



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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Successes

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Policy Statement ID: S01

Category: Affordability

Status: Complete

Ratification: September 13, 2015

Success Date: March 13, 2016

ENSURING ADEQUATE STUDENT LOAN FUNDING AVAILABILITY

***Synopsis:** The UPEI Student Union believes that if the cost of living rises on a yearly basis, so should the amount of student loan funds that students have access to. There hasn't been an increase to weekly maximums in over a decade, and this is an entirely unsustainable practice.*

***Success:** On February 23, 2016 the government of Prince Edward Island published their press release announcing changes to the student financial aid program. Beginning in the 2016-17 academic year, the weekly maximum student loans available to students will increase from \$165 to \$175 per week. This amount will also be indexed to the consumer price index to increase with inflation annually.¹*

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, respectively². These amounts can combine to provide up to \$12,175 in funding for a 34-week study period³. While it is not known

¹

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/index.php3/publications/premier/law/mvr/publications/law/newsroom/newsroom/newroom/index.php3?number=news&newsnumber=10639&dept=&lang=E>

² Government of Prince Edward Island. "Focus on Your Future: Prince Edward Island Student Financial Assistance Guide." 2013-2014. P. 7.

³ Ibid. P. 8.

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how recently PEI's weekly limit was raised, the CSLP maximum assistance level was most recently changed in the 2004 Federal Budget⁴.

Since 2002, it is estimated by the UPEI SU that tuition costs alone have increased by approximately 50%⁵, with inflation according to CPI having increased roughly 28% over the same time period⁶. 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 education⁷. 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 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 2020⁸. Of students with debt in 2010, 59% had to rely on other forms of borrowing in addition to government student loans to make ends meet⁹. 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

⁴ Raaflaub, T. Library of Parliament. "Canada Student Loans Program." 2008. Avail: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/content/lop/researchpublications/prb0343-e.htm>

⁵ UPEI Academic Calendar 2002-2004; Current Student Statement 2014-2015

⁶ 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>

⁷ Macdonald, David, and Erika Shaker. "Eduflation and the High Cost of Learning." P. 16. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

⁸ 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..

⁹ CASA et al. "Canadian Student Survey: Next Steps: Upper-Year Canadian PSE Students' Plans and Debt." March 2010.

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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 independent¹⁰ 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 enough¹¹. 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 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 decrease¹². 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.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ Educational Policy Institute. "Examination of the Impact of the Provincial Needs Assessment Process for Student Financial Assistance." 2009. P. 104.

¹² HRSDC, Gov't of Canada. "Summative Evaluation of the Canada Student Loans Program" 2011.

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Success Date: April 5, 2015

EXPANSION OF THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE GRADUATE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Synopsis: The UPEI Student Union believes that the Graduate Mentorship Program eligibility should be expanded so that all graduates from UPEI can benefit from the program, not just island students. Allowing this to be retention and a recruitment tool will be allowing the province to address the growing demographic concerns of the province.

The *Graduate Mentorship Program* is a program introduced in April 2012 by the government of Prince Edward Island¹³ 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.”¹⁴

“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 2012¹⁵.

“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.”

¹⁶

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

¹⁴ Graduate Mentorship Program Information Sheet. Skills PEI 2013.

¹⁵ Government of PEI News Release (12 April 2012): “Graduate Mentorship program to provide work experience for recent graduates”

¹⁶ Ibid.

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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

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%¹⁷. Nationally, the youth unemployment rate was double that of the all-ages average in March 2013¹⁸. 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.”¹⁹

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)²⁰. 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.

¹⁷ Labour Market Bulletin: Prince Edward Island (Q4 2012) Released: January 2013

¹⁸ StatsCan: Labour Force Survey – March 2013

¹⁹ TD Economics: “Assessing the long-term cost of youth unemployment” (p. 1)

²⁰ Ibid. (p. 4)

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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 years²¹. UPEI can expect, in the future, to see fewer Island students, and increasingly more students from off-island.



Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 1: UPEI population mix, 2011 (UPEI By The Numbers)

As of 2011, almost 30% of students come from out-of-province²².

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 USA²³.

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.

²¹ Abd-el-Aziz: Board of Governors Public Budget Presentation. 9 May 2013.

²² UPEI: By the Numbers. Information sheet. Avail: upei.ca/bythenumbers

²³ MPHEC Annual Digest 2011-2012

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 same²⁴. 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:

“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.”²⁵

“76% of respondents were interested in applying for permanent residency through the federal government’s Canadian Experience Class (CEC) immigration stream.”²⁶

An application for permanent residency through the CEC requires at least one year of full-time, skilled work²⁷. The Graduate Mentorship Program, if expanded, could provide international

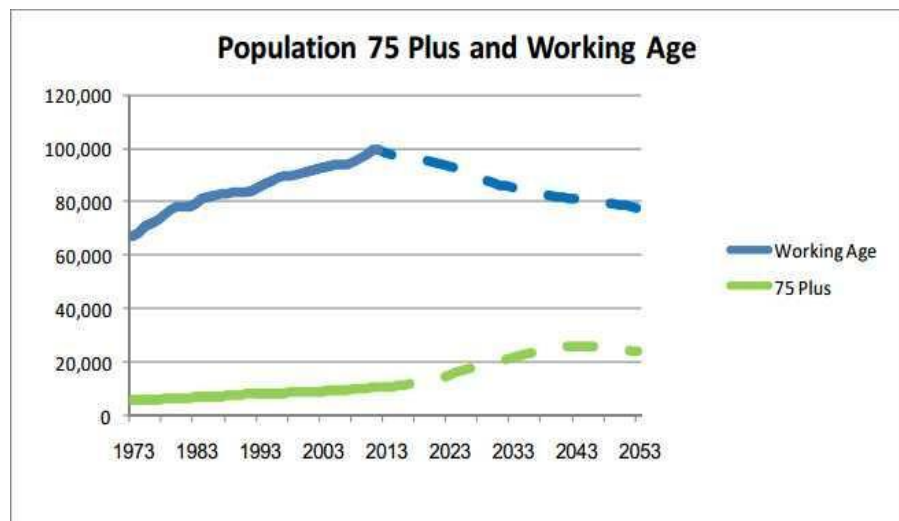


Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 3: Population Projections by Age for PEI

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.

²⁴ Prince Edward Island Settlement Strategy. November 2010. (p. 51)

²⁵ AAU Report: “Immigration and Universities in Atlantic Canada: A Marriage Made in Heaven”

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Determine your eligibility – Canadian Experience Class. Avail:
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/cec/apply-who.asp>

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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

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 increase²⁸.

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.

²⁸ Prince Edward Island Population Projections 2013-2053. April 11, 2013.

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Policy Statement ID: S03

Category: Accountability

Status: Complete

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Success Date: March, 2017

ENSURING UPEI'S TOBACCO USE POLICY IS ENFORCED

***Synopsis:** The UPEI Student Union believes that the University of Prince Edward Island should enforce regulations regarding to smoking on campus for the overall benefit of student health.*

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.²⁹

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 policy recommendation was adopted by the UPEI Student Union Council on September 8th, 2013 and since then, little has changed in regards to people using tobacco products within 9.1 meters of doors on campus.

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 disease³⁰. Further, the CDC says that even brief contact with secondhand smoke can temporarily increase one's risk of a heart attack³¹.

All campuses in the Atlantic Region have policies in place to curb tobacco-use on their grounds, however, an increasing number of campuses have gone completely

²⁹ 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)

³⁰ 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/

³¹ Ibid.

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tobacco-free. There are multiple examples of this, such as Acadia University, which went completely tobacco-free in 2006³². Memorial University announced on August 1st, 2013 that it was officially smoke free, and Saint Mary's University is also a smoke-free campus³³. Saint Mary's will officially be tobacco-free as of September 1st, 2013³⁴.

Given the severe nature of the public health concerns stated by the CDC, it is the view of the UPEI Student Union Academic and External Affairs Committee that no student should be exposed to secondhand smoke while attending classes at the University of Prince Edward Island.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the University of Prince Edward Island amend existing tobacco use policies on campus to create a smoke-free campus that will ensure the safety and well-being of all students and employees at the University.

³² Human Resources ~ Tobacco Free Initiative. Avail: <http://hr.acadiau.ca/tobacco-free-initiative.html>

³³ Memorial smoke-free on August 1st. Avail:
<http://www.mun.ca/marcomm/news/index.php?includefile=showitem.php&id=4036>

³⁴ 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>

Policy Statement ID: S04

Category: Accountability

Status: Complete

Ratification: September 24th, 2017

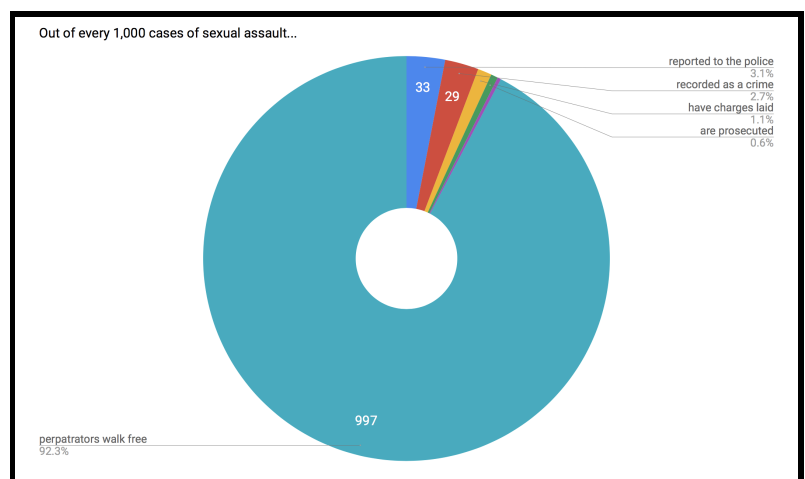
Success: October 2018

Oversight and Accountability in Addressing Sexual Violence on Campus

Success: On October 18th, 2017, the P.E.I. Standing Committee on Education and Economic Development passed a motion stating that the government would, “enact provincial legislation to ensure external oversight of sexual violence policies at its post-secondary institutions.” This was to have oversight onto the forms of justice for survivors, and to create educational programs. In July 2018, the UPEISU attending provincial consultations on the development of this oversight, and will see the official legislation Fall 2018.

While sexual violence continues to be one of the most pervasive issues faced by Canadian society, this issue is particularly prevalent on post-secondary campuses. While the number of sexual assaults that are actually reported may diminish perceptions of the significance of this issue, the University of Prince Edward Island is certainly not immune to sexual violence.

Even without being specifically prompted for feedback on issues of sexual violence on campus, a survey done by the UPEI Student Union as part of annual consultations on advocacy priorities saw a significant number of students commenting that sexual violence and support for survivors was a concern of theirs and something they hoped to see government and the university address.



This only goes to show that while cases of sexual assault may fly under the radar due to lack of data being reported by post-secondary institutions, sexual violence remains a great cause for concern. Sexual assault continues to be the most underreported crime in Canada, and post-secondary campuses are particularly affected. A CBC investigation examining sexual violence on campus indicated that “overall, experts say the number of students reporting sexual assault to universities and colleges is well below the national average.”³⁵

Not only is the crime underreported, but post-secondary students are also particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, as 47% of all sexual assaults are seen in women aged 15 to 24.³⁶ Given that the vast majority of university students are within this age range, it may come as no surprise that some surveys indicate that 1 in 5 women will experience some form of sexual assault while attending an institution of higher education.³⁷

Prince Edward Island is one of only a few provinces in Canada with no legislation or other government authority mandating sexual violence policies on its post-secondary campuses. British Columbia, Manitoba, and Ontario have all recently enacted legislation providing guidance and oversight for post-secondary sexual violence policies, while Nova Scotia has signed a four-year Memorandum of Understanding with its colleges and universities.

Quebec also recently announced a framework for legislation to pass through the Quebec National Assembly by fall 2017, supplemented by a \$23 million dollar investment over the next five years to support its zero-tolerance stance on campus

³⁵ “Sexual assault reporting on Canadian campuses worryingly low, says experts,” *CBC News*, 6 February 2015. Accessed:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sex-assault-reporting-on-canadian-campuses-worryingly-low-say-experts-1.2948321>

³⁶ “Self-reported sexual assault in Canada, 2014,” *Statistics Canada*, 11 July 2017. Accessed:

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2017001/article/14842-eng.htm>

³⁷ “Why don’t Canadian universities want to talk about sexual assault?” *MacLean’s*, 30 October 2014.

Accessed:

<http://www.macleans.ca/education/unirankings/why-dont-canadian-universities-want-to-talk-about-sexual-assault/>

sexual violence.³⁸ While the Government of Alberta does not currently have any formal agreements in place, it has directed its post-secondary institutions to create stand-alone sexual assault policies.

These government initiatives do not just touch on the need for clear and equitable reporting frameworks for dealing with cases of sexual assault on post-secondary campuses, but also provide guidance and set standards for education and prevention programming in an effort to better educate students, provide more well-rounded supports for survivors, and stop sexual assaults before they occur.

Not only is this type of government initiative important from a social perspective for setting a zero-tolerance stance on sexual violence, but it makes sense from an economic perspective as well. Given that it is one of the most pervasive crimes in all Canadian provinces, sexual violence is one of the most costly crimes weighing in at \$4.8 billion annually, even more costly than gun violence at \$3.1 billion.³⁹

Beyond even these considerations, government initiative on the issue of sexual violence on post-secondary campuses sends a strong and clear message. Enacting legislation would demonstrate that the Province of Prince Edward Island does not tolerate sexual violence on its campuses and that it is willing to support survivors and the community at large with the full support of government and the law.

Regardless of stand-alone sexual assault policies which may currently exist in the province, legislation provides a necessary level of accountability for post-secondary



³⁸ "Quebec to invest \$23M for new 'zero-tolerance' campus sexual assault policy," *CBC News*, August 21, 2017. Accessed: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-provincial-sexual-assault-policy-campus-1.4255310>.

³⁹ "Statistics," *Sexual Assault Centre Hamilton and Area*. Accessed: <http://sacha.ca/resources/statistics>.

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institutions. External oversight must exist in order to ensure that these policies are thorough, robust, and survivor-centric.

The cohesion of policies across different institutions is also a crucial consideration. It is essential that students across the province have access to the same support, treatment, and educational initiatives, regardless of which post-secondary institution in the province they choose to attend.

Should the Province of Prince Edward Island decide to move in the direction of other Canadian provinces in enacting legislation on sexual violence at its post-secondary institutions, Islanders could remain assured that the Province is prepared to take every step to protect the safety and well-being of students throughout their post-secondary careers in Prince Edward Island.

The UPEI Student Union recommends: that the Government of Prince Edward Island enact provincial legislation to ensure external oversight of sexual violence policies at its post-secondary institutions.

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Policy Statement ID: S05

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Ratification: September 8, 2013

Success Date: April 2018

CREATING A NEEDS-BASED PROVINCIAL STUDENT GRANT PROGRAM

***Synopsis:** The UPEI Student Union believes that in order for a grant system to address increasing access to post-secondary, it needs to have a needs-based test. Amending the program to provide more funding to those who really need it would be a major step towards addressing financial need for post-secondary education in the province.*

***Success:** In the 2018 PEI Provincial Budget, the Government of Prince Edward Island enhanced investments into student financial aid. Under the new “Island Advantage Bursary”, a new needs-based financial aid program was introduced. The program is targeted to low to middle income students, to provide non-repayable grants to those who need it most. The UPEISU is excited to see the increased accessibility to post-secondary education for students on PEI. Although this is a historic win for the UPEISU, we look forward to continue advocating for a flat-rate contribution model, and extending these grants to graduate students.*

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 study⁴⁰. 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 study⁴¹. If the student graduates in

⁴⁰ “Student Financial Services: George Coles Bursary” Accessed:

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

⁴¹ “Island Student Award 2012-2013” (p. 2) Accessed: <http://www.gov.pe.ca/forms/pdf/2069.pdf>

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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 year⁴².george coles

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.

A similar program still exists in Nova Scotia, with the addition of some reduction for out-of-province students. Previously, a similar program had also existed in Ontario with a relatively high income cap (these programs will be discussed in depth later in this document). In 2016, Ontario announced a new Ontario Student Grant program, New Brunswick passed the Tuition Access Bursary, and the Government of Canada announced a 50% increase in funding for the Canada Student Grant Program for low and middle income families. Alberta also has a needs-based grant to help students in one-year certificate programs. The difference with these new programs is that they are all needs-based grants. Creating needs-based grants has a number of positive benefits. First, it ensures that students who need financial assistance the most will receive the most aid. Secondly, it reduces reduces the overall rate of student debt and lastly, it addresses the need to pay for school up front, as opposed to tax credits which reimburse students for funding their education. Tax credits have been proven by the Parliamentary Budget Officer to significantly benefit high-income students more than low-income students⁴³.

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 \$128.30 per course. For domestic, out-of-province students, the amount is \$26.10 per course⁴⁴. This model is similar to PEI, with the addition of extending benefits of the program to students from out-of-province, which could be a valuable recruitment tool.

⁴² “Student Financial Services: George Coles Graduate Scholarship 2013-2014” Accessed:

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

⁴³ “Federal Spending on Post-Secondary Education” Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer. Accessed:

http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/web/default/files/Documents/Reports/2016/PSE/PSE_EN.pdf

⁴⁴ “Nova Scotia University Student Bursary Program” Accessed:

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

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Ontario has put an emphasis on needs-based grants in the past and made a further investment in 2016. For several years, Ontario provided a grant that paid 30% of a student's tuition during their years of study at post-secondary institutions in the province, provided the student was an Ontario resident. The income cap on that program was \$160,000 in combined parental income⁴⁵. This program will end in 2017 and its funding will be re-allocated to the new Ontario Student Grant. Students in Ontario will now receive enough financial aid in grants to cover the full cost of their tuition if they come from a family with a combined income of less than \$50,000. Grants will still be awarded to families who make up to \$83,000, just at a reduced rate⁴⁶.

Similarly, New Brunswick passed the Tuition Access Bursary (TAB) in 2016 that will provide enough money in grants to cover the cost of tuition for students with a family income of less than \$60,000⁴⁷.

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 eligible⁴⁸.

The Government of Canada has also made a significant investment in needs-based grants in the 2016 Budget. The Canada Student Grant Program founded in 2009 received a 50% increase in funding, bringing the grant up to \$3000 for students from low-income families, \$1200 for middle-income families, and \$1800 for part-time students.⁴⁹

It should be noted as well that the expansion of the Canada Student Grant Program announced by the Government of Canada in the 2016 Budget came at the expense of the Education Tax Credit and the Textbook Tax Credit. While this was a progressive decision, as the Parliamentary Budget Officer had stated that tax credits benefited students from high-income families who had the lower financial need, the program did not extend grants to graduate students. Graduate students have high financial need that is usually above and beyond what the Canada Student Loan Program would be able to

⁴⁵ "30% Off Ontario Tuition." Accessed: <http://www.ontario.ca/education-and-training/30-off-ontario-tuition>

⁴⁶ "New Ontario Student Grant" Avail: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/new-ontario-student-grant>

⁴⁷ "Tuition Access Bursary (TAB): Avail: http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/post-secondary_education_training_and_labour/promo/TAB.html

⁴⁸ Student Aid Alberta webpage. Avail: <http://studentaid.alberta.ca/before-you-apply/types-of-funding/>

⁴⁹ Budget 2016 - Help for the Middle Class. Avail: <http://www.budget.gc.ca/2016/docs/plan/ch1-en.html>

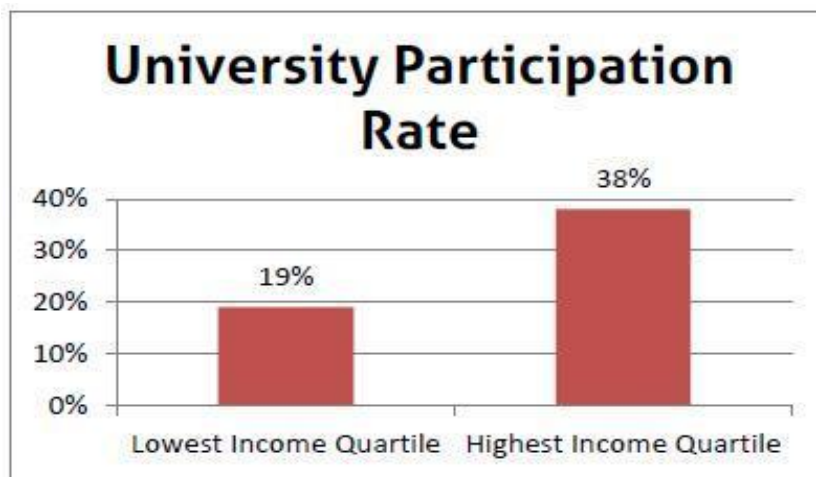
cover. Tax credits were very important to graduate students and as a result of their removal, graduate students have been left with less financial aid. If the Province were to move forward with a needs-based grants program, it would be important for the program to extend to providing support to graduate students at UPEI.

To make up for the drop in support that families from middle and high income families may experience with a needs-based grants system, it is recommended that the Government of Prince Edward Island adopt a flat-rate contribution system similar to the Government of Canada to replace current needs-based assessments for loans⁵⁰.

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 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 quartile⁵¹: those from the highest income quartile were twice as likely to attend.

Figure 1: University Participation Rates by Family Income⁵²



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

⁵¹ Participation in Post-Secondary Education: Evidence from the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (StatsCan 2005) (p. 15)

⁵² Ibid.

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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.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the Government of Prince Edward Island replace all current needs assessments for student loans to a flat-rate contribution.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that needs-based financial grants be extended to graduate students.

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Policy Statement ID: S06

Status: Complete

Date of Ratification: September 10th, 2017

Success Date: April 2018

Providing Sustainable Supports for Mental Health & Well-Being

Success: During a letter-writing campaign, students reached out to local MLAs and MPs for a call to action to enhance mental health supports and initiatives on campus. Specifically, the UPEISU advocated for \$25 per-student funding per year to achieve this. The 2018 Provincial Budget confirmed this ask and the UPEI campus will now see mental health services and supports in the coming years. The UPEI SU applauds this investment into student mental health and recognizes this as a substantial advocacy win.

There are a number of reasons why university students are a key demographic when looking to improve mental health and well-being in communities. University students face a number of unique challenges which put them at a greater risk of suffering from mental health issues. The majority of mental health disorders tend to surface between the ages of 18 to 24, meaning that students will most often experience their first symptoms of mental illness while at university.

What's more is that mental health issues amongst students seem to be increasing at an alarming rate. Research demonstrates that the suicide rate amongst university-aged youth has tripled since the 1950's, with men tending to be disproportionately affected by thoughts of suicide, with two times as many young men (ages 20 - 24) committing suicide as compared to young women.⁵³

Combined with the additional difficulties many students face when they find themselves distanced from their established support networks as they are living away from home for the first time, as well as the stresses of the tremendous academic and financial

⁵³ "Crisis on Campus: the Untold Story of Student Suicides," *College Degree Search*. Accessed: <http://www.collegedegreesearch.net/student-suicides/> .

demands that come along with higher education, the necessity of funding well-rounded and substantial mental health supports for students becomes evidently clear.⁵⁴

Supporting mental health services is not only a social obligation of our provinces, but has proven benefits for the community at large. A report done by the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance describes the positive impacts of supporting the mental well-being of students:

“There is increasing evidence to suggest that mental wellness is closely linked with academic success, student persistence, and student retention, all of which are of tremendous benefit to the institutions and government from a financial and reputational perspective.”⁵⁵

A number of provinces across Canada have recognized and acted upon the need to support mental well-being on campus. The province of Alberta recently saw funding announcements of \$25.8 million over three years to support mental health services for post-secondary students across the province.⁵⁶ Ontario also announced in its 2017 provincial budget that it would be increasing its yearly investments in mental health services and supports for its post-secondary students by \$15 million per year.⁵⁷

Should the province of Prince Edward Island move in the same positive direction as other provinces across Canada, a per-student funding model would provide the most sustainable and equitable option. Such a model would ensure that funding is sustainable in that it fluctuates at the same rate as enrolment.

⁵⁴ Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, “Student Health: Bringing Healthy Change to Ontario’s Universities,” *Campus Mental Health*, May 2012, P. 10. Accessed:

<https://campusmentalhealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Student-Health-2012.pdf> .

⁵⁵ Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, “Student Health: Bringing Healthy Change to Ontario’s Universities,” *Campus Mental Health*, May 2012, P. 12. Accessed:

<https://campusmentalhealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Student-Health-2012.pdf> .

⁵⁶ “Improving post-secondary students’ mental health,” *Alberta Government*, 20 June 2017. Accessed:

<https://www.alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=47143BE408224-AAB2-7176-D584AF992BD423D8> .

⁵⁷ “Ontario Boosts Mental Health Supports for People Across Province,” *Ontario*, 3 May 2017. Accessed:

<https://news.ontario.ca/maesd/en/2017/05/ontario-boosts-mental-health-supports-for-people-across-the-province.html> .

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The UPEI Student Union recommends: That the Government of Prince Edward Island invest in a per-student funding model dedicated to supporting the enhancement of mental health and wellness supports and initiatives for post-secondary students in Prince Edward Island.

The UPEI Student Union further recommends: That the Government of Prince Edward Island engage in active consultation and collaboration with students as it examines mental health services on its post-secondary campuses.

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Policy Statement ID: S07

Category: Accessibility

Status: Complete

Ratification: September 13, 2015

Success Date: April 2018

**ESTABLISH A MULTI-YEAR FUNDING FRAMEWORK THAT
ALLOWS UPEI TO PLAN LONG-TERM**

Synopsis: The UPEI Student Union believes that UPEI being aware of its finances only on a one year basis creates significant issues for its planning. This also creates a level of uncertainty for students because they can't predict how much their tuition will rise every academic year. To address the importance of long-term planning at the University, the Government should create a 4 year rolling budget for the University.

Success: The 2018 budget, announced in April, confirmed the Government of Prince Edward Island will sign onto a multi-year funding agreement with UPEI. The province has confirmed it will be doubling the annual increase in funding to a 2% increase in operating income. With this, the University can now better plan for the long-term. As we have been advocating for this since 2015, the UPEI SU recognizes this as an advocacy win from the 2018 Provincial Budget.

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.

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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 country⁵⁸. 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 years⁵⁹. In the 2015 Budget, UPEI received an 8% increase which included funding for the new Engineering school⁶⁰. 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

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 performance⁶¹. 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

⁵⁸ "The University of Prince Edward Island Economic Impact Assessment" (2014) pg. 17

⁵⁹ "UPEI board approves "bare bones" budget." *Academica Top Ten*. 10 May 2012. Avail: <http://academica.ca/top-ten/upei-board-approves-bare-bones-budget>

⁶⁰ "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>

⁶¹ "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.

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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.

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Policy Statement ID: S08

Category: Accountability

Status: Complete

Ratification: September 7, 2014

Success Date: April 2018

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

***Synopsis:** The UPEI Student Union believes that due to the amount of tax dollars that go to the University's annual budget, the University should be subject to the provincial Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPP). FOIPP provides an avenue for students to request information about their University through an open, accessible, and accountable system.*

***Success:** In May 2018, amendments to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act were tabled to now include post-secondary institutions, such as UPEI, Holland College, and College de l'Île, as well as municipalities. Documents such as internal reports and emails are included under this act. As of June 2018, these amendments were passed and the changes will take effect in April 2019. Students will no longer be required to pay the current university fees to access information through the Access to Information and Privacy Office . Although this was a win for UPEISU advocacy, the legislation is not retroactive, and this will be something we will continue to advocate on into the future.*

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, Canada⁶². 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 Case Review Officer, Maria MacDonald, there are five main purposes of the *FOIPP* Act:

⁶² UPEI Operating Budget 2016-2017. Pgs. 5 & 9. Avail:
http://files.upei.ca/finance/operating_budget_2016-2017.pdf

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- “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.”⁶³

In 2017, UPEI implemented a new “Access to Information and Protection of Personal Information and Privacy Policy.” A new “Access to Information and Privacy Office” was also established. While these efforts prove a move in the right direction, this new policy and Office do not satisfy a number of basic accountability and accessibility measures at the heart of Access to Information principles. In regards to accountability, there are two major concerns: firstly, there is the basic principle that, regardless of UPEI’s new policy, those overseeing UPEI’s budgets themselves are still doing their own access to information rulings. Independent oversight is absolutely necessary in order to provide appropriate accountability measures when public dollars are involved. Secondly, UPEI’s new policy is not retroactive. That is to say, that the only information within the purview of this policy is that which came to being on or after May 1st, 2017.

In addition to these flaws in accountability, the exorbitant costs associated with UPEI’s Access to Information requests do not lend themselves well to an accessible system. UPEI charges an initial application fee of \$25.00, with \$40.00 per hour charged after the initial hour for preparation services such as locating and retrieving records and preparing and handling records for disclosure.⁶⁴⁶⁵ To put these numbers into context, a member of the public looking for some data in regards to the makes and models of cars driven by UPEI students paid \$166 to obtain 2017 parking permit records.⁶⁶ To compare these fees to Access to Information requests through the Government of Prince Edward Island, there is an initial fee of \$5.00 for general Access to Information requests, with

⁶³ 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.

⁶⁴ UPEI Policy: “Access to Information and Protection of Personal Information and Privacy.” Avail: <http://www.upei.ca/policy/files/policy/Access%20to%20Information%20and%20Protection%20of%20Personal%20Information%20and%20PrivacyApproved.pdf>

⁶⁵ “Office of the Vice-President Administration and Finance - Access to Information and Privacy Office.” UPEI Website. Avail: <http://www.upei.ca/vpaf/access-information-and-privacy-office>

⁶⁶ Peter Rukivina. “I Paid \$166 for Data about Parked Cars.” *Ruk.ca*. Avail: <https://ruk.ca/content/i-paid-166-data-about-parked-cars>

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\$10 charged for every half hour following the initial two free hours.⁶⁷ Therefore, we see that, in effect, UPEI's policy offers less information at greater costs than government FOIPP requests, with no external oversight or accountability.

Prince Edward Island is currently the only provincial jurisdiction in Canada which does not extend its freedom of information legislation to universities⁶⁸⁶⁹. 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 2017, Information and Privacy Commissioner, Karen Rose, submitted recommendations relating to the upcoming review of PEI's FOIPP legislation, in which she recommended that post-secondary educational institutions be added as public bodies under the *FOIPP Act*. Commissioner Rose stated in her report that: "While the two Island post-secondary educational institutions have recently adopted policies about access to information and protection of personal information, these policies are at the discretion of the institutions, and, further, there is no independent oversight of their processes or decisions."⁷⁰

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 access to information and for privacy are adequately balanced, and professional and impartial oversight is provided⁷¹.

⁶⁷ "FOIPP Fees." Government of Prince Edward Island Website. Avail:

<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/justice-and-public-safety/foipp-fees-0>

⁶⁸ "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>

⁶⁹ 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/>

⁷⁰ "FOIPP Act Review - Recommendations of the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner." Report to the Standing Committee on Communities, Land and Environment - 2 October 2017. Avail:

<http://www.assembly.pe.ca/docs/oipc-FOIPP-Act-recommendations.pdf>

⁷¹ *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

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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 this transparency with open arms. Institutions receiving public funding must always be willing to be as open and accountable as possible in regards to their activities.

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.

Policy Statement ID: S09

Category: Accountability

Status: Complete

Ratification: November 8, 2020

Success Date:

Investing into a Provincial Experiential Education Fund Pilot Project: Preparing Students for the Workforce

Principle

Experiential Education is an instrumental component of post-secondary education to which all post-secondary students should have access prior to joining the labour market.

Concern

Current Experiential Education opportunities are limited, not accessible to all students, not inclusive of all disciplines, and not provincially funded.

Recommendation

The UPEISU recommends that the Government invest \$200,000 in an Experiential Learning Fund Pilot Project to create a student grant and a student wage subsidy program.

Supporting Evidence:

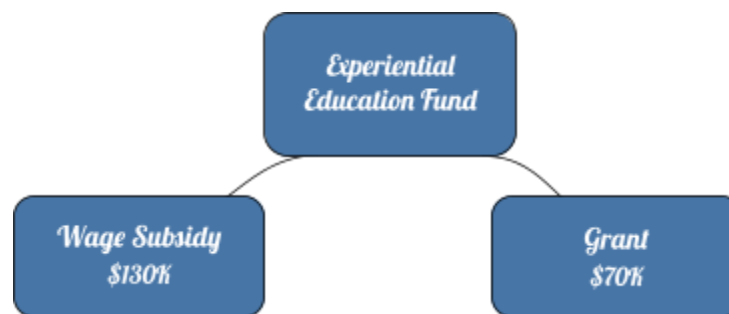
Experiential Education provides students with the opportunity to apply their knowledge and gain real-life experience in job fields relating to their studies. However, there is limited funding, variety, and availability of established programs on PEI. According to Statistics Canada, PEI's youth unemployment rate was 17.2% as of May 2020, while unemployment of those 15 years and over was 13.9% for the same period.⁷²

Experiential Education opportunities are more available in the fields of Sciences, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), as they are usually built into the

⁷² Statistics Canada. *Labour force characteristics by province, monthly, seasonally adjusted*. May 2020.
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1410028703&pickMembers%5B0%5D=3.1&pickMembers%5B1%5D=4.2>

program. UPEI co-op programs are mostly aimed at Business students and require extra costs, which puts students at a disadvantage. A co-op student will have to pay an acceptance fee to become part of the program and also a course fee for the classes rendered.

The lack of co-op opportunities leads to wage disparities among graduates. Students who participate in co-op programs earn, on average, \$20,000 more after graduation than those who do not.⁷³ The Government of PEI, along with the Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET), cited “providing opportunities for students to engage in community-based/experiential learning” as one of the goals of the *Atlantic Career Development Framework for Public Education: 2015-2020*.⁷⁴ By investing \$200,000 in an annual Experiential Learning Fund, the Government of PEI can provide grants to eliminate barriers students face while in a work placement and offer wage subsidy to employers which will facilitate student access to work integrated learning opportunities during their studies.



In 2018, the Government of New Brunswick invested \$18.4 million into the creation of a fully-funded framework for new experiential learning programming. This framework included the Student Experiential Learning Fund (SELF) that provided wage subsidies and tackled various student costs. The framework also provided funding for a platform, employer incentives and more, under the framework now called FutureReadyNB.⁷⁵

⁷³ Finnie, R., Masashi, M. Education Policy Research Initiative. *The Earnings Outcomes of Post-Secondary Co-op Graduates: Evidence From Tax-Linked Administrative Data*. 2017.
<https://www.epri.ca/projects-1/2017/9/13/access-to-post-secondary-education-how-ontario-compares-99jy4-xptey-haz-e2-dlzje-3d46b-hs2z7>

⁷⁴ Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training. *Atlantic Career Development Framework for Public Education: 2015-2020*. June 2015.

https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/eelc_future_in_focus_camet.pdf

⁷⁵ Blue, E., Workman, B. *Shared Perspectives: A Joint Publication on Preparing Students for the Workforce*. April 2019.

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In Nova Scotia, the Government subsidizes 50% to 85% of every co-op student's wage. Companies that hire students from diverse or underrepresented groups receive an additional subsidy of 10%.⁷⁶

Inclusion of the post-secondary institutions, such as the UPEI Experiential Education Office, to administer the program will facilitate student access to the opportunities and ensure that jobs offered include students from all faculties and disciplines. In addition, the Experiential Education Office houses a job posting webpage that could facilitate student access to opportunities.⁷⁷ Hence, we urge the Government to collaborate with post-secondary institutions for administering this program.

It is crucial for the program and employment opportunities to be inclusive of international students, who are essential for the PEI economy and community as a whole. International students makeup 28.9% of the UPEI student population⁷⁸, and just in 2017 international students contributed an average spending of 39,714,882 in PEI.⁷⁹

Investing in an Experiential Learning Fund is essential to economic growth. The Fund will subsidize student wages, and create student grants while in a work placements. Wage subsidies should be a minimum of 50% of a student's wage, with additional subsidies to small and medium-sized enterprises, not-for-profit organizations, and companies that hire students of diverse and underrepresented backgrounds. The Government should work with post-secondary institutions in administering the program to ensure optimum accessibility and inclusion.

The UPEISU recommends that the Government invest \$200,000 annually for a post-secondary Experiential Education Fund.

https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/casaacae/pages/2953/attachments/original/1555348651/1-Shared_Perspectives_3_en_3MB.pdf?1555348651

⁷⁶ Bray, T., McDaniel, C .Shared Perspectives. P.18-20

⁷⁷ UPEI Career Services. <https://www.upei.ca/career-services/job-postings>

⁷⁸ UPEI by the Numbers. 2019. https://files.upei.ca/president/upei_by_the_numbers_2019.pdf

⁷⁹ The Economic Impact of International Students in Atlantic Canada. CAMET. February 2018. https://immediac.blob.core.windows.net/camet-camef/images/2018-02-20_EconomicImpactofInternationalStudents-WEB.PDF

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Policy Statement ID: A01

Category: Accessibility

Status: Active

Ratification: January 26, 2014

Review Date: January 26, 2020

ENSURING AVAILABILITY OF GENDER-NEUTRAL WASHROOMS

***Synopsis:** The UPEI Student Union believes that all students deserve the right to feel safe and accepted on campus. By providing at least one gender-neutral washroom in every building on campus, UPEI can provide students with an equitable atmosphere to meet their diverse needs.*

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”).”⁸⁰

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

⁸⁰ “Neutral Restrooms – UC Davis LGBTQ Resource Center” Avail: <http://lgbcenter.ucdavis.edu/resources/gnr>

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restroom per building be designated “multi-gender”. According to the proposal: “For a number of people ... accessing public washrooms becomes an anxiety-provoking and potentially dangerous activity.”⁸¹. 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.⁸² According to CBC News, the switch of ten washrooms at the U of R cost the University just \$2,000.⁸³ 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.

⁸¹ “Space Proposal: gender and campus washrooms” Submitted to UPEI Space Management Cttee. by A. Braithwaite, T. Smith.

⁸² 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>

⁸³ Ibid.

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Policy Statement ID: A02

Category: Accessibility

Status: Active

Ratification: September 13, 2015

Review Date: September 13, 2021

PROVIDING CREDIT FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE ENGLISH ACADEMIC PREPARATION PROGRAM

***Synopsis:** The UPEI Student Union recognizes the large costs to international students who must enroll in the English Academic Prep (F) program while they attend UPEI. When domestic students take courses, such as Spanish or French, they receive credit for the work they put in. The UPEI Student Union believes that these international students should be granted credit as well upon completion of the EAP program for the work they put in.*

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 \$13,974 for tuition and fees. That is double what a domestic student will pay.⁸⁴

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 a non-primary language. When a domestic student takes a course, or even a program in

⁸⁴ UPEI Tuition and Fees

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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 English as an additional language. In fact, the same applies for French in the program.⁸⁵ Similarly, upon completion of EAP 5 and EAP 6 at Saint Mary's University, students can receive up to 6 transfer credit hours.⁸⁶

If the University of Prince Edward Island began offering credit for the completion of the EAP it would have a number of 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. Additionally, when examining the average grades of EAP students and non-EAP international students there is only a slight difference in performance. Non-EAP international students have an average grade of 73.6, while EAP students have an average grade of 69.9, this demonstrates that EAP students are capable of succeeding at a "credit" level.⁸⁷

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 retention.⁸⁸ The UPEI Student Union wants to see all students integrated in the community as much as possible, therefore we recommend

⁸⁵ English as a second language. University of Ottawa.

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

⁸⁶ English for Academic Purposes, Saint Mary's University.

<https://www.smu.ca/international/tlc/eap.html>

⁸⁷ Gong, Yuqin, UPEI 2010-2014 Cohort Study.

⁸⁸ Gillan, Cathy. "Rationale for awarding credit upon completion of EAP" September 4, 2009.

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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 2017-2018 academic year, there were 1008 full-time International students at UPEI.⁸⁹ 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 two International Student Advisors for all students.

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

⁸⁹ UPEI By The Numbers, November 2017

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Policy Statement ID: A03

Category: Accessibility

Status: Active

Ratification: November 1, 2015

Review Date: November 1, 2021

ADOPTING A 12-MONTH COURSE CALENDAR

***Synopsis:** The UPEI Student Union believes that the University of Prince Edward Island should implement a 12-month-course calendar. The number of students taking a full course load in the fall and winter sessions has steadily decreased, and more students are relying on summer sessions to complete their degree. A 12-month-course calendar would aid students with the long-term planning of their postsecondary education.*

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 33% of students who start in Arts, Business, Science, and Nursing manage to graduate within the standard four years⁹⁰. 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 2017, nearly 54% of middle-year students in Canada worked while enrolled at school, and they worked 17 hours a week on average.⁹¹ Students need to work more

⁹⁰ "Graduation Rate by Faculty" Yuqin Gong

⁹¹ Prairie Research Associates for Canada University Consortium, 2017

than they used to and the majority of students do not take the traditional course load. In fact, as of 2016-2017, only 40% of students at UPEI were taking the full course load⁹². 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 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 major 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 2017, there were 1998⁹³.

⁹² "Undergraduate Student Course Load, by Faculty and Semester" Yuqin Gong.

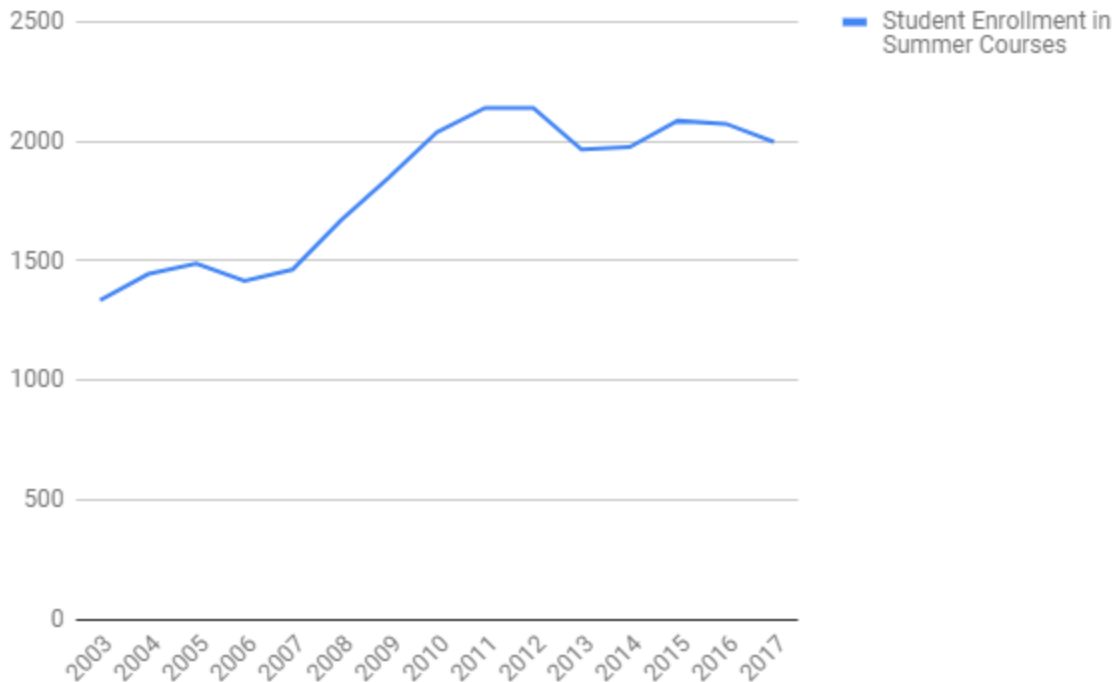
⁹³ "Headcounts in Summer Sessions, Historical Trend" Yuqin Gong

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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.

Policy Statement ID: A04

Status: Active

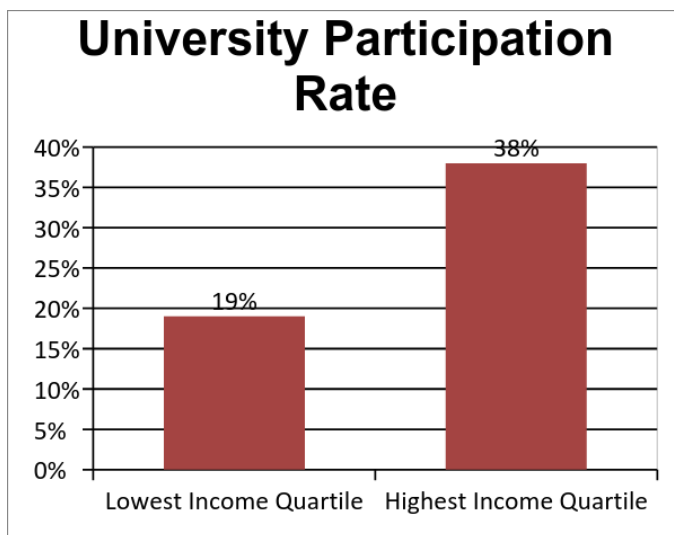
Date of Ratification: September 2013

Review Date: September 2019

IMPLEMENTING A PROVINCIAL STUDENT DEBT CAP

Synopsis: For many students, especially those from low-income backgrounds, student debt is unavoidable when obtaining a post-secondary education. Although incurring student debt is a common part of attending post-secondary education, for many, student debt can become so high that the unfavourable repayment rates increases the likelihood of defaulting and ruining the credit rating of students who are just trying to advance themselves.

Under the current student loan program in Prince Edward Island, if someone were to be assessed at maximum need for four consecutive years, their overall student debt would total \$54,460. That is an incredible amount of debt. In 2015, Prince Edward Island



students had an average of \$27,000 in student debt, well above the Canadian average⁹⁴. Unfortunately, those who are likely to incur the highest amount of debt in our Province, are the ones who come from less fortunate backgrounds. If we examine post-secondary attendance by income quartile, only 19% of people from the lowest income quartile are attending, while 38% from the highest income quartile are attending post-secondary⁹⁵.

One of the reasons why the low-income quartile could have lower University attendance rates is because they are more debt averse. Research conducted in the United

⁹⁴ Student Debt Rates, New Brunswick Student Alliance. Tweet.

⁹⁵ Participation in Postsecondary Education: Evidence from the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (StatsCan 2005) (p. 15)

Kingdom has found that low-income families, racialized communities, and single parents are more likely to have a negative view of student debt. They are more likely to view it as debt as opposed to an investment⁹⁶.

Taking on debt is a necessary factor for many though, as mentioned before. Post-secondary education is a valuable investment to make. It is the responsibility of government to ensure that everyone feels comfortable making that valuable investment. Recognizing the debt aversion of low-income families is important, and government should be taking steps to reduce the amount of debt accumulated by students.

Some provinces have taken the steps of implementing a provincial cap on student debt. For example, in the 2011-2012 budget, the government of Nova Scotia implemented a debt cap of \$28,560 so that students who have more need than that would never reach a level of debt deemed too high by government⁹⁷. Ontario, similarly has a debt cap of \$7,500 for two-term academic years, or \$11,500 for three-term academic years⁹⁸. Any loans that are incurred beyond these caps is forgiven by the Province immediately.

Given that the average student debt in Prince Edward Island is \$27,000 it is likely that there are many people in the Province incurring debt loads from the student loan program that are much higher than the caps that are being set out by Nova Scotia and Ontario. If the Province wants to increase accessibility to post-secondary, it needs to recognize the debt aversion of lower income families and respond by finding ways to reduce debt loads. Implementing a debt cap would certainly send the message that post-secondary is accessible for everyone, especially to those who need it most.

The UPEI Student recommends that the Government of Prince Edward Island take steps to implement a cap on student debt so that no student can incur an unreasonable amount of debt.

⁹⁶ Callender, Claire & Jon Jackson. "Fear of Debt and Higher Education Participation." London South Bank University, November 2004

⁹⁷ "Backgrounder: Student Debt Cap. CBC. Apr 6, 2011. Avail:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/backgrounder-student-debt-cap-1.1024684>

⁹⁸ "Pay back your OSAP". Government of Ontario. Avail: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/pay-back-osap>

Policy Statement ID: A05

Category: Accessibility

Status: Active

Ratification: September 10th, 2017

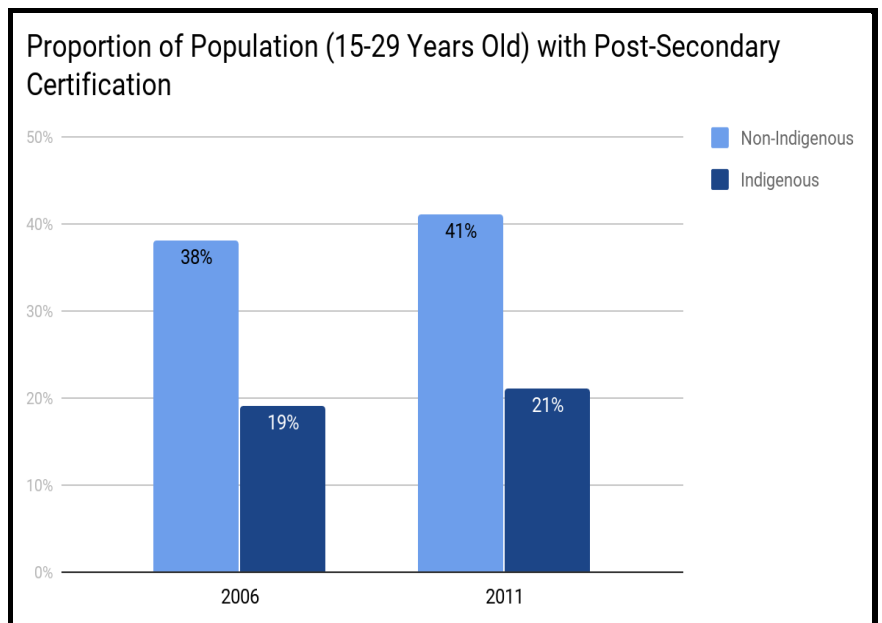
Review Date: September 10th, 2020

Indigenizing the University of Prince Edward Island and Moving Towards Reconciliation

While the number of Indigenous youth attaining post-secondary education has risen in recent years, these levels have not risen at the same rate as Non-Indigenous youth.⁹⁹

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada recognized in its research that:

“While 9% of Métis youth and 7% of Other First Nations (non-status) youth held university certification, only 3% of Registered Indian youth and 2% of Inuk youth had the same level of certification. In comparison, 19% of Non-Indigenous youth had university certification.”¹⁰⁰



Discrepancies in university attainment levels between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous youth are most pronounced when compared to trades or apprenticeship and college or CEGEP attainment levels. While Non-Indigenous youth saw an increase of 2.8% in their

⁹⁹ “Indigenous Youth - Post-Secondary Education and the Labour Market,” *Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada*, 4 July 2016. Accessed: <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1451931236633/1451932655379>

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

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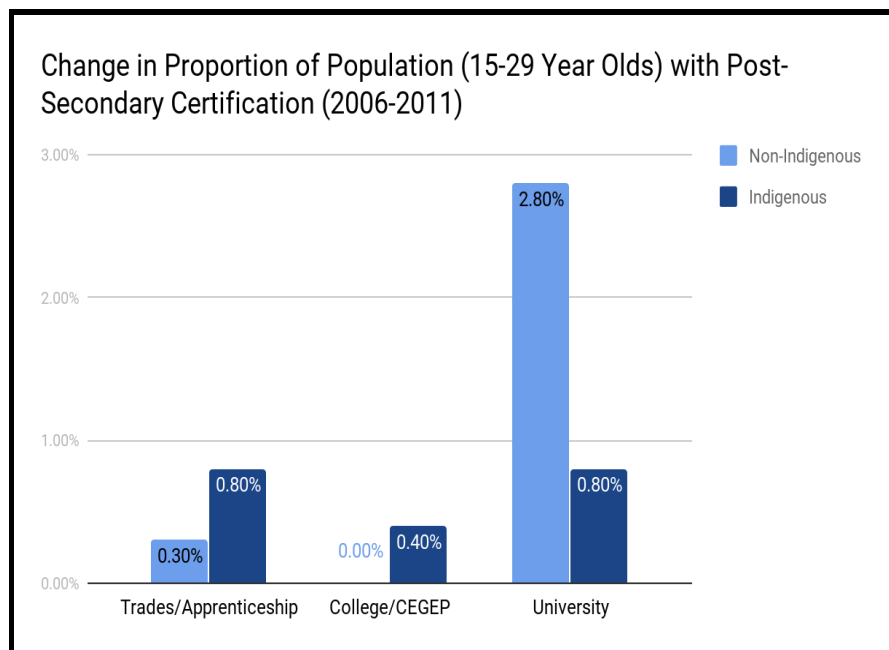
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university level certification and only a 0.3% increase in trades or apprenticeship certification, Indigenous youth saw equal increases in attainment levels at only 0.8% between both trades and apprenticeship and university level certification.

This data begins to demonstrate the tangible reality of post-secondary education in Canada and the barriers faced by the Indigenous peoples of this country therein. Every effort must be made to make university environments more welcoming for Indigenous students if we hope to see any change in these numbers.

In recent years, the University of Prince Edward Island has begun to show a greater commitment to Indigenizing the institution. There are a number of references to the Indigenization of UPEI in its 2013-2018 Strategic Plan, which provides a long-term vision for the institution.



“Emphasis will be placed on the development of student support strategies and increasingly effective pathways for various student groups, including Aboriginal students, to aid in better connecting, engaging, and retaining our student populations.”¹⁰¹

- UPEI Strategic Plan 2013-2018

Through initiatives such as creating a permanent “Elder-in-Residence” program and the creation of an Indigenous advisory group for the University, steps in the right direction are being made. However, there is much more work to be done to better support UPEI’s

¹⁰¹ “UPEI Strategic Plan,” *University of Prince Edward Island*, January 2014. Accessed: http://files.upei.ca/president/Future_Directions_Strategic_Planning_Framework_A.pdf

indigenous students and the indigenization of campus. This will require buy-in from all levels of government in order to support these initiatives.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada undertook a six-year endeavour to travel across the country hearing the stories of Aboriginal people who had survived the residential school system. After hearing from more than 6,000 witnesses, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission released a list of 94 “Calls to Action” outlining necessary actions in order to lead Canada on the path towards reconciliation.¹⁰²

A number of these Calls to Action were directed at post-secondary, calling on the need to indigenize these institutions and their approaches to education.

16. We call upon post-secondary institutions to create university and college degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages.

24. We call upon medical and nursing schools in Canada to require all students to take a course dealing with Aboriginal health issues, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, and Indigenous teachings and practices. It will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

62. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:

ii. Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.

iv. Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education.

¹⁰² “Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada,” *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, 2015.

Accessed:

http://www.myrobust.com/websites/trcinstitution/File/Reports/Executive_Summary_English_Web.pdf .

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86. We call upon Canadian journalism programs and media schools to require education for all students on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. ¹⁰³

Canada has a moral and legal obligation to address these Calls to Action and address the systemic barriers imposed on its indigenous peoples by colonialism. The federal government has begun to take action on these obligations, with Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada investing \$341 million in 2014 to post-secondary education for \$22,000 First Nations and Inuit students.¹⁰⁴ Additionally, the federal government announced in Budget 2017 that it would be investing \$90 million over two years in post-secondary education for First Nation and Inuit students through the Post-Secondary Student Support Program.¹⁰⁵ The province of Prince Edward Island must also play its part in addressing these obligations and demonstrate an active and thoughtful dedication to the movement towards reconciliation.

The UPEI Student Union recommends: that the Government of Prince Edward Island establish a Reconciliation Fund dedicated to assisting the University of Prince Edward Island in implementing the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as they relate to post-secondary, particularly Calls to Action 16, 24, 62 (ii, iv), 86.

The UPEI Student Union further recommends: That in any and all efforts to support indigenous students in Prince Edward Island, all decision-making must be generated from within the First Nations communities of Prince Edward Island.

¹⁰³ “Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action,” *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, 2015. Accessed:

http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf.

¹⁰⁴ Post-secondary Education,” *Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada*, 3 March 2017. Accessed: <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100033679/1100100033680>

¹⁰⁵ “Canada Commits to Increased Post-Secondary Funding for First Nations and Inuit Students,” *Government of Canada*, 28 April 2017. Accessed: https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-northern-affairs/news/2017/04/canada_commits_toincreasedpost-secondaryfundingforfirstnationsan.html?wbdisable=true

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Accountability

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Policy Statement ID: C01

Category: Accountability

Status: Active

Ratification: September 7, 2014

Review Date: September 7, 2020

ACADEMIC CONSULTATION ON COURSE OFFERING

***Synopsis:** The UPEI Student Union believes that departments should ask students, prior to the timetable coming out, what classes they would like to see offered in the next academic year. Including students on the course selection process allows them to have more options, be more engaged with the departments, and could increase course enrollment.*

In times of fiscal restraint at the University of Prince Edward Island, there is often 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 fluctuations in government funding, the University can be 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, but 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

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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:

- 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.

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Policy Statement ID: C02

Category: Accountability

Status: Active

Ratification: September 7, 2014

Review Date: September 7, 2020

STUDENT COMPLAINTS AT UPEI

***Synopsis:** The UPEI Student Union believes that, in the interest of accountability and responsibility, the University should amend the Code of Conduct for Students so that it provides clearer indication of student rights and instructions on methods of recourse for students. The Student Union also supports a biannual informational campaign to raise awareness and discussion towards the right of students to file complaints as they see fit.*

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 feeling that their voices are not being heard.

While UPEI has a *Code of Conduct for Students* which governs students' responsibilities and expectations, there currently does not exist a comprehensive policy or clause within other University policies which outlines a student's right to lodge a complaint regarding the conduct of a professor or other staff member at UPEI. The *Student Code of Conduct* contains no mention or direction in regards to a student's right to take issue with the conduct of a University employee¹⁰⁶.

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 crucial that this information be clearly identified to students.

¹⁰⁶ 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

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 Office¹⁰⁷.
- 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 12¹⁰⁸.
- 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 Academic¹⁰⁹.
 - Throughout these processes, the UPEI Student also makes itself available to be an aid for students, providing advice and acting as a student advocate however necessary.

It is vital that these three methods of grievances 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 through 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

¹⁰⁷ UPEI Policy. "Fair Treatment Policy." 21 November 2005. Avail:

<http://stage.upei.ca/policy/files/policy/Fair%20Treatment%20Policy%20%28govbrdgnl0009%29.pdf>

¹⁰⁸ Regulation 12 - Academic Appeals." UPEI Website. Avail:

<http://www.upei.ca/programsandcourses/regulation-12-academic-appeals>

¹⁰⁹ Email Exchange. UPEI Vice-President Academic Christian Lacroix. 6 August 2014.

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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 *Code of Conduct for Students* to more concretely outline modes of recourse should a student need to lodge a complaint against the University or one of its agents.

Policy Statement ID: C03

Category: Accountability

Status: Active

Ratification: September 7, 2014

Review Date: September 7, 2020

STUDENT CONSULTATION ON MANDATORY NON-INSTRUCTIONAL FEES

Synopsis: *The UPEI Student Union believes that skyrocketing mandatory non-instructional fees have become a problem at UPEI. These fees rise without consultation with students and do not contribute directly to their educational needs. The University should begin consulting with the student body before they raise any non-instructional fees.*

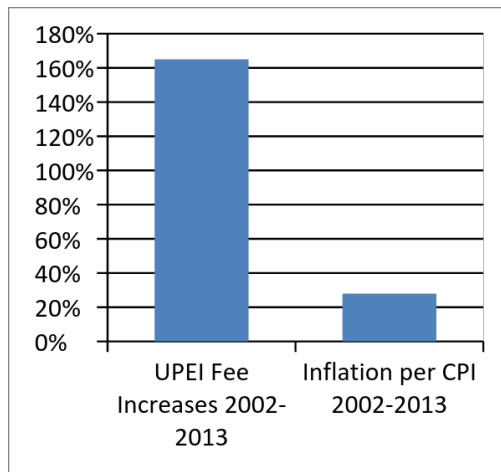


Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 1: Fees at UPEI vs. CPI Increases

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)¹¹⁰. 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 ensure that mandatory non-instructional fees remain reasonable for students.

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%¹¹¹. 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

¹¹⁰ StudentsNS. "Briefing Note: Ancillary Fees and Consultations." 20 March 2013.

¹¹¹ UPEI Academic Calendar 2002-2004; Current Student Statement 2014-2015.

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 the library resource fee (\$40 per year)¹¹². Inflation over the same time period (2002 to 2013) was around 28%¹¹³.

According to the Maritime Provinces Higher 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 fees. 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 practices¹¹⁴. 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 campus¹¹⁵.

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

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ "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>

¹¹⁴ Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance. "Ancillary Fees" Briefing Note.

¹¹⁵ StudentsNS. "Briefing Note: Ancillary Fees and Consultations." 20 March 2013.

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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 University¹¹⁶.

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 time¹¹⁷. 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 consultation¹¹⁸. 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 Committee for the purposes of consultation no fewer than two weeks prior to its submission to the Board of Governors' Finance and Audit Committee.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ 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

¹¹⁸ UPEI website. "Budgets | Finance | UPEI" Accessed 7 August 2014. Avail: <http://www.upei.ca/finance/comptroller/budgets>

Policy Statement ID: C04

Category: Accountability

Status: Active

Ratification: September 13, 2015

Review Date: September 13, 2021

PROFESSORIAL ACCOUNTABILITY & REVIEW AT UPEI

Synopsis: The UPEI Student Union believes that the University and the Faculty Association should work together to create a modern system by which accountability from student feedback can be facilitated. The Student Opinion on Teaching Surveys must have real purpose and a mechanism for students' written comments to be reviewed and considered from year to year.

Professors at UPEI are vital members of the University community, tasked with using their experience and education to educate the many who 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, at the end of their course. 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 remain confidential. 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 promotion¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁹ UPEI-UPEIFA Collective Agreement Exp. June 30, 2020. Article E1.3.1. P. 59

Second, the URC which reviews tenure and promotion for professors does not have a student representative¹²⁰.

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 representation on the URC, would allow student voices in the tenure/promotion process, and would also ensure that professors are being held accountable outside the tenure/promotion process (by their Chair/Dean).

In January 2018, the UPEI Student Union conducted online consultations for feedback from students on SOTS. When asked "I feel like, more often than not my professors make changes to their teaching and course structure based on student feedback from course evaluations", only 16.73% agreed with this statement.¹²¹ When students were asked if they believed that someone else besides the professor, such as the dean or chair, should be able to view students comments about the professors teaching, 90.3% of students stated that they supported this belief.¹²² However when students were asked if they were aware that professors had the choice to share or not share the written commentary, 81% were not aware.¹²³

Universities across Canada, such as McGill¹²⁴, have transitioned to an online version of these surveys. With the opportunity to not only answer the surveys in the classroom, but as well off campus, student are given greater access to the surveys, as compared to exclusively in the classroom. A survey conducted at Western University reported that for the summer semester 2016, 53.8% of students filled out the survey from off campus¹²⁵.

¹²⁰ UPEI-UPEIFA Collective Agreement Exp. June 30, 2020. Article E2.7.3 P. 73

¹²¹ Internal Data: Information Collected from 295 respondents in January, 2018.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ McGill University. "Historical Background." Mercury Course Evaluations. Accessed: <https://www.mcgill.ca/mercury/about/history>.

¹²⁵ *Western University Student Questionnaire on Courses and Teaching Information Session (Fall 2016)*. By John Doerksen, Carac Allison, and Ken Meadows. Accessed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xEwWfkP57Ik&t=480s>.

From using an online feedback system, students are allotted more time to provide their feedback on the surveys. Because of this, students have the opportunity to write more well thought out answers, specifically in the commentary section. For example, at the University of South Florida, 76% of students wrote commentary responses online as opposed to only 50% commentary responses from paper surveys.¹²⁶ When asked if there was ever a time that they did not fill out written commentary on a course evaluation, 58.36% of UPEI students who answered stated yes.¹²⁷ Written commentary is the most important element of course evaluations, as it contextualizes student's numerical responses, and empowers students to have their input valued and taken into consideration on the course and professors performance.

An online survey system enhances not only the overall facilitation of the surveys, but as well has a positive environmental effect. From a report during the 2016-2017 academic year at McGill University, it was estimated that approximately 480,000 sheets of paper were saved by using an online course evaluation system, as opposed to paper based¹²⁸. Since their transition to exclusively online course evaluations in 2011, it is concluded that in 2018 3,360,000 pieces of paper have been saved.

During consultations, UPEI students were asked what they thought the most effective time to distribute course evaluations was. Students responded with 70.26% stating that "both midway through the course and again at the end of the course", would be most effective.¹²⁹ From a 2006 study by Wickramasinghe, S., & Timpson, W., a fluid mechanics engineering course implemented midway course evaluations. The study concluded that after two years, on average, from midpoint to the end of the course, the sum of overall favourable responses went up by 10%.¹³⁰ Currently, because UPEI SOTS are exclusively utilized at the end of the semester, students cannot see improvements upon the things they comment on in their survey. Midway course evaluations however, provide students the opportunity to shape the path of their course, and see their

¹²⁶ Ojmarrh Mitchell & Melissa Morales (2018) The effect of switching to mandatory online course assessments on response rates and course ratings, *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 43:4, 629-639.

¹²⁷ Internal Data: Information Collected from 295 respondents in January, 2018.

¹²⁸ McGill University. "Historical Background." *Mercury Course Evaluations*. Accessed: <https://www.mcgill.ca/mercury/about/history>.

¹²⁹ Internal Data: Information Collected from 295 respondents in January, 2018.

¹³⁰ Wickramasinghe, S., & Timpson, W. (2006). Mid-Semester Student Feedback Enhances Student Learning. *Education For Chemical Engineers*, 1126-133.

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feedback implemented during the second half of their course. This has been noted by Wickramasinghe, S., & Timpson, W to create an “improved learning environment,” and for students to have a more “responsible attitude while reflecting” on the course evaluation.¹³¹

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.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the UPEI Faculty Association and the University of Prince Edward Island implement an online system to conduct SOTS.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the Faculty Association and the University of Prince Edward Island provide professors with campus wide standard midpoint course evaluations.

¹³¹ Ibid

Policy Statement: C07

Status: Active

Date of Ratification: September 11th, 2016

Review Date: September 11th, 2019

ENSURING STUDENTS HAVE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The twenty-first century economy has required students to attend post-secondary education at a higher rate than ever before. Students are accumulating student debt at record rates, while simultaneously facing discrimination in the labour market. PEI's youth unemployment rate stood at 10.7% in September 2018, slightly lower than the national youth unemployment rate of 11%, but above PEI's general unemployment rate of 8.7%.¹³²

There is an identifiable group in OECD countries, Canada included, that have been called the Poorly Integrated New Entrants or PINEs. This group of young people are educated and qualified enough to gain employment, but find difficulty integrating into the labour force. They slip between temporary jobs and unemployment, even when the economy is showing signs of growth.¹³³ Prince Edward Island is no exception to this phenomenon.

Government can address these concerns by creating experiential learning opportunities to expose our post-secondary students to the labour market prior to leaving school. Experiential learning can be described as education through experiences that support

¹³² Yarr, Kevin. CBC PEI. "P.E.I. Unemployment Rate Below 10% for 5 Straight Months." Oct 9, 2018. Avail:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-job-numbers-september-2018-1.4855686>

¹³³ Bell, D. & Benes, K. Transitioning Graduates to Work: Improving the Labour Market Success of Poorly Integrated New Entrants (PINEs) in Canada

students in applying their knowledge and conceptual understanding to real-world problems and situations. The classroom can be a place where experiential learning happens, but when students get to leave the classroom for opportunities such as internships, co-op placements, clinical experiences, research, and service-learning projects, the learning becomes more powerful.¹³⁴ This also helps to address the skills gap that currently exists with PINEs.

Exposing students to these opportunities will help create a more skilled and ready workforce, and will make students more employable. The UPEI Student Union believes that the government must assist in funding experiential learning opportunities in partnership with the University.

In doing so, the Province and UPEI should avoid the use of unpaid internships. Unpaid interns are not provided with as high quality of an experience as paid interns. Employment outcomes are higher for those who work in paid internships. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers in the US, only 37% of unpaid interns receive a job offer following their Bachelor's degree, compared to 63% of paid interns.¹³⁵ There is currently nothing in the labour code specifically protecting young people from the problems that can arise with unpaid internships. The UPEI Student Union believes that Prince Edward Island should create a six-point test to determine whether an intern must be paid. The six-point test exists in Ontario. The criteria is as follows:

- 1) The training is similar to that which is given in vocational learning;

¹³⁴ Experiential Learning Defined. University of Texas Faculty Innovation Centre. Access: <https://facultyinnovate.utexas.edu/teaching/engagement/experiential-learning/defined>

¹³⁵ National Association of Colleges and Employers. Class of 2013 Student Survey. Accessed: <http://www.nacweb.org/s05292013/paid-unpaid-interns-job-offer.aspx>

- 2) The training is for the benefit of the individual;
- 3) The person providing the training derives little, if any, benefit from the activity of the individual while he or she is being trained;
- 4) The individual does not displace employees of the person providing the training;
- 5) The individual is not accorded a right to become an employee of the person providing the training;
- 6) The individual is advised that he or she will receive no remuneration for the time that he or she spends in training.¹³⁶

Another way to improve the youth employment situation in Prince Edward Island is to incentivize the private sector to increase its commitment and contribution toward creating a skilled workforce. Canada is currently experiencing an “employer training gap” and is falling behind other OECD countries. Currently, Canadian employers pay 64 cents for every dollar American employers spend on training. Meanwhile, Canadian spending on training has declined by about 40%.¹³⁷

Quebec is already taking steps to address the PINEs issue by bringing the private sector back into the picture. In Quebec, companies are required to spend 1% of their total payroll on training such as formal courses, apprenticeships, salaries to interns, and other workforce development programs. Those companies that refuse to pay 1% on training pay a 1% tax that goes into a Workforce Skills Development and Recognition

¹³⁶ Canadian Intern Association. What is the law? Access: <http://www.internassociation.ca/what-is-the-law/>

¹³⁷ Munro, Daniel, Conference Board of Canada, Developing Skills: Where are Canada's Employers? March 20, 2014. Access: http://www.conferenceboard.ca/topics/education/commentaries/14-03-20/developing_skills_where_are_canada_s_employers.aspx

Fund.¹³⁸ If a company pays a portion of the 1%, they pay only the difference. Quebec ensures this tax does not apply to small businesses. The UPEI Student Union believes that Prince Edward Island should introduce a PEI Training Tax so that the private sector would be increasingly committed to helping young students become labour market ready.

The youth employment issue in Prince Edward Island is significant, but the UPEI Student Union believes that with support from the Province, steps can be taken together to change that. The Province must provide experiential learning opportunities to students in PEI to address their need for real world experience prior to graduation. Furthermore, the private sector must contribute to training our workforce. This is a problem that can be fixed, but only if industry, government, and educational institutions work together.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the Government of Prince Edward Island create an Experiential Learning Fund to create co-op and internship opportunities for post-secondary students.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the University of Prince Edward Island significantly expand its co-op programs so students in every Faculty can take part in experiential learning.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the Government of Prince Edward Island take steps to build protections for unpaid interns in PEI. Unpaid interns should be protected under a six-point system like they are in Ontario.

¹³⁸ Editeur Officiel du Quebec, An Act to Promote Workforce Skills Development and Recognition, updated Dec 2015. Access: http://www2.publicationsdquebec.gouv.gc.ca/dynamicSearch/telecharge.php?type=2&file=/D_8_3/D8_3_A.html

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The UPEI Student Union recommends that the Government of Prince Edward Island introduce a Prince Edward Island Training Tax to incentivize the private sector to contribute in the training of our workforce.

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Affordability

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Policy Statement ID: F01

Category: Affordability

Status: Active

Ratification: September 8, 2013

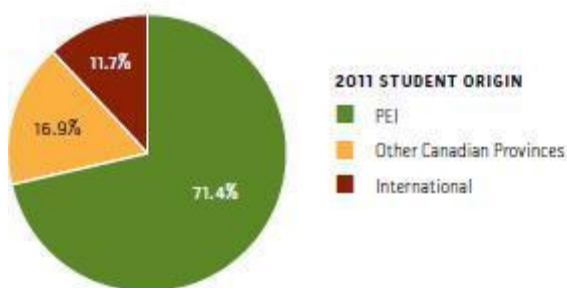
Review Date: September 8, 2019

INCREASING INVESTMENT IN SCHOLARSHIPS FOR NON-ISLAND GRADUATES

Synopsis: Increasing Investment in Scholarships for Non-Island Graduates

The UPEI Student Union believes that all UPEI students should have a fair chance at obtaining scholarships. Therefore, the University should do everything it can to ensure that scholarships are open to all UPEI students and remove restrictions that allow only Island students to obtain scholarships.

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.¹³⁹



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 graduates¹⁴⁰, 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.

¹³⁹ UPEI By the Numbers. Avail: upei.ca/bythenumbers

¹⁴⁰ 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.

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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

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

of the offered awards, at least fifty may only be claimed by those originally from PEI or those who graduated from an Island high school¹⁴¹. This is unfortunate for the almost 30% of students who've come to UPEI from other provinces or countries.

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, respectively¹⁴².

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.

¹⁴¹ UPEI Scholarships & Awards Page. Avail: <http://www.upei.ca/studentlife/listofscholarshipsandawards>

¹⁴² MPHEC Annual Digest. Credentials Granted 2011. Avail: http://www.mphec.ca/resources/TrendsV10N3_2013.pdf

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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.

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.

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Policy Statement ID: F02

Category: Affordability

Status: Active

Ratification: September 8, 2013

Review Date: September 8, 2020

USING OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES IN ALL FIRST-YEAR UPEI COURSES

Synopsis: The UPEI Student Unions believes that reducing the cost of textbooks is an important part of addressing the cost of an education today. With growing access to Open Educational Resources, and the general survey knowledge taught in 100 level courses, UPEI should try to use Open Educational Resources for all first year courses to reduce financial burden.

Traditional educational resources, such as textbooks and academic journals, have long been known to have considerably high costs. More alarming however, is the rate at which these costs are increasing. This trend of increase in costs is echoed in Canada: textbook prices have increased at a rate of more than 3 times that of inflation since 1977.¹⁴³ 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%.¹⁴⁴

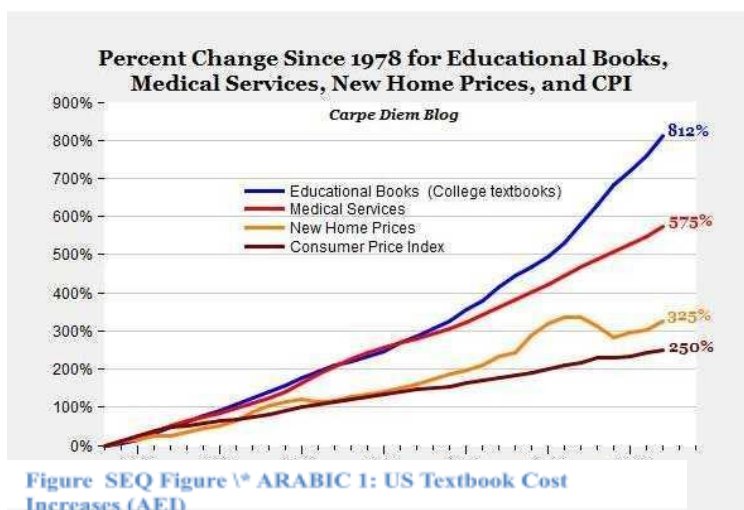


Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 1: US Textbook Cost Increases (AEI)
Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 1: US Textbook Cost Increases (AEI)

Open Educational Resources are teaching and learning materials that are freely available online for everyone to use, whether you are an instructor, student, or self-learner. With the advent of massive open

¹⁴³ "To Combat Soaring Textbook Costs" *The Globe and Mail* Avail: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/to-combat-soaring-textbook-costs-look-to-an-open-source-approach/article37477566/> "

¹⁴⁴ "Trends in Scholarly Communication," S. Venkadesan. Avail: <https://www.inflibnet.ac.in/caliber2009/CaliberPDF/48.pdf>

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.

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 large scale at the University of Prince Edward Island.

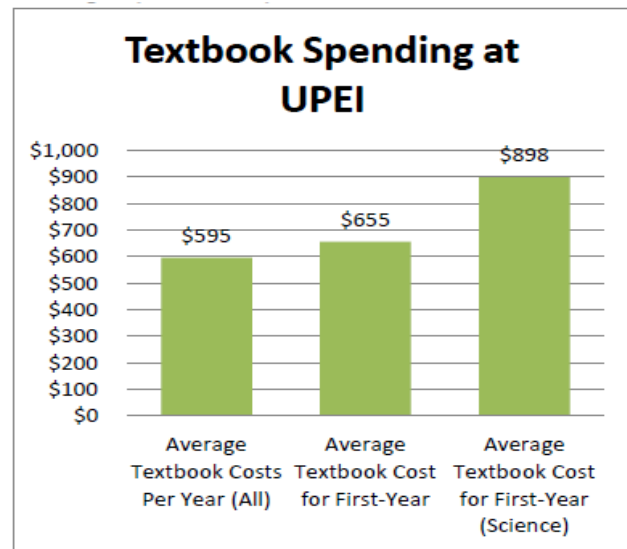
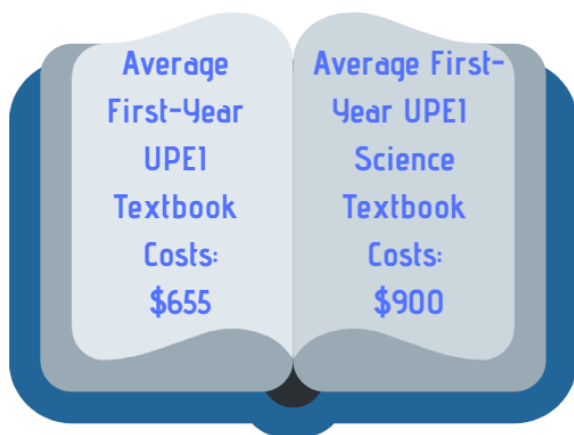


Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 2: Textbook Spending at UPEI (UPEISU Data 2012)

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A survey of student debt and textbook spending conducted during Education Week 2012 revealed that 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 found to be paying even more on average, among the hardest hit, having reporting expenses of almost \$900 to acquire obtain their required books.¹⁴⁵ According to a MacLean's survey from 2017, UPEI students now pay on average \$778 for textbooks each year.¹⁴⁶

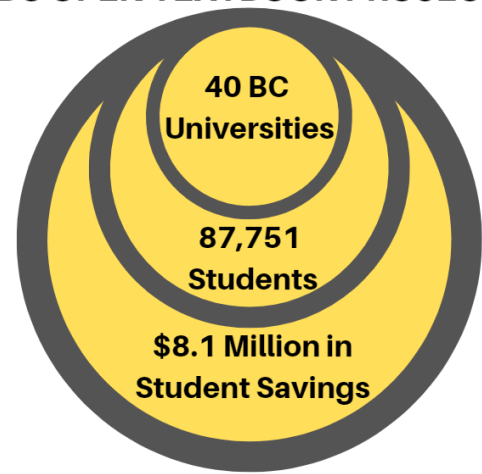


¹⁴⁵ Internal Data: Information Collected from 336 respondents in late September, 2012.

¹⁴⁶ "What Canadian University Students Can Expect to Pay for Books." Macleans. Avail: <https://www.macleans.ca/education/most-expensive-books/>

A successful initiative called the “Open Textbook Project” was adopted in British Columbia in 2012. The Open Textbook Project is funded by the BC Ministry of Higher Education and is managed by an organization called BCcampus. The open textbooks in BC are openly licensed using a Creative Commons license so they can be offered free of charge. Since the adoption of this government-funded initiative, BCcampus has seen their open textbooks adopted by 40 educational institutions, being used by 87,751 students, and has amounted to roughly \$8.1 million in savings for students in BC.¹⁴⁷ From their success, BC has been able to aid the advancement of open educational resources in other provinces such as in Ontario with the eCampus Ontario project.

BC OPEN TEXTBOOK PROJECT



In order to make education resources available online, professors must adapt existing educational resources into an accessible online version, or they must write original resources intended for online use on an open education platform. UPEI already has this digital framework in place as the University has acquired an existing online textbook software called PressBooks, which is also used by BCcampus. A select few number of UPEI professors use this already for their courses, but many do not as converting texts for online use is a lengthy process without financial payoff as it stands now. Unless professors are being compensated for the labour they put in to making texts accessible, they will not be commonly used. The government can incentivize the adoption of online education resources by monetarily compensated professors to contribute to the accessibility of online texts, and this can be achieved by an Open Textbook Project fund.

These textbook costs could easily be reduced by using open educational resources, such as open access journal articles or open textbooks. To accomplish such a task, as proven in British Columbia, will require significant buy-in from post-secondary education institutions and government.

¹⁴⁷ *Open Textbook Stats*. BC Open Campus. Avail: <https://open.bccampus.ca/open-textbook-stats/>

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The UPEI Student Union recommends that the Government of Prince Edward Island fund an Open Textbook Project to ease the cost of accessing educational resources.

Policy Statement ID: F03

Category: Affordability

Status: Active

Ratification: September 13, 2015

Review Date: September 13, 2021

TUITION REGULATION AT UPEI

***Synopsis:** The UPEI Student Union believes that tuition should be regulated so that increases to domestic and international rates are no larger than increases in the cost of living. Students are currently facing tuition increases that are doubling the rise in the cost of living. The government implementing tuition regulation with a cap to the consumer price index would stop tuition rates from becoming unsustainable. Additionally, it must be so that international tuition be adjusted by the same percent as domestic, to ensure that international students are not being unfairly charged by their institution.*

Tuition is an issue oft-discussed on University campuses, and the University of Prince Edward Island is no different. At UPEI, tuition has increased by 32% since 2006, while inflation for the Province during the same period increased by 19.5%. 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 placing reasonable upper limits on yearly tuition increases.

Most provinces across the country have introduced measures to regulate tuition increases. Ontario, has a four-year framework in place which caps tuition increases to an average of three per cent per year. Inflation, has averaged two per cent per year over the past ten years.¹⁴⁸ This framework was extended for two more years in December, 2016.¹⁴⁹

Here in the Atlantic provinces, tuition increases are limited by government in every province except for ours. In New Brunswick, the government imposes a cap of 2% per

¹⁴⁸ “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>

¹⁴⁹ “Ontario Continues to Cap University and College Tuition Fees.” Government of Ontario. December 2016. Avail: <https://news.ontario.ca/maesd/en/2016/12/ontario-continues-to-cap-university-and-college-tuition-fees.html>

year to tuition increases.¹⁵⁰ In Nova Scotia, the government has instituted a tuition cap of 3% per year.¹⁵¹

The Alberta government recently tabled amendments to their existing post-secondary tuition law to continue to freeze tuition through the 2019-2020 year, followed by limiting domestic tuition increases to Alberta's Consumer Price Index. These amendments would also ensure that universities must be able to show the complete tuition costs for international students at the start of their degrees. This decision was made to prevent the repetition of program tuition hikes as high as 31% between years, which occurred as recently as four years ago.¹⁵²

Since 2005, tuition increases in British Columbia have been capped at a maximum of 2% per annum.¹⁵³

It is to be expected that tuition fees for domestic and international students be different, reflecting the fact that before arriving, international students do not pay taxes into the Canadian system; however the proportional disparity between what these two groups of students are paying for tuition has been growing significantly. Canadian citizens pay on average \$6,500 per year on tuition for an undergraduate degree, whereas international students pay \$25,000 per year.¹⁵⁴ On average, international students are paying approximately 3.8 times more than domestic students. That being said, it has become commonplace for tuition to rise disproportionately more for international students than domestic students. In the past two decades, domestic tuition has risen on average 2% more than inflation.¹⁵⁵ However for international students it has doubled between 2010-2017, rising by 4% more than inflation every year.¹⁵⁶ In 2006-2007 international

¹⁵⁰ McPhail, Colin "STU the odd school out as universities reach funding, tuition deal" Jan 25, 2018. Avail: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/tuition-cap-funding-universities-1.4504399>

¹⁵¹ NS to cap tuition fees at 3%. Academica Group. Avail: <http://www.academica.ca/top10/stories/12071>

¹⁵² Baker, D. & Wilson, M. The Gauntlet. "Alberta Bill 19 Step in Right Direction to Providing Affordable Education". November 8, 2018. Avail: <http://www.thegauntlet.ca/alberta-bill-19-step-in-right-direction-to-providing-affordable-education/>

¹⁵³ Gov't of BC. "Education Costs." Avail: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/post-secondary-education/institution-resources-administration/tuition-limit-policy><http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/tuition/>

¹⁵⁴ Usher, A., (2018). The State of Post-Secondary Education in Canada, 2018. Toronto: Higher Education Strategy Associates.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Usher, A., (2018). The State of Post-Secondary Education in Canada, 2018. Toronto: Higher Education Strategy Associates.

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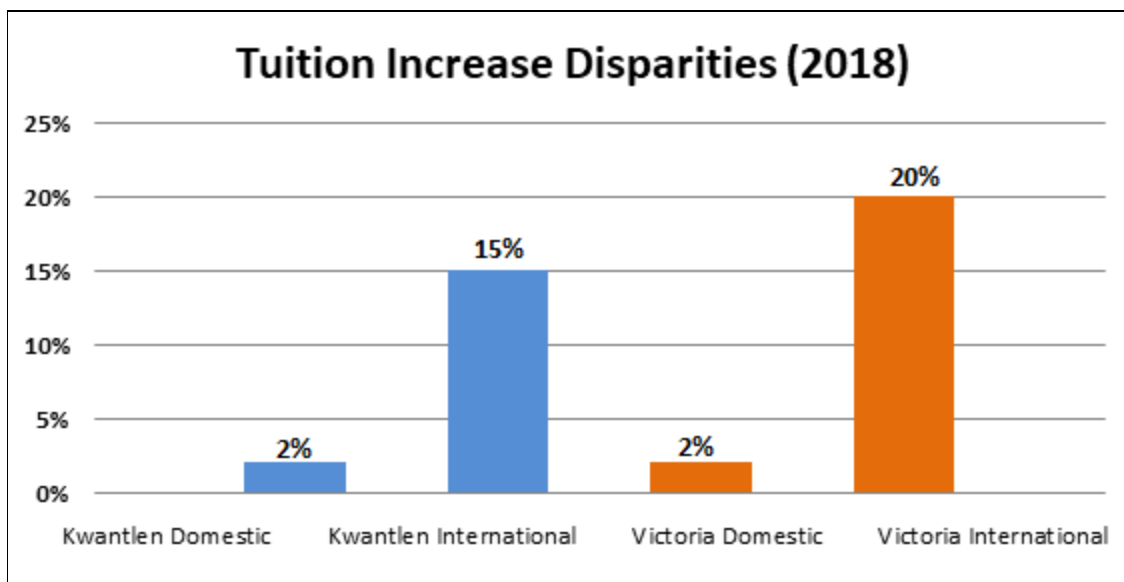
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students paid close to \$9,000 more, or 3.04 times the tuition fees domestic student paid.

¹⁵⁷ Comparatively, in 2017-2018 international students paid on average \$20,321, or nearly *four* times more on tuition than domestic students.¹⁵⁸

In the Spring of 2018, Kwantlen Polytechnic University saw a dramatic increase to new international student tuition rates with a 15% increase.¹⁵⁹ In comparison, domestic student tuition rates are capped at 2% in BC. For returning international students, tuition will be increasing by 7.5% for Fall 2018, and 6.98% for Fall 2019.¹⁶⁰ For Fall semester



2018 at Kwantlen, international students will be paying \$9,870 in comparison to \$2,000 for domestic students.¹⁶¹ The University of Victoria saw an even more dramatic change, with a 20% increase to new international student tuition Fall 2018. Additionally, the institution is proposing an additional 15% increase for new international students for the 2019-2020 academic year.¹⁶² Domestic students attending University of Victoria will only be facing a two per cent student fee increase, reflecting the capped provincial rate.

¹⁵⁷ Statistics Canada. Canadian and international tuition fees by level of study. 2018. Raw data.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Xu, Xiao. "B.C. Universities Impose Steep Tuition Increases for Foreign Students." *The Globe and Mail*, April 22, 2018.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

The increase to international student fees has replaced the decrease in government support that universities had been previously receiving. In 2006, international student fees were less than \$1 billion total, equal to 19% of all fees collected at Canadian Universities, and 4% total revenues.¹⁶³ However in 2016-2017, these numbers had risen to \$2.75 billion, making up for 35% all fees collected, which contributed 9.3% of total revenue.¹⁶⁴ From 2009-2015, government support to universities fell by roughly 1.6 billion in real terms, while concurrently, international student fees rose by \$1.5 billion.¹⁶⁵ That is to say, while universities may be losing government support, this loss is being almost seamlessly offset by revenues collected from increased international student fees.

An economic dependency and increasing international student population can make universities more economically vulnerable due to unpredictability of international student enrollment from geopolitical factors. For example, in August 2018 Canadian post secondary institutions saw a loss of approximately 7000 Saudi students, after an unexpected international dispute, less than one month before classes began.¹⁶⁶ Offsetting costs through international student fees leads to an unjust proportional disparity in domestic versus international student tuition, and cannot be considered an economically sustainable approach for the longevity of a university.

In March 2018, the Government of Prince Edward Island confirmed to create a multi year funding agreement with UPEI. Multi-year funding and tuition regulation go hand and hand, in a way which guarantees tuition predictability for students, however protects services available at the university by offsetting operating costs via the multi-year funding.

Prince Edward Island is one of the few provinces left to not have limits in place on tuition increases. Other provinces have found suitable models that work for students, institutions, and governments, and keep tuition costs predictable and manageable for

¹⁶³ Usher, A., (2018). *The State of Post-Secondary Education in Canada, 2018*. Toronto: Higher Education Strategy Associates.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Baker, Sinead. "Thousands of Saudi Arabian students have to leave Canada because their governments are fighting". *Business Insider*. August 26, 2018.

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students. It is the opinion of the UPEI Student Union that the Government of Prince Edward Island should implement a maximum limit on tuition increases, to both domestic and international, at 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.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the Government of Prince Edward Island align domestic and international tuition so that each adjust by the same percent each year.

Policy Statement ID: F04

Category: Affordability

Status: Active

Ratification: September 13, 2015

Review Date: September 13, 2021

EXEMPTING PARENTAL INCOME AS AN ASSET FOR STUDENT LOAN ASSESSMENTS

***Synopsis:** The UPEI Student Union believes that parents' income should not be factored in when an adult student applies for student loans. It is an unrealistic expectation that many low and middle income families will be able to contribute to their child's education in the current Canadian economy.*

Parental income has long been counted as an asset when student aid personnel are calculating loan amounts across the country, with the exception of Alberta and New Brunswick's provincial student loans. . As of the 2015 budget, the Government of Canada has significantly scaled back parental income as an asset for student loan eligibility. 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.



Figure 1: University Attainment by Parental Income¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷

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 post-secondary education at lower rates than those from higher-income backgrounds: 47.1% for the lowest quintile versus 78.7% in the highest quintile¹⁶⁸.

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.

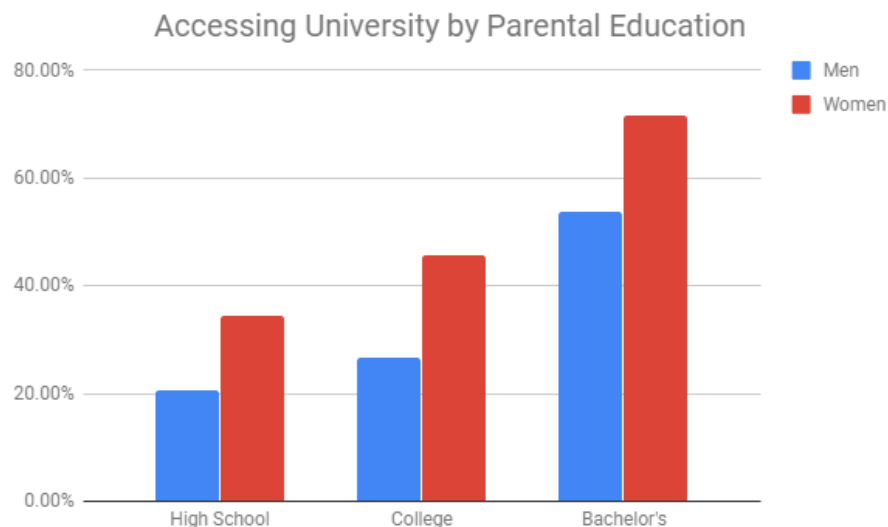


Figure 2: Accessing PSE by Family Educational Background¹⁶⁹

Those parents with less to contribute are still expected to contribute, when that may not be possible, potentially restricting their children's access to post-secondary education.

¹⁶⁸Postsecondary Enrolment by Parental Income (StatsCan 2017)

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

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 fact, only 20.7% of young men and 34.5% of young women 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 26.7% for men and 45.7% for women.

Students whose parent(s) attained a Bachelor's degree had an attainment rate of 53.8% for men and 71.5% for women.¹⁷⁰

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%. In addition, family loans have dropped to 1.95% of a child's student income.¹⁷¹ Furthermore, as of 2009, the average household on Prince Edward Island was only contributing 5.8% of their household expenditures to tuition fees.¹⁷² As of 2016, the average PEI household contributes less than 1% of their household expenditures to tuition.¹⁷³ Evidently, students are getting less than what they once did, though government continues to assume that parents are contributing adequate amounts.

¹⁷⁰ Access and Barriers to Postsecondary Education. CSSHE (2015) (p. 235)

¹⁷¹ The More Things Change...: Undergraduate Student Living Standards After 40 Years of the Canada Student Loans Program. (2004) (p. 11)

¹⁷² Survey of household spending (Table 2): Statistics Canada. (2009)

¹⁷³ Survey of household spending: Statistics Canada (2016)

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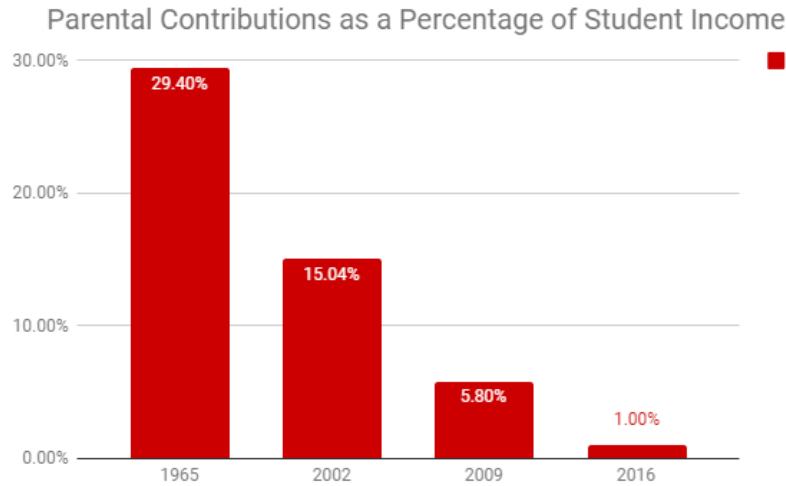


Figure 3: Parental Contributions to a Student's Income¹⁷⁴

The current system is inaccurate in its assessment 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.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

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Policy Statement ID: F05

Category: Affordability

Status: Active

Ratification: September 23, 2018

Review Date: September 23, 2021

Creating Student Dedicated Affordable Housing

***Synopsis:** The UPEI Student Union believes that students should not have to have their academic ability affected by the state of the rental market. The stress of finding and affording housing in the current rental market, has caused negative effects to students financial, academical, and mental well being. Student-dedicated affordable housing, located off campus, would alleviate student stress, by allowing students the opportunity to better focus on their academics.*

The Housing Data and Trends 2017 report states, “Stable, safe, adequate housing is a fundamental human need, and provides a foundation from which Islanders can achieve success in education, employment, community participation, and health”¹⁷⁵. Accessibility to affordable housing is essential for students when pursuing post secondary education. An inadequate supply of affordable housing presents barriers for many students in their efforts to attend and succeed in postsecondary education. As an already economically vulnerable demographic in society, due to the inability to secure adequate income on top of educational costs, it is vital that students have affordable options when it comes to a basic necessity such as housing. Without affordable options for housing, a students ability to succeed or attend post secondary education becomes jeopardized.

In the 2018 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Rental Market Report, Prince Edward Island had an all time low vacancy rate of 0.3%, while concurrently Charlottetown had a vacancy rate of 0.2%.¹⁷⁶ In cases such as a rental unit with 3 or

¹⁷⁵ The Province of Prince Edward Island. Report. Housing Data and Trends, Poverty Reduction Action Plan Backgrounder. Charlottetown, PE, 2018..

¹⁷⁶Canada. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. *Rental Market Report: Prince Edward Island Highlights 2018*. CMHC, 2018

more bedrooms, there was a 0.0% vacancy rate.¹⁷⁷ This was a major shift from 2014, when the vacancy rate in Charlottetown was 7.9%.¹⁷⁸

Despite the substantial increase in population, averaging at 2600 new arrivals to PEI annually,¹⁷⁹ only 100 apartments were built in 2016-17,¹⁸⁰ and 40 in 2017-18.¹⁸¹ Population growth and inadequate housing development are not the only factors causing a low vacancy rate. The rising popularity of online rental companies like AirBnB has affected housing supply; former long-term rental properties have shifted to seasonal or short-term rentals. This could be due to the fact that during the months of May-September, some property owners like to take advantage of high temporary demand from tourists. From 2015-2016, AirBnB rental units in Charlottetown increased by double, from 154 to 300 units.¹⁸² Concurrently, the vacancy rate in Charlottetown decreased from 4.2% to 1.7%.¹⁸³ One article details that in 2018, 442 housing units in Charlottetown were available for short term rental via AirBnB.¹⁸⁴ The rapid increase of short-term rentals effects students as the academic calendar no longer operates September-April, coinciding with the short term rental season like it once did. Since 2003 there has been an 49.6% increase in enrolment of summer courses, therefore an increase of students requiring housing within proximity to the University, not just in the months of September-April.¹⁸⁵ Short term rentals have contributed to loss of housing stock, and have consequently narrowed housing options for students.

In July 2018, the UPEI Student Union circulated a survey to students soliciting information on their housing situations, if they were being affected by the 0.9% vacancy

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Canada. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. *Rental Market Report: Prince Edward Island Highlights 2014*. CMHC, 2014

¹⁷⁹ Government of Prince Edward Island, Department of Finance, and Prince Edward Island Statistics Bureau. "PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND POPULATION REPORT 2018." 2018.

¹⁸⁰ The Province of Prince Edward Island. Report. Housing Data and Trends, Poverty Reduction Action Plan Backgrounder. Charlottetown, PE, 2018.

¹⁸¹ *Rental Market Report*. Report. Prince Edward Island Highlights, Canada Mortgage and Housing Commission. 2018.

¹⁸² Fraser, Sara. "Airbnb Takes Flight in P.E.I. as Popularity of Rental Site Doubles." CBC PEI. May 30, 2016.

¹⁸³ Canada. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. *Rental Market Report: Charlottetown CA 2016*. CMHC, 2016.

¹⁸⁴ Neatby, Stu. "Airbnb Listings up 40 per Cent in 2018." *The Guardian*, November 06, 2018.

¹⁸⁵ Headcounts in Summer Sessions, Historical Trend" Yuqin Gong

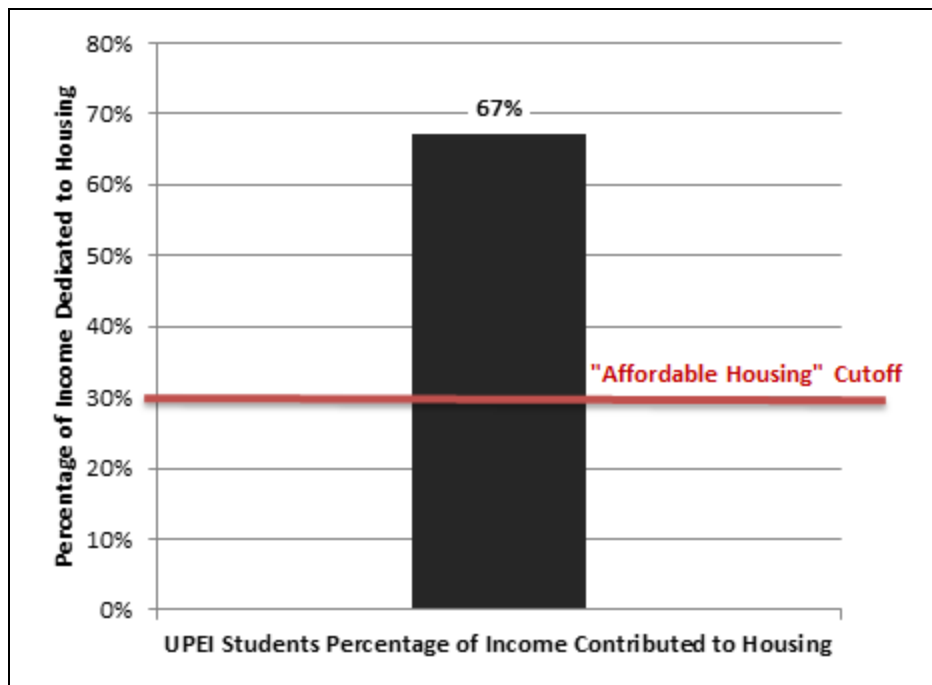
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rate, and how. From this the UPEI Student Union found that, on average, students were paying 67% of their income, pre tax, towards housing¹⁸⁶. Similarly, in their 2018 *Youth Housing Report*, Charlottetown - Youth Matters found that, on average, 65% of students spent over 30% of their income towards housing¹⁸⁷. As defined in the 2018 Provincial Housing Action Plan and CMHC, “housing is considered affordable if shelter costs account for less than 30% of before-tax household income”¹⁸⁸.



From this, it is evident that students' housing costs exceed the threshold of affordability. Students are even facing homelessness, by definition, due to Charlottetown's affordable housing crisis. The definition of homelessness includes those who are temporarily living with family, friends, their car, or anywhere else because they had nowhere else to live.

¹⁸⁶ *UPEI Student Union Housing Survey Results*. Report. Student Union, University of Prince Edward Island. Charlottetown, PE, 2018

¹⁸⁷ *Youth Housing Report*. Report. Charlottetown Youth Matters. Charlottetown, PE, 2018.

¹⁸⁸ "About Affordable Housing in Canada." Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. May 31, 2018.

¹⁸⁹ UPEI students have already come forward describing their homeless ordeal, with an untold number of others facing the same dilemma.¹⁹⁰

Through consultations conducted by the Student Union, many students reported suffering academically as a result of the difficult housing situation. Forty-one percent of students stated that their current housing situation in Charlottetown has affected their academic ability¹⁹¹.

The evident financial and academic burdens on students' shoulders stemming from the provincial housing situation projects negative effects onto their mental well being. The Canadian Mental Health Association's (CMHA) Citizens for Mental Health project determined housing as a key determinant in shaping the mental health of every community¹⁹². Accordingly from the UPEISU's housing survey, students expressed that they experienced stress on their mental health from the current housing situation in two ways. The first source of stress related to the financial burden associated with spending approximately 67% of their wages on housing, with the procurement of wages coming at the expense of study time for work time, thus hindering their academic efforts. The second source pertained to the challenging nature of finding a residence with a 0.9% vacancy rate. Approximately 66% of students said that the current vacancy rate affected their ability to move housing when they wanted. The CMHA Citizen's for Mental Health project concluded that "to improve the mental health of all, governments must ensure access to safe, affordable and appropriate housing as individual circumstances necessitate"¹⁹³.

As part of the 2018 Provincial Housing Action Plan, the Province of PEI announced the new "Housing Council", charged with implementing the action plan, supporting the Cabinet Committee, administering the Community Housing Fund, and giving direction to

¹⁸⁹ Rodrigue, Samantha. *"Hidden Homelessness in Canada"*. Statistics Canada. Nov 15, 2016. Avail: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2016001/article/14678-eng.htm>

¹⁹⁰ O'Brien, Allison. *"UPEI Students Struggling to Find a Place to Live Amid Housing Crisis in Charlottetown"*. Sept 5, 2018. Avail: <https://thecadreupei.com/2018/09/05/upei-students-struggling-to-find-a-place-to-live-amid-housing-crisis-in-charlottetown/>

¹⁹¹ *UPEI Student Union Housing Survey Results*. Report. Student Union, University of Prince Edward Island. Charlottetown, PE, 2018

¹⁹² "Housing, Health and Mental Health." Canadian Mental Health Association. 2004.

¹⁹³ Ibid

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the new “Housing Hub”¹⁹⁴. Students have unique lived experiences in the rental and housing market, and are a key contributing demographic in the city of Charlottetown. Accordingly, the UPEI Student Union believes that student representation is key when implementing the housing action plan, as they are one of the key demographics it will affect. This will affect students considerably as they are a vulnerable demographic, due to an inability to secure adequate income, in addition to their educational costs. Therefore there must be a seat at the table on the Housing Council allotted to a student representative to ensure that the student perspective is at the table.

Inaccessible housing is a barrier to education. To break this barrier, student-specific solutions are needed. Student-dedicated affordable housing is a solution which has been proven to have positive effects not just for students but for the community as a whole.

The lack of affordable housing is not just an issue faced by present students at UPEI, but one for those graduating as well. When students were asked if they planned on staying in PEI after graduating, 45% of students living away from home said they intended on leaving PEI; of those respondents, 46% said they would stay if the housing situation were different¹⁹⁵. Additionally, 55% of students living with their parent/guardian said they intended to leave PEI after their studies, of these respondents; 41% said they would stay if the housing situation were different¹⁹⁶.

Youth out-migration from Prince Edward Island is a major long-term issue for the province’s economic future. Island students have made it clear that they want to stay in this province they call home, but insurmountable housing barriers have made this impossible. If Island students are to have a future on Prince Edward Island, immediate action must be taken to ensure that there is housing which is both affordable and available.

“Student housing should be considered as a distinct and important factor in shaping healthy, affordable communities.”¹⁹⁷ As essential, however economically vulnerable,

¹⁹⁴ Canada. Government of Prince Edward Island. *Housing Action Plan*. Charlottetown, PE, 2018.

¹⁹⁵ *UPEI Student Union Housing Survey Results*. Report. Student Union, University of Prince Edward Island. Charlottetown, PE, 2018

¹⁹⁶ Ibid

¹⁹⁷ *Housing Data and Trends*. Report. The Province of Prince Edward Island. PE, 2018.

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members of the Charlottetown community, adequate action must be taken now to provide student specific solutions to address the dire need for affordable and available housing.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the Government of Prince Edward Island, the City of Charlottetown, and UPEI collaborate to create student-dedicated affordable housing.

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the City of Charlottetown and Government of PEI collaborate to encourage the prioritization of long term rental, and discourage the use of 8-10 month rentals with the purpose of profiting off short-term rentals.

Policy Statement ID: F06

Category: Accountability

Status: Complete

Ratification: November 8, 2020

Success Date:

Expanding the Graduate Mentorship Program to International Students: A Plan for International Student Retention

Principle

All international students should have resources available to pursue a career on Prince Edward Island.

Concern

There are no programs that tackle long-term work opportunities, aid in retention or facilitate access to employment for international students.

Recommendation

The UPEI Student Union Recommends the Province of Prince Edward Island expand eligibility of the Graduate Mentorship Program to include international students to aid in retaining students and facilitate employment opportunities.

Supporting Evidence:

The Graduate Mentorship Program was introduced in 2012 by the Government of Prince Edward Island.¹⁹⁸ The goal of the program is to “encourage employers to hire post-secondary graduates and provide valuable work experience and mentorship opportunities in their field of study”.¹⁹⁹

In 2015, the UPEI Student Union advocated to the Provincial Government to include international students in the Program.²⁰⁰ As a result, the eligibility criteria was expanded that year to reflect those concerns.

¹⁹⁸ Government of Prince Edward Island. 2012. *Graduate Mentorship program to provide work experience for recent graduates*. <http://www.gov.pe.ca/webarchive/index.php?number=news&dept=&newsnumber=8320&lang=E>

¹⁹⁹ Skills PEI. *Graduate Mentorship Information Sheet*. [http://skillspei.com/uploads/Program_PDFs/ENG/2018/Grad%20Mentor_Program%20\(June%202019\).EN.pdf](http://skillspei.com/uploads/Program_PDFs/ENG/2018/Grad%20Mentor_Program%20(June%202019).EN.pdf)

²⁰⁰ UPEISU External Policy Book. 2013. Policy S10.

The number of graduates accessing the Program following the 2015 expansion drastically increased.²⁰¹ It went from a total of 325 individuals between 2012 and 2016 to 875 individuals from 2016 to 2019.²⁰² Such data is demonstrated in Figure 1 below. In June 2019, the Program criteria changed back to limit eligibility to Canadian citizens and permanent residents, excluding international students.²⁰³

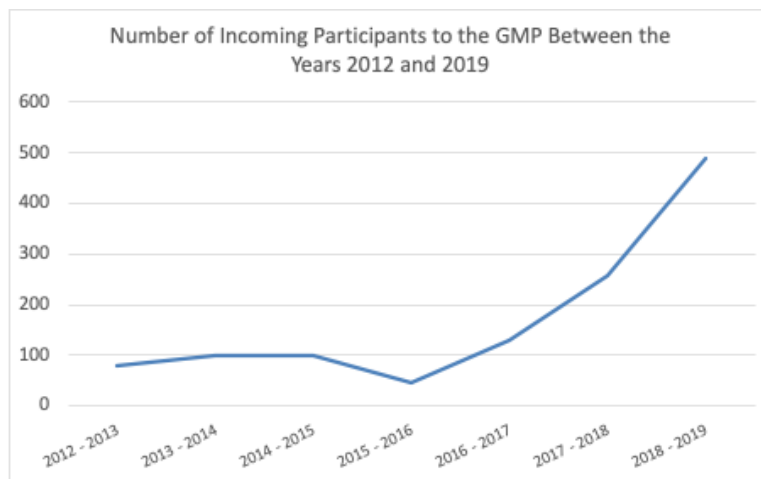


Figure 1: The growth of the number of incoming participants into the GMP.

Statistics Canada identified the unemployment rate of persons between the age of 15 and 24 in PEI as 14%. The unemployment rate of persons 15 years of age and over was 10.8%.²⁰⁴ The statistics show an alarming decline of the number of Islanders in the workforce, specifically in the age range of 15-24.

The Canadian Bureau for International Education stated in a 2018 study that “the ability to retain international students as permanent residents and skilled workers is especially critical for regions with a declining labour force.”²⁰⁵ The ideal strategy for such retention, according to the CBIE, is providing international students with employment.

²⁰¹ Harding, G. 2016. CBC News. *International students will be part of P.E.I. mentorship program.*

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/international-students-mentorship-program-1.3533492>

²⁰² Davis, T. 2019. CBC News. *P.E.I. Liberals promise more jobs for young Islanders.*

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-liberals-youth-jobs-promise-election-1.5092378>

²⁰³ Skills PEI. 2019. *Graduate Mentorship Information Sheet.*

[http://skillspei.com/uploads/Program_PDFs/ENG/2018/Grad%20Mentor_Program%20\(June%202019\).EN.pdf](http://skillspei.com/uploads/Program_PDFs/ENG/2018/Grad%20Mentor_Program%20(June%202019).EN.pdf)

²⁰⁴ Statistics Canada. April 2020. *Labour Force Survey.*

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/200508/t004a-eng.htm>

²⁰⁵ Esses, V., Sutter, A., Ortiz, A., Luo, N., Cui, J., Deacon, L. Canadian Bureau for International Education. *Retaining International Students in Canada Post-Graduation: Understanding the Motivations and Drivers of the Decision to Stay.* June 2018. <https://cbie.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Intl-students-post-graduation-RiB-8-EN-1.pdf>

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According to a UPEI Student Union survey, 76.7 % of international students stated they would stay in PEI if they had career opportunities. 65% of those who said they would leave PEI, cited a “lack of career opportunities” as their reason.²⁰⁶ Only 33% of domestic out-of-province students showed interest in staying in PEI post-graduation.

The Government of PEI published a Population Action Plan to “recruit, retain, and repatriate” persons to the Island from 2017 to 2022.²⁰⁷ The identified concerns were the larger aging population, a decrease in the number of Island high-school graduates, and a negative natural growth. These concerns were also extended to the Island’s labour force. Initial remedies tackled recruitment, but retention remains an issue. The Population Action Plan proposed the following solutions:

1. Introduce incentives and programs to post-secondary graduates to stay on the Island after graduating.
2. Strengthen retention efforts for “post-secondary graduates - including international students.”
3. Continue to connect employers with young job seekers.

The Graduate Mentorship Program is an existing solution. Expanding its eligibility to include international students is crucial to help rebuild PEI’s economy, especially after the effects of COVID-19. International students are a young, skilled workforce that is eager for an opportunity to join the Island’s labour market and community.

The UPEI Student Union Recommends the Province of Prince Edward Island expand eligibility of the Graduate Mentorship Program to include international students to aid in retaining students and facilitate employment opportunities.

²⁰⁶ UPEISU Students’ Current and Future Residency Survey. June 2020.

²⁰⁷ Government of Prince Edward Island. *Recruit, Retain, Repatriate: A population Action Plan for Prince Edward Island*. 2017. https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/pei_population-action-plan_2017.pdf

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