

# **An Open Letter from the UPEISU Regarding Labour Negotiations at UPEI**



To the UPEI student body:

As you may be aware, the Collective Agreement between the UPEI Board of Governors and the Faculty Association Bargaining Unit #1 (which consists of faculty members, librarians, sessional instructors, and clinical nursing instructors) is set to expire on June 30th. The Student Union has met with leaders from both the Faculty Association and the Board of Governors Executive Committee to better understand their positions in this year's negotiations and to share the interests of students.

For both parties, the major item at the negotiation table is the university pension plan, which covers all employees of UPEI. In the provincial legislature, the need for a sustainable pension plan in Island post-secondary institutions has been mentioned in two separate speeches from the Throne. Currently, the University's pension plan has a \$35,000,000 shortfall. This means that if the university were to cease operations, dissolve, and payout all of its pension to the plan's members, the university would still be short by \$35,000,000. In recent years, the University has had to make additional contributions from the operating budget to the pension plan to alleviate a portion of the shortfall.

To address a shortfall in the pension plan and to create a more sustainable plan, the University is proposing a series of changes to the plan. These changes are partially modeled after changes the Province made to its own pension plan in 2014, and according to the Board of Governors, it would effectively address the pension shortfall. However, the Faculty Association contends that the changes would significantly reduce the pension they would receive upon retirement.

Of course, while the pension is the most significant item in the ongoing negotiations, other items are also being brought to the table and discussed. The Student Union has articulated to members of the Faculty Association and the Board of Governors its desire to see Student Opinion on Teaching Surveys (SOTS) addressed in the Collective Agreement. We hope both sides will be able to come to a satisfactory agreement on this topic, as well as other items that are important to students.

While we understand that the Faculty Association and the Board of Governors are both trying to secure an agreement that is in their best interests, we urge both parties not to lose sight of the needs and interests of students. With a large increase in enrolment projected for the upcoming academic year, we must continue to ensure that UPEI is an institution where both faculty and administration can come together to provide an outstanding experience and value to UPEI students.

The Student Union's priority is to ensure that students do not miss a day of classes. With both parties involved in the negotiations having expressed their desire to avoid a lockout/strike, we will hold them to their word and trust that they will come together to find a solution.

Below, we have attached a number of resources for you to access if you would like to learn more about each side's perspective and actions. They include the FA's website, the UPEI Labour Negotiations website, and a video link to the University's pension proposal. Students who have any further inquiries may contact UPEISU President, Nathan Hood, at [president@upeisu.ca](mailto:president@upeisu.ca).

**Current Collective Agreement**

[http://files.upei.ca/hr/agreements/fa1\\_ca\\_2012\\_2016.pdf](http://files.upei.ca/hr/agreements/fa1_ca_2012_2016.pdf)

**Faculty Association Website**

<http://www.upeifa.org/home/?q=node/58>

**UPEI Labour Relations Website**

<http://www.upeilabour.ca/updates/>

**UPEI Proposed Solution for the Pension Plan**

<https://youtu.be/D83E-6HoHxl>