⁷

This phenomenon, known as ‘wage scarring’ is well documented. The same TD Economics report concluded that the bout of youth unemployment created during the recent recession will cost Canadian youth \$23.1 billion over the next eighteen years - \$12.4 billion of which will be due to lost wages in the future (wage scarring)¹⁸. With these numbers in mind, one can see that bouts of youth unemployment are undeniably damaging to the economy – and will continue to be for years to come.

In the analysis of this issue, it is also important to note the changing demographics of UPEI. According to UPEI President Abd-el-Aziz, PEI

high school graduate numbers are expected to drop by 22% over the next 14 years¹⁹. UPEI can expect, in the future, to see fewer Island



¹⁵ Labour Market Bulletin: Prince Edward Island (Q4 2012) Release

¹⁶ StatsCan: Labour Force Survey – March 2013

¹⁷ TD Economics: “Assessing the long-term cost of youth unemployment” (p. 1)

¹⁸ Ibid. (p. 4)

¹⁹ Abd-el-Aziz: Board of Governors Public Budget Presentation. 9 May 2013.



students, and increasingly more students from off-island.

As of 2011, almost 30% of students come from out-of-province²⁰.

A trend recently observed and confirmed by an MPHEC report shows that international student enrollment is skyrocketing: international student enrollment increased by 259.4% from 2001-2002 to 2011-2012. PEI leads the Maritimes in this regard. 35% of our international students come from China, and 22% are from the USA²¹.

ENROLMENT OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS		Enrolment 2011-2012	Change over		
			1 year	5 years	10 years
New Brunswick	Total	2,325	13.0%	20.6%	56.0%
	Undergraduate	1,786	14.6%	15.2%	43.8%
	Graduate	539	8.2%	43.0%	117.3%
Nova Scotia	Total	5,863	15.7%	49.9%	150.0%
	Undergraduate	4,825	16.9%	51.2%	166.9%
	Graduate	1,038	10.7%	44.2%	93.3%
Prince Edward Island	Total	496	9.7%	94.5%	259.4%
	Undergraduate	458	9.8%	102.7%	281.7%
	Graduate	38	8.6%	31.0%	111.1%
Maritimes	Total	8,684	14.6%	42.5%	118.6%
	Undergraduate	7,069	15.8%	42.3%	123.0%
	Graduate	1,615	9.8%	43.4%	101.1%

Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 2: International Student Enrollment in the Maritimes (MPHEC)

The *Prince Edward Island Settlement Strategy*, authored in November 2010 by the Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning, highlights the government's desire for the recruitment and retention of skilled immigrants.

According to the *Strategy*, a survey of Holland College's international student population indicated that 62% of those surveyed would stay on PEI if they could find meaningful employment, and it is not unreasonable to believe that a similar or even-higher percentage of UPEI international students would feel the same²². A recent survey

conducted by Corporate Research Associates, and commissioned by the Association of Atlantic Universities, further emphasizes that international students are ready and willing to help with our growing skills gap:

²⁰ UPEI: By the Numbers. Information sheet. Avail: upei.ca/bythenumbers

²¹ MPHEC Annual Digest 2011-2012

²² Prince Edward Island Settlement Strategy. November 2010. (p. 51)

“33% of respondents ranked a “desire to live in Canada after graduation” as the single most important reason for their decision to attend a Canadian university.”²³

“76% of respondents were interested in applying for permanent residency through the federal government’s Canadian Experience Class (CEC) immigration stream.”²⁴

An application for permanent residency through the CEC requires at least one year of full-time, skilled work²⁵. The Graduate Mentorship Program, if expanded, could provide international graduates with the experience needed to obtain permanent residency through the CEC. The opportunity to become a permanent resident will be an attractive incentive for international graduates to stay and work on PEI, and it’s one that will enable PEI to combat the coming skills shortage.

As UPEI’s international student population has and continues to balloon, government should take advantage of the opportunity to retain skilled young immigrants by implementing effective retention strategies.

As noted previously, the PEI public school system is slated to see a drop in Island graduates over the next 14 years. In response, UPEI is increasing recruitment efforts domestically out-of-province, and is identifying new markets to

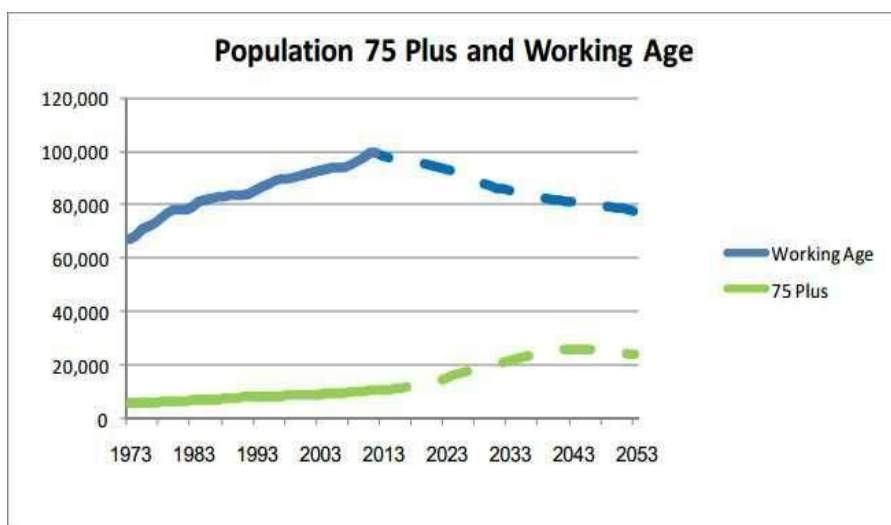


Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 3: Population Projections by Age for PEI

²³ AAU Report: “Immigration and Universities in Atlantic Canada: A Marriage Made in Heaven”

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Determine your eligibility – Canadian Experience Class. Avail:

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/cec/apply-who.asp>



target (ex. In Ontario), in a greater effort to make up for the projected enrollment shortfall in the coming years. As recruitment efforts change, UPEI's student population will diversify even further to include a larger proportion of domestic, out-of-province students.

But it is not only the Island school system which is slated to see a drop in population over the next years – the entire Island is. In fact, according to the Government of Prince Edward Island's population projections, the Island's natural increase rate (births minus deaths) will become negative by 2016. Further, the number of working-age people is slated to decrease while those age seventy-five and over are slated to increase²⁶.

As the Island moves into a state of stagnant and even negative growth, immigration and inter-provincial migration will play an increasingly large role in ensuring that the Island economy is diverse, sustainable, and productive.

The Island will clearly benefit further from these students who, if encouraged through retention efforts, may stay here beyond graduation from their program of study. It is increasingly important, as shown, to ensure a diversified and robust economy on Prince Edward Island. Going forward, it will be vital for government to support those youth who wish to stay here post-graduation, to ensure that they are able to effectively contribute to the Island economy.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the government of Prince Edward Island expand the eligibility requirements of the Graduate Mentorship Program to include those who are not official residents of Prince Edward Island, but who have graduated from Island post-secondary institutions, so as to encourage retention and provide valuable work experience for graduates.

²⁶ Prince Edward Island Population Projections 2013-2053. April 11, 2013.



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Policy Statement ID: A03

Category: Accessibility

Status: Active

Ratification: January 26, 2014

Review Date: January 26, 2017

Ensuring the Availability of Gender-Neutral Washroom Facilities At UPEI

As an institution of higher learning, it is vital that all students at the University of Prince Edward Island feel safe and accepted at all times. One of the many areas where this may not fully be the case is in our washrooms. Students, staff, or faculty who may not identify with their assigned sex at birth, or those who choose not to identify with any gender, are faced with a tough decision each time they must use a restroom at UPEI: which restroom do they use? It is the opinion of the UPEI Student Union that this issue must be addressed quickly: it is imperative that UPEI ensure the availability of gender-neutral washroom facilities in each building, and introduce appropriate signage for such washrooms.

The availability of single-stall restrooms which are open to all members of the campus community, regardless of gender, allows for greater individual privacy, and can also be equipped to be more accessible for those with special needs. And according to the UC Davis LGBTQIA Resource Center, the value to those who are transgender or may not identify is especially great: “[A gender-neutral washroom] eliminates the conflict between decisions based on sex and decisions based on gender, and protects them from many dangers or even simply being discovered (also called being “outed”).”²⁷

A proposal was submitted by Professor Ann Braithwaite (Department of Women’s Studies) and Treena Smith (Manager, UPEI Student Affairs) to the UPEI Space Management Committee during the Summer of 2013, requesting a minimum of one restroom per building be designated “multi-gender”. According to the proposal: “For a number of people ... accessing public washrooms becomes an anxiety-provoking and

²⁷ “Gender Neutral Restrooms – UV Davis LGBTQ Resource Center” Avail:
<http://lgbcenter.ucdavis.edu/resources/gnr>



potentially dangerous activity.”²⁸ It is incumbent upon the University to provide a comfortable study environment for students. Ensuring that students do not feel judged for using a washroom designated for one gender or the other is a vital part of creating that comfortable environment for some students.

The University of Regina was one such University in 2013 to recognize the vital role that they play in this regard, and designated ten restrooms as gender-neutral, with accompanying signage.²⁹ According to CBC News, the switch of ten washrooms at the U of R cost the University just \$2,000.³⁰ A change that can be enacted so frugally, and one which can provide the environmental change necessary to create a more comfortable environment for students, should be a priority for University administration.

Education also plays a key role in the issue of embracing gender-neutral washroom facilities. It is the UPEI Student Union’s hope that the University would look to the Action Committee on Sexuality and Gender Diversity to take a lead role in an education campaign designed to educate the campus community on the need for gender-inclusive washrooms on campus, as well as other issues facing those who are transgender or those who do not conform to a traditional binary gender system.

The UPEI Student Union calls on the University of Prince Edward Island to ensure the availability of at least one gender-neutral washroom in each University building, accompanied by appropriate signage as determined by the Action Committee on Sexuality and Gender Diversity.

The UPEI Student Union calls on the University of Prince Edward Island to ensure that future construction of University buildings will recognize the need for gender-neutral washroom facilities, and will incorporate such facilities into any new buildings.

²⁸ “Space Proposal: gender and campus washrooms” Submitted to UPEI Space Management Cttee. by A. Braithwaite, T. Smith.

²⁹ CBC News: U of R opens gender-neutral washrooms. Feb 18, 2013. Avail:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/u-of-r-opens-gender-neutral-washrooms-1.1378509>

³⁰ Ibid.



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Policy Statement ID: A04

Category: Accessibility

Status: Active

Ratification: September 13, 2015

Review Date: September 13, 2018

Establish a Multi-Year Funding Framework that allows UPEI to plan long-term.

The rising operating costs of universities across the country are a growing area of policy concern; the University of Prince Edward Island is no exception to this issue. The UPEI Student Union recognizes the need for growth at UPEI, but also sees that there are significant challenges associated with long-term planning when the University does not know how much funding it will receive from the provincial government until the Provincial Budget is delivered in the spring. While rising operating costs are an area of concern for the administration at UPEI, they are also an area of concern for students because they are unsure of how much their tuition will rise over the course of their degree. The UPEI Student Union believes that the Government of Prince Edward Island and the University of Prince Edward Island should establish a multi-year funding agreement that allows students to effectively plan financially for their education.

According to the University of Prince Edward Island Economic Impact Assessment, the Province contributed 34% of UPEI's overall revenue in 2013, one of the lowest rates in the country³¹. In addition to having one of the lowest rates, the operating grant varies from year to year. In 2012, UPEI took a 3% cut to its funding. There were subsequently no changes in funding in the following 2 years³². In the 2015 Budget, UPEI received an 8% increase which included funding for the new Engineering school³³. These fluctuations in government contributions reveal that funding amounts allocated to UPEI are inconsistent. In the end, inconsistent funding makes financial planning for UPEI difficult, and it also creates a lot of financial stress for students and their families as they try to anticipate and afford the rising cost of education. In Prince Edward Island, post-secondary funding is determined by an incremental (or historical) funding

mechanism – the amounts allocated to the institutions are based on the previous year. This funding mechanism is great from an administrative perspective

³¹ "The University of Prince Edward Island Economic Impact Assessment" (2014) pg. 17

³² "UPEI board approves "bare bones" budget." *Academica Top Ten*. 10 May 2012. Avail: <http://academica.ca/top-ten/upei-board-approves-bare-bones-budget>

³³ "P.E.I budget gives small increases to health, education." *CBC News*. 19 June 2015. Avail: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/p-e-i-budget-gives-small-increases-to-health-education-1.3120258>



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because it is simple and the most logical funding framework in a small province with one university. Incremental funding does have its downsides, however; for example, it does not provide incentive for Universities to improve their performance³⁴. From a financial perspective, it makes growth hard because the uncertainty associated with funding can cause the University to be reluctant in spending and expansion. Additionally, if funding decreases, it can put the University in a difficult position forcing them to increase tuition for students.

Although an incremental funding model is the best type of funding for a small province like Prince Edward Island, there is still room for improvement. The current model provides little certainty to students in the years after they enroll as to how much they will deposit into the University's budget. The government department responsible for higher education has a role to play in providing relevant information to students, especially as it relates to how much they will be expected to contribute to their education. The department responsible for higher education equally has a role to play in providing the University with the necessary information to effectively plan for several years' worth of revenue and expenses.

It is the opinion of the UPEI Student Union that the Government of Prince Edward Island should create a 4 year "rolling-funding" agreement with the University of Prince Edward Island, with incremental increases each year to accommodate for rising costs, so students can reasonably estimate how much their education will cost from enrollment to the completion of their program. and so that the University can invest confidently in the future of the institution and its students.

The Student Union recommends that the Government of Prince Edward Island establish a 4 year rolling-funding agreement with public post-secondary institutions, such that students can know how much their education will cost from start to finish, and administration can effectively plan for the long-term.

³⁴ "The Future Is Not What It Used To Be: Re-examining Provincial Post-Secondary Education Funds in Canada." C.D Howe Institute. Pakravan, pg. 12.



Policy Statement ID: A05

Category: Accessibility

Status: Active

Ratification: September 13, 2015

Review Date: September 13, 2018

Providing Credit for the Completion of the English Academic Preparation Program

The UPEI Student Union is without a doubt concerned with the rising costs of education. That being said, International students at our university are subject to tuition rates much higher than the average Canadian student. For International students, the cost of a single year at UPEI adds up to \$13,960 for tuition and fees. That is double what a Canadian born student will pay³⁵.

The UPEI Student Union understands that many International students come from different countries with different language backgrounds, and many may not be proficient enough in the English language to succeed in an academic program. We highly support the use of the English Academic Preparation program to aid International students in the level of success they will achieve at UPEI. That being said, receiving an international education is an expensive affair as highlighted. We take issue with the fact that international students who don't have command of the language are made to enroll in the EAP program, pay all the tuition and fees associated with being a student, and never receive any sort of course credit for completion of the program. In academics, if something has value, credit is given for completing it.

Through this program many International students gain competency in speaking an entirely new language to them. When a domestic student takes a course, or even a program in French or Spanish through the Modern Languages department, they get credit for it. International students learning a new language should be treated the same way.

Furthermore, there is a precedent at another Canadian university. The University of Ottawa does offer credit for the completion of English language courses for those students who take English³⁶ as an additional language. In fact, the same applies for French in the program³⁶.

³⁵ UPEI Tuition and Fees

³⁶ English as a second language. University of Ottawa.

<http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/info/regist/calendars/courses/ESL.html>



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If the University of Prince Edward Island began offering credit for the completion of the EAP it would have three positive effects. First, students who progress through the EAP would put as much work into learning English as they do with any other credited course. International students can take a limited number of credit courses based on their level of English. However, students who are working on these credit courses will often diminish their efforts in EAP courses in order to find success in the credit courses. This would incentivize a stronger effort towards EAP, even while students are working on one or two credit courses. Second, it would be a huge recruitment tool for the University to say that we provide credit for learning the English language when others do not. This would make UPEI very unique and demonstrate innovation in pedagogy. Third, holding students in a program until they achieve native-like English skills is not recommended and hasn't worked. In fact, examining the average grades of EAP students and non-EAP students shows only a slight difference. Non-EAP students have an average grade of 76.1, while EAP students have an average grade of 73.7, this demonstrates that EAP students are capable of succeeding at a "credit" level³⁷.

Student surveys conducted at UPEI suggest that taking part in a course that is for credit is motivating and challenging, provides a reality check for the level of English required, and immerses International students in the community of being a "regular" student which encourages engagement and retention³⁸. The UPEI Student Union wants to see all students integrated in the community as much as possible, therefore we recommend that the University take measures to ensure the work International students undertake is being given credit value.

UPEI is becoming more and more reliant on International enrollment given the dropping domestic demographics in Prince Edward Island. As of the 2014-2015 academic year, there were 685 full-time International students at UPEI³⁹. With the arrival of the School of Sustainable Design Engineering, this number is set to increase. As of right now, the International Relations Office has 1 International Student Advisor for all those students. The UPEI Student Union recommends that a second International student advisor is hired to aid with the influx of students.

The UPEI Student Union wants to ensure all students are receiving a good value for their education here at UPEI. International students are subject to much higher costs than domestic students, and end of doing a lot of school work before they can receive any credits. If domestic students receive credit for courses in new languages, it would

³⁷ Gillan, Cathy. "Rationale for awarding credit upon completion of EAP" September 4, 2009.

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ UPEI By The Numbers, November 2014



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be entirely fair for International students to receive credit for the completion of the English Academic Preparation program.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the University of Prince Edward Island begin to grant credit to International students for the completion of English Academic Preparation.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the University of Prince Edward Island hire a second International Student Advisor to aid International students.



Policy Statement ID: A06

Category: Accessibility

Status: Active

Ratification: November 1, 2015

Review Date: November 1, 2018

Adopting a 12-month course calendar at UPEI

Completing a university degree in the traditional four years is not as common as people think. University degree programs are generally designed as four year programs but for the vast majority of students this isn't the case. At the University of Prince Edward Island only 32% of students who started in Arts, Business, Science, and Nursing in the fall of 2010 had managed to graduate within the standard four years⁴⁰. This is because students are taking fewer courses in the school year than they had previously, and more and more students are relying on summer credits. Given that students at UPEI are shifting to a pattern of a 12 month school year instead of the traditional 8 months, UPEI should move to adopt a course timetable that reflects these changing needs for students.

By assuming that a student will graduate within four years of the beginning of their program, there is also an assumption made that a full course load is 30 semester hours per year (10 courses). A student with a full course load will take 5 classes in the fall, and 5 in the winter. Taking 10 courses a year is expensive and time consuming. Due to rising costs of education more and more students are not able to take a full course load because they have to work while studying in order to afford their education and living costs. In 2011, nearly 60% of students in Canada worked while enrolled at school, and they worked 18 hours a week⁴¹ on average. Students need to work more than they used to and the majority of students do not take the traditional course load. In fact, as of 2012, only 39% of students at UPEI were taking the full course load⁴². If a student is unable to take a full course load because of financial reasons they have two options. First, take 5 years or more to graduate with a reduced course load in the fall and winter semesters (the more years students are in school, generally the more debt they will

⁴⁰ "Graduation Rate by Faculty, Fall 2000-2013" Yuqin Gong

⁴¹ Prairie Research Associates for Canada University Consortium, 2011

⁴² "Undergraduate Student Course Load, by Faculty and Semester" Yuqin Gong.



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draw). Second, take summer courses to catch up and graduate within the allotted 4 year timeframe.

A large number of students will attempt to graduate in 4 years by trying to catch up with summer courses; however, there is a major logistical problem with this plan. UPEI releases its fall and winter timetables in the spring and students select which classes they want for the year at that time. The timetable for the summer sessions is not released until January, which is well after students are already locked into all the credits they will take for the fall and winter sessions. This creates problems for many students because they will take courses in the fall and winter, only to find out that the course they took in the fall was the only course in their program offered in the summer. If students knew otherwise they would have adjusted their schedules accordingly.

UPEI has also seen a huge increase in the amount of students who take summer courses over the last decade. In 2003, there were only 1335 students enrolled in summer courses, and in 2015, there were 2087⁴³.

⁴³ "Headcounts in Summer Sessions, Historical Trend" Yuqin Gong

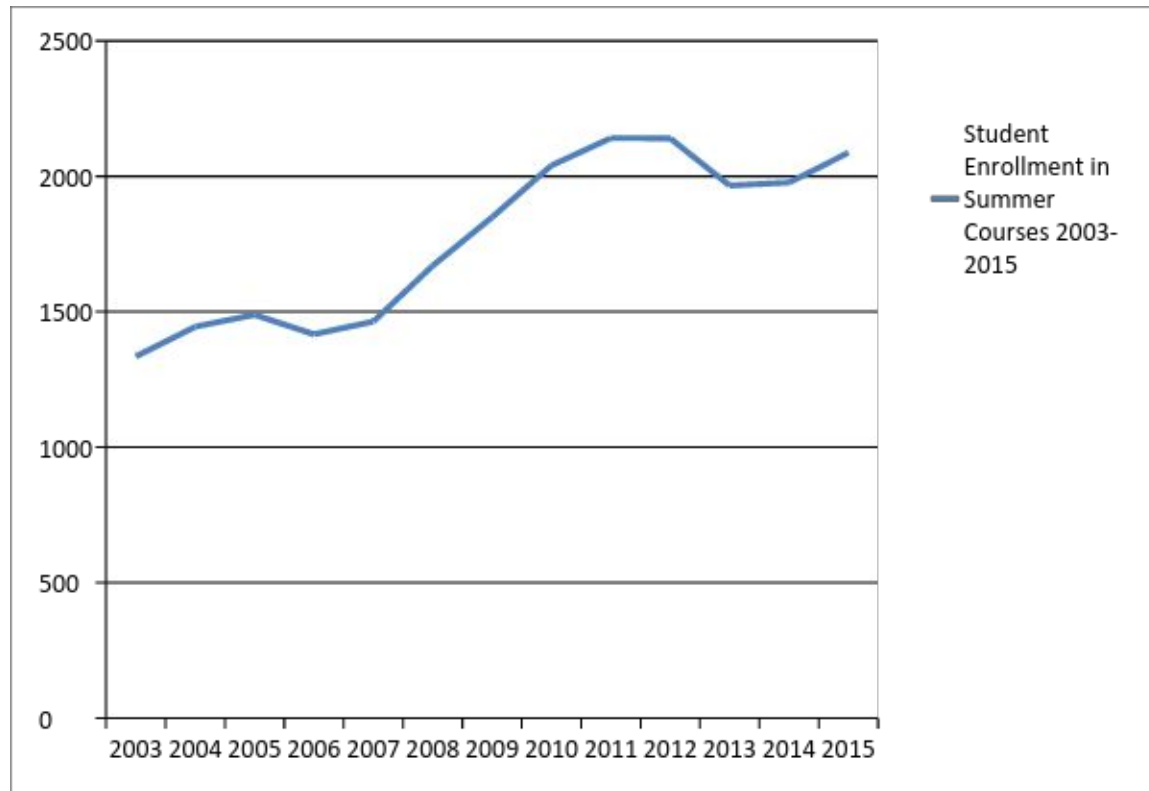


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Given the increase of students enrolling in the summer courses, the University should adopt a schedule to reflect the fact that almost half of UPEI students go to school 12 months a year, not 8 months.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the University of Prince Edward Island adopt a 12 month course calendar that allows students to plan their courses for an entire year.



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Accountability



Policy Statement ID: C01

Category: Accountability

Status: Active

Ratification: September 8, 2013

Review Date: September 8, 2016

Ensuring UPEI's Tobacco Use Policy is Enforced

The University of Prince Edward Island's Tobacco Use Policy, created in June 2007, mandates that any tobacco use take place at least 9.1 meters from a University building. In addition, the policy states that no tobacco use may occur within buildings or within University-owned or –leased vehicles.⁴⁴

It has become a recognized problem at the University of Prince Edward Island that there are those who choose to contravene UPEI's policy on tobacco use by smoking or using tobacco products within 9.1 meters of a door. This problem has been exacerbated by the fact that in some cases, UPEI has placed cigarette-butt receptacles within 9.1 meters of a building. In fact, a cigarette-butt holder is located within two feet of one of Bernardine Hall's doors – attached to the building.

The negative health effects of breathing secondhand smoke are well-known to all. According to the United States Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, those exposed to secondhand smoke at home or work may face a 25-30% increase in their chance of developing coronary heart disease⁴⁵. Further, the CDC says that even brief contact with secondhand smoke can temporarily increase one's risk of a heart attack⁴⁶.

Other campuses have policies in place to curb tobacco-use on their grounds. Most controversial of these is those campuses which have gone completely tobacco-free. There are multiple examples of this, such as Acadia University, which went completely tobacco-free in 2006⁴⁷. Memorial University announced on August 1st, 2013 that it was

⁴⁴ UPEI Tobacco Use Policy. Avail:

[http://policy.upei.ca/files/policy/Tobacco%20Use%20Policy%20\(admhrdohs0007\)_2.pdf](http://policy.upei.ca/files/policy/Tobacco%20Use%20Policy%20(admhrdohs0007)_2.pdf)

⁴⁵ Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. Fact Sheet – Health effects of secondhand smoke. Avail:

http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/secondhand_smoke/health_effects/

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Human Resources ~ Tobacco Free Initiative. Avail: <http://hr.acadiau.ca/tobacco-free-initiative.html>



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officially smoke free, and Saint Mary's University is also a smoke-free campus⁴⁸. Saint Mary's will officially be tobacco-free as of September 1st, 2013⁴⁹.

A discussion of the UPEI Student Union Council in early 2013 was centered around the idea of a smoking ban from campus, in recognition of the fact that other campuses have taken similar steps. However, the UPEI Student Union Council recognized that it would be not be appropriate to alienate a segment of the student population with measures as extreme as a ban. Instead, the UPEI Student Union recommends the following actions be taken.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the University of Prince Edward Island ensures all cigarette-butt receptacles are placed no closer than 9.1 meters to buildings

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the University of Prince Edward Island ensure stricter enforcement of the tobacco use policy, so as to ensure the safety and well-being of all students & employees at the University.

⁴⁸ Memorial smoke-free on August 1st. Avail:

<http://www.mun.ca/marcomm/news/index.php?includefile=showitem.php&id=4036>

⁴⁹ Counting Down the Days to a Tobacco-Free Campus. Avail:

<http://www.smu.ca/newsreleases/2013/march/counting-down-the-days-to-a-tobacco-free-campus.html>



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Policy Statement ID: C02

Category: Accountability

Status: Active

Ratification: September 7, 2014

Review Date: September 7, 2017

Academic Consultation on Course Offerings at UPEI

In this time of fiscal restraint at the University of Prince Edward Island, there is much discussion of the potential for impact on academics. Indeed, this core area of the University is one which should be shielded from detrimental cuts – it is, after all, the core service for which students pay. With that said, one cannot deny that with recent decline in government funding, the University has been forced to make tough decisions, including those around course offerings.

The UPEI Student Union understands the strain on resources that heavy course offerings can have on departments. Course offerings constitute a significant expenditure on the part of the University – as they should. However, it is the opinion of the UPEI Student Union that course offerings must be protected in any time of restraint. Ensuring the provision of a wide variety of relevant courses is highly important to student's education.

When departments must cut back in core academic areas, there is little doubt this will affect course offerings. However, departments should engage and consult with students when this must occur. Learning from students which courses they require or desire should be a key part of departmental academic planning – not only would this assist in academic planning; it could also lead to a more engaged student population within the department.

It is the opinion of the UPEI Student Union that academic departments have a duty to provide relevant academic programming. This can be achieved through active consultation and engagement with students in the department's major and minor programs. It is notable that many departments have students who sit in on departmental meetings – and this is admirable. However, consultation must run deeper for the purposes of academic planning.

A number of models could be used, for example:



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- A survey, similar to the Student Opinion of Teaching Survey, administered on a departmental basis;
- Utilization of student representatives to gather information on which courses are needed for the next year;
- For smaller departments, a departmental meeting to which all students are invited;

The UPEI Student Union believes that using consultative models to choose course offerings could also encourage student engagement within academic departments: when students have some measure of control over what will be taught in their program, they may be more willing to engage with others in their department, creating an inclusive and engaging learning environment.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the University of Prince Edward Island encourage its academic departments to engage in consultative processes with students for the purposes of academic planning for course offerings.



Policy Statement ID: C03

Category: Accountability

Status: Active

Ratification: September 7, 2014

Review Date: September 7, 2017

Freedom of Information at UPEI

Freedom of Information is an important discussion, and one which is discussed across the country. Fundamentally, freedom of information legislation is designed to allow the public access to information within public institutions, while respecting the privacy of individuals. Roughly half of UPEI's revenues are derived from government funding – money which comes from the taxpayers of Prince Edward Island and, indeed, Canada⁵⁰. It is not unreasonable to believe, as the UPEI SU does, that information about UPEI should be easily accessible to the public.

According to the PEI Information and Privacy Commissioner, Maria MacDonald, there are five main purposes of the *FOIPP* Act:

- “Creates a right of access to records subject to limited and specific exceptions;
- Controls how public bodies collect personal information, they use it, and they disclose it;
- Allows individuals a right of access to personal information about themselves;
- Allows individuals a right to request corrections to personal information about themselves; and
- Provides for independent reviews of decisions made by public bodies.”⁵¹

UPEI does have two policies pertaining to privacy and protection of information: “Disclosure and Protection of Student Information” and “Personal Information and Privacy Policy”. The two policies mainly cover steps to take to maintain privacy, and lay out a few routes for those curious to access information – however, little is mentioned in the way of obtaining information about anything other than your personal file, a request which would be directed to the University's Privacy Officer. Further, there are no

⁵⁰ UPEI Operating Budget 2014-2015. Pgs. 5 & 9. Avail:
http://files.upei.ca/finance/operating_budget_2014-2015.pdf

⁵¹ MacDonald, Maria. “UPEI FOI FYI: What would it mean to UPEI if it were subject to *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*?” n.d. Presentation.



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methods outlined within the policies for members of the public to request information⁵²⁵³. Currently, the information regime at UPEI is rather closed off and of a narrow purview. While the University does have a Privacy Officer, who has the authority to release information, any decisions made by the Privacy Officer are not subject to external oversight or appeal⁵⁴⁵⁵.

Prince Edward Island is currently the only provincial jurisdiction in Canada which does not extend its freedom of information legislation to universities⁵⁶⁵⁷. Other provinces have, in effect, recognized the value of ensuring access to information at public institutions such as universities and colleges – and PEI should do the same. With a budget of over \$100 million per year, it is vital that UPEI's information be accessible to students, staff, faculty, and indeed, the public.

To conceive this idea of *FOIPP* legislation extending to the university is not new: in 2013, the Minister responsible for the legislation, Janice Sherry, was considering the addition of PSE institutions, as well as municipalities, to the legislation⁵⁸. In the end, the Minister chose not to do so, citing the existence of an access-to-information process at UPEI. However, there is no external recourse should the University's privacy officer deny the access request.

Bringing UPEI under *FOIPP* would not necessarily mean that every document passed through UPEI would become public, and this is important to note. While many fear the extension of *FOIPP* legislation on this basis, it is important to note that a portion of the legislation is also dedicated to the privacy – of individuals and of the organization, as well as third-party interests. *FOIPP* legislation is crafted such that the needs for both

⁵² UPEI Policy. "Personal Information and Privacy Policy." 15 April 2005.

⁵³ UPEI Policy. "Disclosure and Protection of Student Information." 5 April 2004.

⁵⁴ "Privacy Committee | Campus Committies." UPEI Website. Avail: <https://cab.upei.ca/privacy-committee>

⁵⁵ *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* of Prince Edward Island. General Regulations. Pgs. 6-9. Avail: <http://www.gov.pe.ca/law/regulations/pdf/F&15-01G.pdf>

⁵⁶ "Freedom of Information Expansion Delayed." CBC News – 6 May 2013. Avail: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/freedom-of-information-expansion-delayed-1.1313231>

⁵⁷ Keller, T. "New Brunswick's Information is Free!" *Macleans.ca*. 9 June 2008. Avail: <http://www.macleans.ca/education/uniandcollege/new-brunswicks-information-is-free/>

⁵⁸ "Freedom of Information Expansion Delayed." CBC News – 6 May 2013. Avail: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/freedom-of-information-expansion-delayed-1.1313231>



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access to information and for privacy are adequately balanced, and professional and impartial oversight is provided⁵⁹.

It is time for Prince Edward Island's government to bring a new level of transparency to post-secondary institutions in Prince Edward Island, and those institutions should welcome the transparency with open arms. Institutions receiving public funding must be willing to be open and accountable in regards to what they do.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the Government of Prince Edward Island amend the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* to bring public post-secondary institutions under its jurisdiction.

⁵⁹ *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act of Prince Edward Island*. S. 3. Avail: http://www.gov.pe.ca/law/statutes/pdf/f-15_01.pdf



Policy Statement ID: C04

Category: Accountability

Status: Active

Ratification: September 7, 2014

Review Date: September 7, 2017

Student Complaints at UPEI

When students have issues with those in positions of authority, such as Professors, it is important that complaints and grievance processes are known by students. At UPEI, however, an unclear grievance process is leaving some students with a bad taste in their mouth.

One would think that the *Students' Rights and Responsibilities Code*, a University policy governing student conduct, would also outline a students' right to lodge a complaint regarding the conduct of a professor or other staff member at UPEI. Instead, the policy outlines a student's responsibilities to the University and outlines the process by which they will be disciplined. The policy contains no mention or direction in regards to a student's right to take issue with the conduct of a University employee⁶⁰.

It is vital that students be aware of how to make issues known. Currently, students are given very little, if any, information on how to address concerns with a professor. While there is not a rash of misgivings by faculty, it holds that having knowledge on how to address potential issues is important. It is important that this be clearly identified to students.

There are three main routes to addressing an issue with a faculty or staff member of UPEI:

- If the nature of the complaint is in relation to an incidence of discrimination or harassment, the student can seek support and remedy through UPEI's Fair Treatment Office⁶¹.

⁶⁰ UPEI Policy. "Students' Rights and Responsibilities Code." 7 July 2011. Avail: http://stage.upei.ca/policy/files/policy/Students%27%20Rights%20%26%20Responsibilities%20Code%20%28adms_s_gnl0001%29.pdf

⁶¹ UPEI Policy. "Fair Treatment Policy." 21 November 2005. Avail: <http://stage.upei.ca/policy/files/policy/Fair%20Treatment%20Policy%20%28govbrdgnl0009%29.pdf>



- If the nature of the complaint is in relation to an academic issue or is in relation to any of the University's standing Academic Regulations, the student shall have the ability to appeal through the procedures contained in Academic Regulation 12⁶².
- If the complaint is in regard to an issue not covered in the previous two points, the student is expected to follow the academic chain of command. This means:
 - The student should first try to resolve the issue with the faculty member;
 - The student then has the right to address the issue with the Chair of the Academic Department in question;
 - If no resolution is provided, the student can then address the issue with the Dean of the Faculty or School in question and;
 - If no resolution is provided, the student can then address the issue with the University's Vice-President Academic⁶³.

It is vital that these three methods of grievance are highlighted for students in the event that they ever need to remedy a situation. This is not only the responsibility of the University, but the UPEI SU also accepts that it has a role to play in educating and supporting its members on these avenues of complaint.

The UPEI SU directs the UPEI SU Vice-President Academic & External Executive Committee to design and execute, once every two years, an information campaign concerning how students may file a complaint regarding a faculty or staff member.

The UPEI SU recommends that the University of Prince Edward Island amend its *Student Rights and Responsibilities' Code* to more concretely outline modes of recourse should a student need to lodge a complaint against the University or one of its agents.

⁶² UPEI Academic Calendar 2013-2014, Updated January 2014. Academic Regulation 12, P. 100.

⁶³ Email Exchange. UPEI Vice-President Academic Christian Lacroix. 6 August 2014.



Policy Statement ID: C05

Category: Accountability

Status: Active

Ratification: September 7, 2014

Review Date: September 7, 2017

Student Consultation on Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees

Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees, also known as ancillary or auxiliary fees, are fees which are charged to students which are either necessary or essential to the completion of a course or program (auxiliary) or related to areas of the University which are non-academic in nature (ancillary)⁶⁴. It is the strong opinion of the UPEI SU that the costs of education should be regulated – in that vein, the UPEI SU supports a consultative approach to ensuring mandatory non-instructional fees remain reasonable for students.

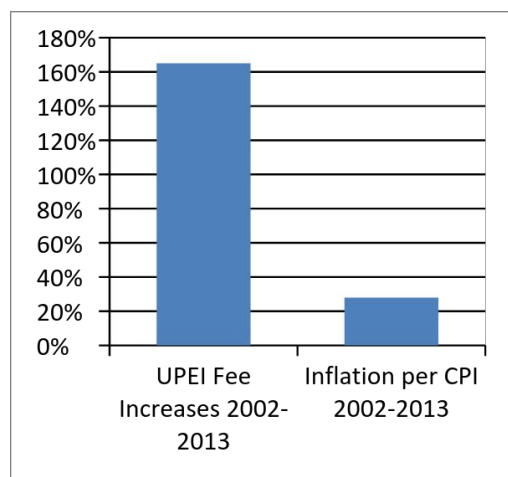


Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 1: Fees at UPEI vs. CPI Increases

From academic years 2002-2004 to academic year 2014-2015, the amount UPEI collected from its student in mandatory ancillary and auxiliary fees had increased 165%⁶⁵. UPEI collects several fees which have been steadily increasing over the years. For example, in 2002 the Athletic & Administration fee was \$114 per year. In 2014-2015, it stood at \$194, representing a 72% increase over that period. Several new fees have been introduced over time as well, such as the technology fee (now \$50 per year) and

⁶⁴ StudentsNS. "Briefing Note: Ancillary Fees and Consultations." 20 March 2013.

⁶⁵ UPEI Academic Calendar 2002-2004; Current Student Statement 2014-2015.



the library resource fee (\$40 per year)⁶⁶. Inflation over the same time period (2002 to 2013) was around 28%⁶⁷.

According to the Maritime Provinces High education Commission, UPEI's ancillary fees in the 2013-2014 year amounted to \$612. Comparably, the highest amount of ancillary fees charged at a Nova Scotian institution are \$1108 at the University of King's College. In New Brunswick, the University of New Brunswick charges the highest amount, \$587, in ancillary fees⁶⁸. The wide variance in institutional ancillary fees is something to be wary of, and is exactly why the introduction or increase of mandatory non-instructional fees must be carefully monitored. This should involve extensive consultation with students and student groups.

Ontario has requirements in place regarding mandatory non-instructional fees since 1994. Since then, fees have been in direct control of students either through referenda or through student unions' or associations' established practices⁶⁹. In addition, non-instructional fees are regulated by a Memorandum of Understanding in Nova Scotia. In Nova Scotia, universities are required to abide by several key principles, including:

- That money raised from the increase or introduction of a fee must be used transparently and in relation to the fee;
- Fees should only be implemented on a cost-recovery basis;
- The introduction or increase in fees should be made known to key stakeholders, such as the recognized Student Association on campus⁷⁰.

The UPEI SU wholly supports these principles, and is moving to see them adhered to at the University of Prince Edward Island. Student consent and approval must form a major part of the introduction of new institution-wide fees at UPEI. Some Canadian campuses have extensive student consultation and approval processes in place, such as at Ryerson University. At Ryerson, ancillary fees must be voted on by students in a referendum. Other campuses operate on a committee structure – a committee

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ "Consumer Price Index, historical summary, by province or territory (2009 to 2013)." Statistics Canada. Avail: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/econ150a-eng.htm>

⁶⁸ Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission. "Table C: Undergraduate Ancillary and Residence Fees 2013-2014." Avail online: http://www.mphec.ca/media/39942/Final_Tuition_2013_14_Tbl_C_En.pdf

⁶⁹ Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance. "Ancillary Fees" Briefing Note.

⁷⁰ StudentsNS. "Briefing Note: Ancillary Fees and Consultations." 20 March 2013.



comprised of students and administrators reviews fees. If consensus cannot be achieved on a new fee, then a student referendum must be held. Such is the process at York University⁷¹.

Many, when broaching this topic, express concern that students have no appetite for any fee increases whatsoever. However, data from the Council of Alberta University Students proves this incorrect. At their member associations/schools, where fees which were subject to referendum faced an increase, students voted to approve these increases over 70% of the time⁷². Students are not necessarily averse to paying more – as long as there is demonstrable value and sound rationale for the fee.

UPEI's budget process is an extensive one. Beginning in October and culminating in May, where the Board of Governors ostensibly votes to approve the budget, there is clearly ample opportunity for consultation⁷³. It is the hope of the UPEI SU that the University will choose to embrace a consultative budgeting process, and include those who are most affected by the University's budget decisions: students.

The UPEI SU directs the UPEI SU Executive Committee to conduct a review of Student Union representation on UPEI Committees, with special attention paid to those concerning University funding, tuition, or fees. A review of Student Union representation on UPEI Committees should occur once every four years.

The UPEI SU recommends that the Comptroller's Office, in conjunction with the University Budget Committee, hold an open consultation with the University community no fewer than two weeks prior to its submission to the Board of Governors' Finance and Audit Committee. This consultation should include proposed increases to tuition or fees.

The UPEI SU recommends that the Comptroller's Office, in conjunction with the University Budget Committee, hold a meeting with the UPEI SU Executive

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Council of Alberta University Students. "Responsible, Accountable, Predictable: Why the use of referenda for increasing mandatory fees balances the needs of stakeholders." September 2010. Avail online: http://www.caus.net/docs/10-09_fees.pdf

⁷³ UPEI website. "Budgets | Finance | UPEI" Accessed 7 August 2014. Avail: <http://www.upei.ca/finance/comptroller/budgets>



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Committee for the purposes of consultation no fewer than two weeks prior to its submission to the Board of Governors' Finance and Audit Committee.



Policy Statement ID: C06

Category: Accountability

Status: Active

Ratification: September 13, 2015

Review Date: September 13, 2018

Professorial Accountability & Review at UPEI

Professors at UPEI are vital members of the University community, tasked with using their experience and education to educate the many who enter walk through their doors. Classroom learning, indeed, forms a very important part of a student's experience at University, and professors are chief among those who work to facilitate that classroom learning.

Student Opinion on Teaching Surveys (SOTS) allow students to provide feedback to a professor in regards to their teaching ability, areas of improvement, and areas of excellence. These surveys, which are common across Canada, are a vital measure of professorial performance. The SOTS is comprised of two parts: questions on which professors receive a numerical indicator of their performance, and questions on which professors receive written commentary from students.

The UPEI Student Union takes issue with the two aspects of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. First, if a faculty member so chooses, written commentary from the SOTS can never see the light of day. It may not be accessed by the Chair or Dean for review purposes, and it may not be shared with the Department Review Committee (DRC) or University Review Committee (URC) in instances of review for tenure or promotion⁷⁴. Second, the URC which reviews tenure and promotion for professors does not have a student representative⁷⁵.

Those assessing a professor's application for promotion or tenure deserve to see a full picture of the professor's performance – and the professor should not have the right to hide negative commentary which has been made by students in regards to their pedagogy. Written commentary being available to the DRC/URC as well as Chairs and Deans, as well as student representative on the URC, would allow student voices in the

⁷⁴ UPEI-UPEIFA Collective Agreement Exp. June 30, 2016. Article E1.2.5. P. 70

⁷⁵ UPEI-UPEIFA Collective Agreement Exp. June 30, 2016. Article E2.10.1 P. 90



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tenure/promotion process, and would also ensure that professors are being held accountable outside the tenure/promotion process (by their Chair/Dean).

Students expect their professors to be accountable for their work, as they are wholly accountable for theirs.

The UPEI Student Union calls on the UPEI Faculty Association and the University of Prince Edward Island to work towards a collective agreement which makes student commentary on the SOTS freely available to the Department Chair, Faculty/School Dean, and the DRC and URC when applicable, when negotiations begin for the next collective agreement.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the UPEI Faculty Association encourage its members to share with their Chair and Dean, as well as the DRC and URC when applicable, the student commentary received from SOTS.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the UPEI Faculty Association and the University of Prince Edward Island work towards adding a student representative elected by the Student Union in a collective bargaining agreement.



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Affordability



Policy Statement ID: F01

Category: Affordability

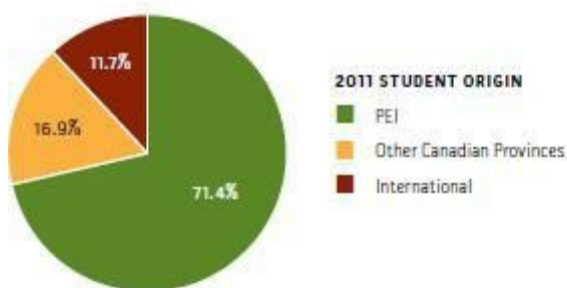
Status: Active

Ratification: September 8, 2013

Review Date: September 8, 2016

Increasing Investment in Scholarships for non-Island Graduates

The University of Prince Edward Island is an institution which has grown much over the past years, and indeed its now-diverse population says much about its popularity as an educational institution. What was once an almost-exclusively Islander school is now decidedly more balanced.⁷⁶



As UPEI shifts its focus to recruiting more students from out-of-province, and experiences a renewed focus on recruiting international students to make up for a coming shortfall in Island high school graduates⁷⁷, it is more important than ever to ensure that those coming from jurisdictions other than Prince Edward Island experience

fair treatment when being considered for scholarships and awards offered by the University.

One major area of complaint is that the scholarships scheme at UPEI favours those who've graduated from Island high schools disproportionately, and students 'from away' are feeling unfairly singled out in this manner. In fact, a rudimentary search of the UPEI scholarships and awards page confirms that of the offered awards, at least fifty may only be claimed by those originally from PEI or those who graduated from an Island high school⁷⁸. This is unfortunate for the almost 30% of students who've come to UPEI from other provinces or countries.

⁷⁶ UPEI By the Numbers. Avail: upei.ca/bythenumbers

⁷⁷ Number of PEI high school graduates slated to drop 22% over the next 14 years. President Alaa Abd-el-Aziz, public presentation to UPEI Board of Governors. 9 May 2013.

⁷⁸ UPEI Scholarships & Awards Page. Avail: <http://www.upei.ca/studentlife/listofscholarshipsandawards>



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As previously mentioned, the University is experiencing rapid enrolment growth from those not originally from PEI. MPHEC in its Annual Digest released credential figures for 2011. Credentials granted to Island residents were up only 16%, compared to 48% to other Maritimers, from 2010 to 2011. Other Canadians and International students receiving credentials rose 33% and 48% from the previous year, respectively⁷⁹.

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES BY STUDENT ORIGIN	Credentials	Change over	
	2011	1 year	5 years
New Brunswick	3,674	0%	-12%
New Brunswick Residents	2,597	-2%	-7%
Other Maritimers	433	9%	-17%
Other Canadians	404	1%	-13%
International	240	0%	-40%
Nova Scotia	6,877	0%	-7%
Nova Scotia Residents	3,838	-5%	-12%
Other Maritimers	584	-2%	-10%
Other Canadians	1,752	8%	1%
International	703	16%	8%
Prince Edward Island	734	23%	21%
Prince Edward Island Residents	523	16%	18%
Other Maritimers	93	48%	15%
Other Canadians	53	33%	2%
International	65	48%	97%
Total	11,285	1%	-7%

Figure SEQ Figure (* ARABIC 2: 2011 Credentials Granted by Origin (MPHEC)

The UPEI Student Union recognizes that many awards are funded by private donors. However, it is the opinion of the UPEI Student Union that the University could do more to educate donors on choosing criteria and the importance of UPEI's changing demographics. Further, the University must ensure that its internally-funded scholarships are equitable in terms of geographic origin.

The UPEI Student Union is not advocating for less scholarship opportunity for Island students. The UPEI Student Union is advocating only for fairness in scholarship eligibility and criteria. In a University that is facing a rapidly changing dynamic in terms of population, it is only fair that all students, inclusive of those not originally from Prince Edward Island, have the same opportunities.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the University of Prince Edward Island encourage donors who sponsor scholarships or awards not to restrict their awards to only Island residents.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the University of Prince Edward Island encourage donors who sponsor scholarships or awards not to restrict their awards to graduates of Island high schools.

⁷⁹ MPHEC Annual Digest. Credentials Granted 2011. Avail:
http://www.mphec.ca/resources/TrendsV10N3_2013.pdf



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The UPEI Student Union calls on the University of Prince Edward Island to ensure that no internally-funded scholarships or awards are restricted to those from Prince Edward Island.



Policy Statement ID: F02

Category: Affordability

Status: Active

Ratification: September 8, 2013

Review Date: September 8, 2016

Using Open Educational Resources in all First-Year UPEI Courses

Traditional educational resources, such as textbooks and academic journals, have long been known to have very high costs. More alarming, however, is the rate at which the costs are increasing. In the US, textbook costs have risen at triple the rate of inflation since 1978⁸⁰. This trend is echoed in Canada: according to a University of Alberta Students' Union study, textbook prices increased at a rate of 2.8 times that of inflation from 1995 to 2007⁸¹. Textbooks are not the only educational resources suffering from hyperinflation either: from 1986 to 2004, North American research library spending on academic journals increased by 273%⁸².

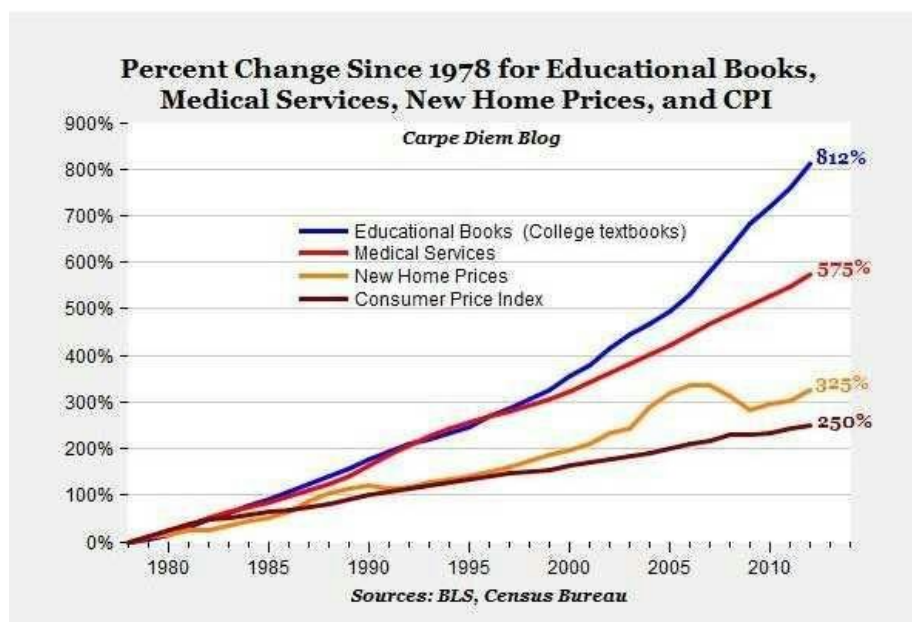


Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 1: US Textbook Cost Increases (AEI)

With the advent of massive open online courses, the increasing availability of free course materials online, and an OER movement that is picking up speed, now is the time to start the conversation at the University of Prince Edward Island about open educational resources.

⁸⁰ "The college textbook bubble..." American Enterprise Institute: Mark Perry. Avail: <http://www.aei-ideas.org/2012/12/the-college-textbook-bubble-and-how-the-open-educational-resources-movement-is-going-up-against-the-textbook-cartel/>

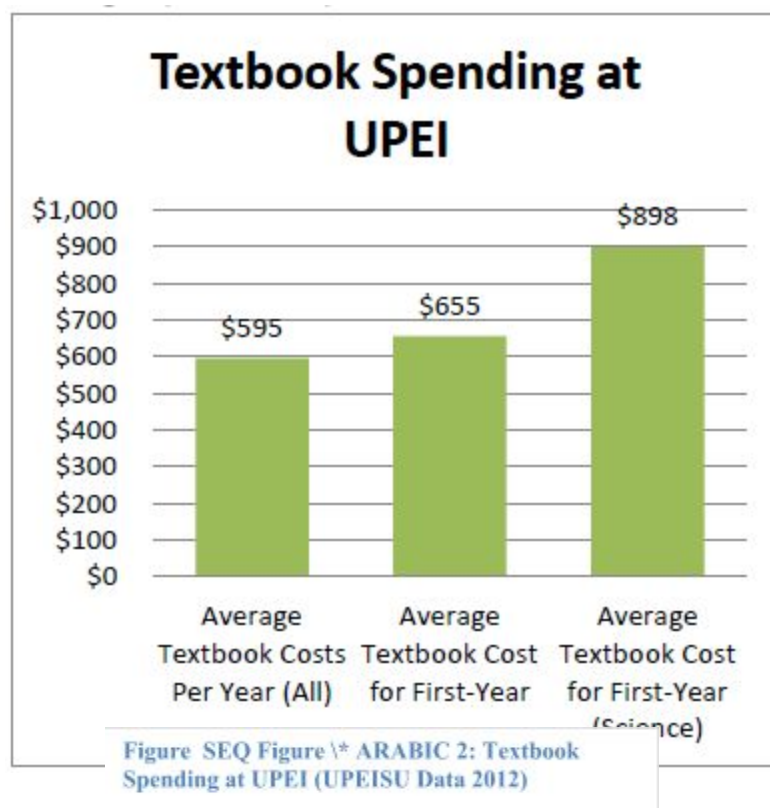
⁸¹ "A textbook case of sky-high prices" *The Ottawa Citizen*. Avail: <http://www.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/city/story.html?id=c28b9b6a-8f13-48e6-8622-d8b99100cf5f>

⁸² CASA Policy Statement: Open Educational Resources



The UPEI Student Union believes that all first-year courses should be taught using open educational resources. The introductory nature of first-year courses, combined with higher-than-average textbook costs, makes first-year classes a priority target for the introduction of OER use on a large scale at the University of Prince Edward Island.

A survey of student debt and textbook spending conducted during Education Week 2012 revealed interesting findings: the average student at UPEI will spend an average of \$595 per year on textbooks, with first-year students spending above the average at \$655 for the year. First-year science students were among the hardest hit, having reported expenses of almost \$900 to acquire their books⁸³.



One must also consider that it is likely that students aren't even buying all of the textbooks that they require. A recent survey in the US found that over 75% of students don't buy all of their required texts. A similar survey in the UK found the rate was 83%⁸⁴. It is not unreasonable to assume that textbook purchasing patterns are any different in Canada.

With both the incidence of student debt and the amount of student debt continually on the rise, UPEI would be wise to take measures to attempt to reduce the cost of a student's education⁸⁵.

⁸³ Internal Data: Information Collected from 336 respondents in late September, 2012.

⁸⁴ "Are College Students Buying Required Textbooks? 75% in US say no." Publishing Perspectives. Avail" <http://publishingperspectives.com/2012/09/are-college-students-buying-required-textbooks-75-in-us-say-no/>

⁸⁵ *The Price of Knowledge*: Berger, Motte, and Parkin 2009. (p. 185)



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These textbook costs could easily be reduced by using open educational resources, such as open access journal articles or open textbooks, to teach the introductory-level courses offered at the 100-level at UPEI.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the University of Prince Edward Island undertake significant measures to encourage the use of open educational resources for all first-year courses.



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Policy Statement ID: F03

Category: Affordability

Status: Active

Ratification: September 13, 2015

Review Date: September 13, 2018

Tuition Regulation at UPEI

Tuition is an issue oft-discussed on University campuses, and the University of Prince Edward Island is no different. At the University of Prince Edward Island, tuition since 2002 has increased by approximately 50% with Island inflation during the same period numbering in the 28% range⁸⁶⁸⁷. The UPEI Student Union understands the need for growth at UPEI, but tuition increases must be kept reasonable and should balance the needs of the University and students – this is why the UPEI SU believes in and fully endorses a system of reasonable tuition regulation.

Many provinces across the country have forms of tuition regulation in place, which serve to keep tuition increases at reasonable rates for students. Ontario, for example, has a four-year framework in place which caps tuition increases to an average of three per cent per year. Inflation, according to the Government of Ontario, has averaged two per cent per year over the past ten years⁸⁸.

Here in the Atlantic provinces, tuition is regulated by government in every province except for ours. In New Brunswick, the government imposes a cap of \$150 per year to tuition increases⁸⁹. In Nova Scotia, the government has instituted a tuition cap of 3% per year⁹⁰. Newfoundland and Labrador has had a tuition freeze in place since 1999⁹¹,

⁸⁶ UPEI Academic Calendar 2002-2004; Current Student Statement 2014-2015

⁸⁷ Statistics Canada. Consumer Price Index, historical summary, by province or territory. Avail: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/econ150a-eng.htm>

⁸⁸ “New Tuition Framework Reduces the Cap on Tuition Increases.” Government of Ontario. March 2013. Avail: <http://news.ontario.ca/tcu/en/2013/03/new-tuition-framework-reduces-the-cap-on-tuition-increases.html>

⁸⁹ St. Thomas University hikes fees, ignores tuition cap.” CBC News. Avail: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/st-thomas-university-hikes-fees-ignores-tuition-cap-1.1373979>

⁹⁰ NS to ca[tuition fees at 3%. Academica Group. Avail: <http://www.academica.ca/top10/stories/12071>

⁹¹ Dunne and Falvo. “Danny Williams’ Post-Secondary Education Legacy.” December 3, 2010. Avail: <http://www.academicmatters.ca/2010/12/danny-williams%E2%80%99-post-secondary-education-legacy/>



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which shows: tuition fees for the 2013-2014 year were just \$2,550 for Canadian students⁹².

In Alberta, students are covered by a 2.15% cap on tuition raises. The Redford government froze tuition in 2013-2014 and assisted Universities with additional funding to offset the difference. Crucially, the provincial government in Alberta recognized that tuition freezes without a make-up in funding is dangerous, and sought to avoid that sort of policy prescription for post-secondary education⁹³.

Since 2005, tuition increases in British Columbia have been capped at a maximum of 2% per annum⁹⁴. This applies to all post-secondary institutions – Universities, Colleges, and Institutes.

In Manitoba, following a decade of tuition freezes, tuition increases are capped to inflationary levels⁹⁵.

The UPEI Student Union recognizes the need for growth in tuition in many circumstances. Costs continue to increase, and Universities do need to account for growth in both expenses and revenue. According to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, tuition will continue to be a cost-driver for students, and is slated to continue to outpace inflation. And according to the Centre's 'Cost-of-Learning Index' – a measure developed which indexes the cost of an education to median- or low-incomes in the stated area – PEI will become the second-most expensive place in the country to study in 2015-2016 for the median family⁹⁶.

Prince Edward Island is one of the few provinces left to have unregulated tuition, by and large. Other provinces have found suitable models that work for students, institutions, and governments, and keep tuition costs predictable and manageable for students. It is the opinion of the UPEI Student Union that the Government of Prince Edward Island

⁹² MUN.ca "Become an Undergraduate Student | Tuition & Fees." Avail: <http://www.mun.ca/undergrad/admissions/fees/>

⁹³ Wingrove and Bradshaw. 18 April 2013. "Students surprised by Alberta tuition freee." Avail: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/education/students-surprised-by-albertas-tuition-freeze/article11370907/>

⁹⁴ Gov't of BC. "Education Costs." Avail: <http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/tuition/>

⁹⁵ Macleans.ca. April 12, 2011. "Manitoba caps tuition at inflation." Avail: <http://www.macleans.ca/education/uniandcollege/manitoba-caps-tuition-at-inflation/>

⁹⁶ Macdonald, David, and Erika Shaker. "Eduflation and the High Cost of Learning." P. 16. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.



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should implement a tuition cap on public post-secondary institutions, indexed to the Consumer Price Index.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the Government of Prince Edward Island implement a tuition cap for all public post-secondary institutions, such that no institution may raise tuition by more than the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index each year.



Policy Statement ID: F04

Category: Affordability

Status: Active

Ratification: September 13, 2015

Review Date: September 13, 2018

Ensuring Adequate Student Loan Funding Availability

It is plain to all that the student financial assistance programs available to students have done much to ensure that students are able to access education. Student loans play a key role in ensuring that students can ensure they are able to pay for both the costs of education and living. While the student loans program is clearly key to post-secondary education for Islanders, does the program account for scalability and growth?

PEI's student loans program is run in tandem with the Canada Student Loans Program, and the province provides \$165 per week and the federal government provides \$210 per week of assistance to full-time students, respectively⁹⁷. These amounts can combine to provide up to \$12,175 in funding for a 34-week study period⁹⁸. While it is not known how recently PEI's weekly limit was raised, the CSLP maximum assistance level was most recently changed in the 2004 Federal Budget⁹⁹.

Since 2002, it is estimated by the UPEI SU that tuition costs alone have increased by approximately 50%¹⁰⁰, with inflation according to CPI having increased roughly 28% over the same time period¹⁰¹. Tuition is not set to level out at this point, either. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives predicts that tuition will continue to outpace inflation and be a cost-driver for students attending post-secondary education¹⁰². It is incumbent upon governments, both provincial and federal, to continue to ensure that our student financial assistance programs keep pace with the ever-increasing costs of obtaining an education. It is an unfortunate reality that as of 2015-2016, 41% of

⁹⁷ Government of Prince Edward Island. "Focus on Your Future: Prince Edward Island Student Financial Assistance Guide." 2013-2014. P. 7.

⁹⁸ Ibid. P. 8.

⁹⁹ Raaflaub, T. Library of Parliament. "Canada Student Loans Program." 2008. Avail: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/content/lop/researchpublications/prb0343-e.htm>

¹⁰⁰ UPEI Academic Calendar 2002-2004; Current Student Statement 2014-2015

¹⁰¹ Statistics Canada. Consumer Price Index, historical summary, by province or territory. Avail: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/econ150a-eng.htm>

¹⁰² Macdonald, David, and Erika Shaker. "Eduflation and the High Cost of Learning." P. 16. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.



Canadian students who received financial aid had assessed need in excess of what the government was permitted to disburse. Furthermore, that number is projected to increase to 51% by 2020¹⁰³. Of students with debt in 2010, 59% had to rely on other forms of borrowing in addition to government student loans to make ends meet¹⁰⁴. Unfortunately, private borrowing brings with it far less support than government borrowing; students can be subject to exorbitant interest rates, may have to make payments while in-study, and may require a co-signer – a difficulty that would disqualify many from low-income backgrounds.

The funding provided by the two student loans programs is acceptable for many students, but there are those who may fall through the cracks due to personal circumstance, which often is unaccounted for in the program's stringent and tightly controlled application process.

In a 2009 report, the Educational Policy Institute examined the impact that provincial needs assessment processes could have on applicant's loans. This allows us an interesting look into the situation for many students – especially those who come from non-traditional or more vulnerable backgrounds. The EPI report found that, indeed, students who came from a non-traditional student background were being shortchanged by the student loans system. When it came to independent¹⁰⁵ students living away from home, over 20% of student loan recipients reported unmet need. For married students, the figure was similar, but at least 30% of single parent students who received aid reported it to not be enough¹⁰⁶. Fundamentally, our student loans program is a social program – and shouldn't social programs be structured to help those who need it most? If our program cannot address the needs of the most vulnerable, we know problems exist.

Further, we know that increasing access to loan funding by raising maximum assistance levels has a variety of desirable effects. According to ESDC information, increasing the maximum assistance levels would have three main effects: (1) The portion of the

¹⁰³ Table 33, Impact of Loan Limit on Loans Issued, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. Actuarial Report on the Canada Student Loans Program. Office of the Chief Actuary, 2012..

¹⁰⁴ CASA et al. "Canadian Student Survey: Next Steps: Upper-Year Canadian PSE Students' Plans and Debt." March 2010.

¹⁰⁵ In this document, an 'independent' student is a student who has spent at least four years out of high school or who has worked full-time for two years.

¹⁰⁶ Educational Policy Institute. "Examination of the Impact of the Provincial Needs Assessment Process for Student Financial Assistance." 2009. P. 104.



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population who were graduates of PSE would increase by a couple of percentage points; (2) Gross Domestic Product would increase slightly and; (3) the measure of income inequality would decrease¹⁰⁷. One cannot deny that each of the three ancillary effects are positive for society in Canada.

The UPEI Student Union recognizes that while for many students, adequate student loan funding is available, there are those who fall through the cracks of the system. These students may have to pursue other financing options, such as private bank loans or credit cards, or they may not attend post-secondary education at all. The UPEI SU seeks to ensure a fair and adequate student loans program for all, and as such recommends inflation indexation as a tool to ensure the availability of student aid continues to grow as other costs do.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the Government of Prince Edward Island index its student loan maximum assistance level to the provincial inflation rate annually.

¹⁰⁷ HRSDC, Gov't of Canada. "Summative Evaluation of the Canada Student Loans Program" 2011.



Policy Statement ID: F05

Category: Affordability

Status: Active

Ratification: September 13, 2015

Review Date: September 13, 2018

Exempting parental income as an asset for Student Loan Assessments

Parental income has long been counted as an asset when student aid personnel are calculating loan amounts across the country, with few exceptions. Alberta and New Brunswick currently exempt parental income in the consideration of assets for student loan eligibility. Additionally, the Government of Canada has included a significant scale back of parental income as an asset for students in the 2015 budget.

It is a shaky assumption for student loan programs to include parental income as an asset. Parents may not always value post-secondary education as an investment; may not be in a financially suitable position to contribute; or may assume the loan programs will cover sufficient amounts for their child's education. Some students are unable to obtain stable government loan funding, and may be forced to turn to private lenders to fund their education. Some students, in fact, may not attain a post-secondary education due to a lack of available funds.

It is the opinion of the UPEI Student Union that the government is wrong to assume parental contributions when calculating loan eligibility. Parental contributions should not be assumed assets when considering whether a student has enough funding to access education.

Participation in post-secondary education varies among different demographics, and the most easily seen differences occur when examining the income backgrounds of a student's family. According to Statistics Canada data, youth who come from lower-income backgrounds attend University at lower rates than those from higher-income backgrounds. Indeed, those with family incomes in the highest quartile were roughly twice as likely to attend University than those in the lowest quartile: 19% for the lowest quartile versus 38% in the highest quartile¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰⁸ Participation in Postsecondary Education: Evidence from the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (StatsCan 2005) (p. 15)

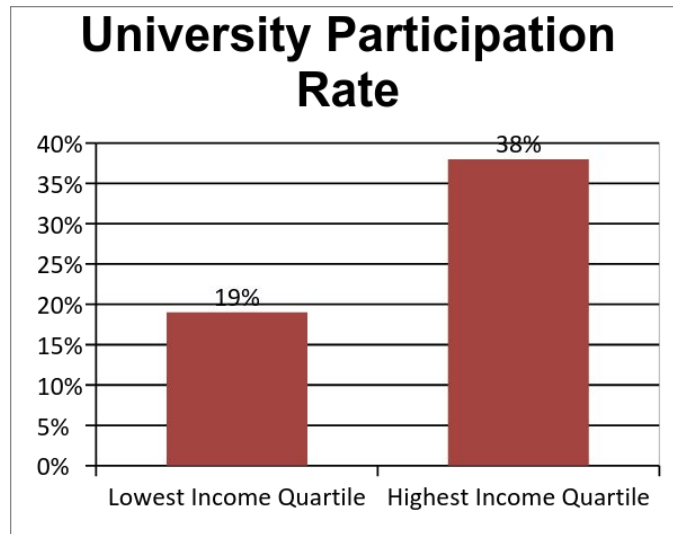
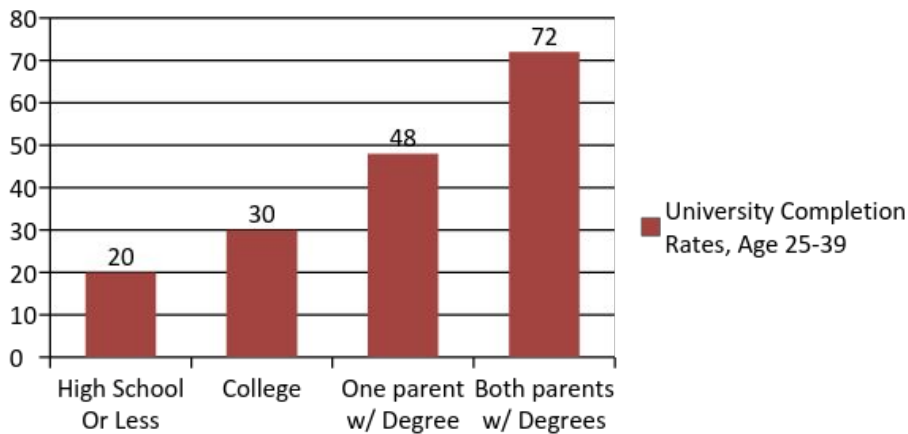


Figure 1: University Attainment by Parental Income¹⁰⁹

We must consider the attendance gap between those who come from lower-income and higher-income backgrounds. There is a clear and demonstrated gap in attendance laid out in figure 1. Those parents with less to contribute are still expected to contribute – could this be restricting their children's

Accessing University by Parental Education Level



access to post-secondary education?

Figure 2: Accessing PSE by Family Educational Background¹¹⁰

As we know, there is a direct link between the likelihood of post-secondary attainment and a family's education. Students who come from a family with a shorter educational history are less likely to attend post-secondary education, and specifically university. In

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.



fact, only 20% of youth will participate in university if their parent(s) had an education which ended with high school or less. Those with parent(s) who had a college level education attained a university education at a rate of 30%.

Those with at least one parent who attained a university education had an attainment rate of 48%. Finally, students who had both parents holding a university degree had the highest attainment rate at 72%¹¹¹.

These different rates of attainment may be due to different values placed on post-secondary education by parents in these situations. These parents could be less likely to value the attainment of university education, and may be less likely to contribute to their child's education. Bearing this in mind, is it fair to assume that parents will contribute to their child's education?

Perhaps most important is that, simply put, parents are contributing far less to their children's education than they used to. In 1965, parents contributed 29.4% of their child's student income. By 2002, that had dropped to just 15.04%. In addition, family loans have dropped to 1.95% of a child's student income¹¹². Furthermore, as of 2009, the average household on Prince Edward Island was only contributing 5.8% of their household expenditures to tuition fees. Evidently, students are getting less than what they once did, though government continues to assume that parents are contributing adequate amounts¹¹³.

¹¹¹ Intergenerational education mobility: University completion in relation to parents' education level. (2011) (p. 39)

¹¹² The More Things Change...: Undergraduate Student Living Standards After 40 Years of the Canada Student Loans Program. (2004) (p. 11)

¹¹³ Survey of household spending (Table 2): Statistics Canada. (2009)

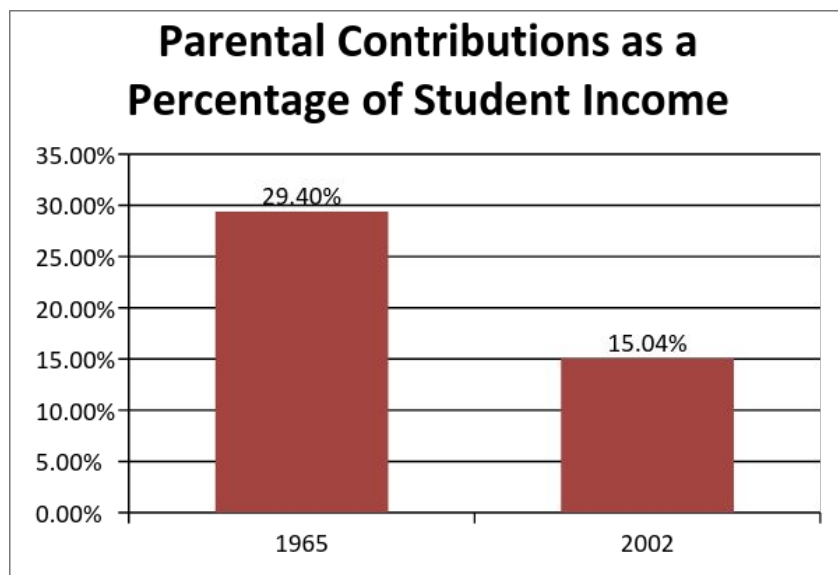


Figure 3: Parental Contributions to a Student's Income¹¹⁴

The current system is unfair and assumes that parents are contributing to their children's education. In many cases, that may not be happening. There may not be enough money to go around; parents may not value a post-secondary education; or parents may assume that their child will be able to afford education on loans alone.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the Government of Prince Edward Island no longer consider or assume parental contributions when carrying out assessments for student loan eligibility.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.



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