



# **EMPOWER**

**UPEI Student Union Policy Priorities 2021-2022**

The UPEI Student Union is located on unceded Mi'kmaq territory. Epekwitk is covered by the historic Treaties of Peace and Friendship. The UPEI Student Union pays its respects to the Indigenous Mi'kmaq People who have occupied this island for over 12,000 years; past, present, and future.





## 2021 - 2022 Executive Committee

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### **MISSION:**

The UPEI Student Union exists to represent the interests of UPEI students and improve the student experience at UPEI.

### **VISION:**

Through our efforts, students will enjoy the best possible academic and social experience while enrolled at UPEI.

### **CORE VALUES:**

**INTEGRITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY:** Entrusted with handling students' resources and advocating on their behalf, our employees and elected representatives will conduct themselves in an honest and ethical manner and show consistency in their actions. We commit to what we say, we take responsibility for our actions, and we will work diligently to rectify any mistakes we might make.

**OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY:** Our members, staff, and the greater community want to know what is happening in our organization, and we will communicate with them in a transparent way that meets their expectations. We will practice transparency by default, even when it is uncomfortable or difficult. We believe that justification is required to keep things private, not to make them public.

**INCLUSIVITY:** We represent a diverse range of students from different places of origin and with different lived experiences. We will endeavour to make our organization as accessible as possible by actively incorporating all voices and dismantling barriers to participation so that all students feel included in student life.

**EVIDENCE-LED:** The use of evidence enhances the quality of our work and lends legitimacy to our positions and decisions. We will rely on consultation and research to guide our work in all aspects of the organization.

**FINANCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY:** We will conduct our operation in a fiscally and environmentally responsible manner. Meeting the needs of our current members will not compromise the ability of future members to meet their needs.

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# Predominantly Using Open Educational Resources as Textual Material when Delivering UPEI Courses

## PRINCIPLE

The cost of textbooks should not serve as a hurdle for students while pursuing post-secondary education at UPEI. All students should have access to the prescribed textual resources irrespective of financial barriers.

## CONCERN

Post-secondary students at UPEI spend an average of \$800 every year on textbooks<sup>1</sup> and are expected to cover this cost while also paying for housing, tuition, and basic living expenses.

## RECOMMENDATION

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the Government of Prince Edward Island facilitate student access to Open Educational Resources through a multi-year recurring grant directed to the UPEI Robertson Library which will then be invested into the Open Educational Resource Development Program at UPEI.

## SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:

Since 1978, the cost of textbook prices in Canada have increased by an alarming 812% which is three times that of inflation.<sup>2</sup> University textbook prices have risen much faster than the Consumer Price Index.

### PERCENT CHANGE IN TEXTBOOK PRICES SINCE 1978

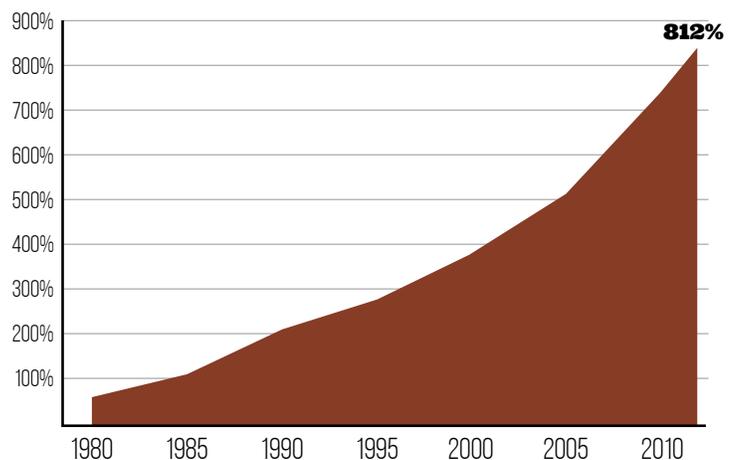


Figure 1: The increase in textbook prices in Canada since 1978<sup>3</sup>.

According to a recent study, 46% of university students stated that the cost of textbooks and other course materials had 'a big impact' on their financial

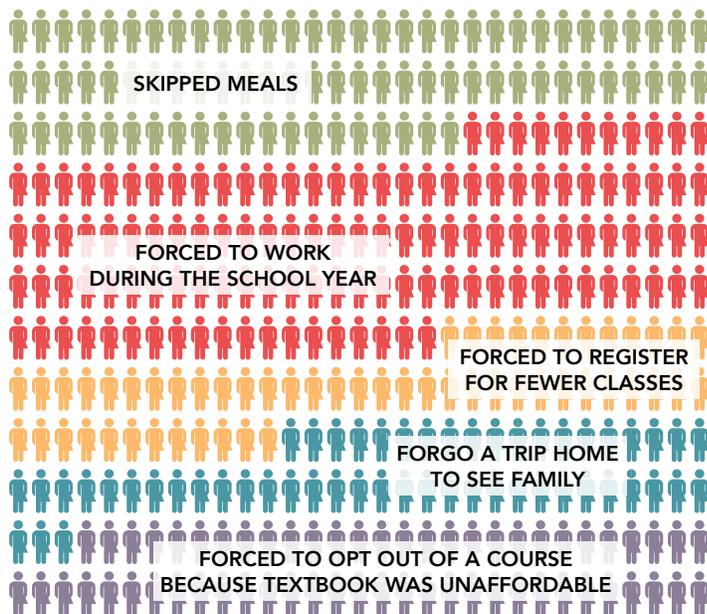
<sup>1</sup>Brown, Mark. "What Canadian university students can expect to pay for books." Maclean's, 4th December 2017, <https://www.macleans.ca/education/most-expensive-books/>.

<sup>2</sup>Zook, Chris. "Infographic: Textbook Costs Skyrocket 812% in 35 Years." Applied Educational Systems, 7th September 2017, <https://www.aeseducation.com/blog/infographic-the-skyrocketing-cost-of-textbooks-for-schools-students>.

<sup>3</sup>Zook, Chris. "Infographic: Textbook Costs Skyrocket 812% in 35 Years." Applied Educational Systems, 7th September 2017, <https://www.aeseducation.com/blog/infographic-the-skyrocketing-cost-of-textbooks-for-schools-students>.

situation. Students have had to make major trade-offs and sacrifice basic necessities to pay for university textbooks. 43% of students have said to have skipped meals, 69% have been forced to work a job during the entire school year, 31% have had to register for fewer classes, and 30% have had to forgo a trip home to see family; all this to be able to afford to pay for university textbooks. Moreover, students have also had to change their educational plans in addition to making financial sacrifices. 33% of university students have been forced to opt-out of a course because of how unaffordable the prescribed textbook for the class was.<sup>4</sup>

## EFFECT OF HIGH TEXTBOOK PRICES ON STUDENTS

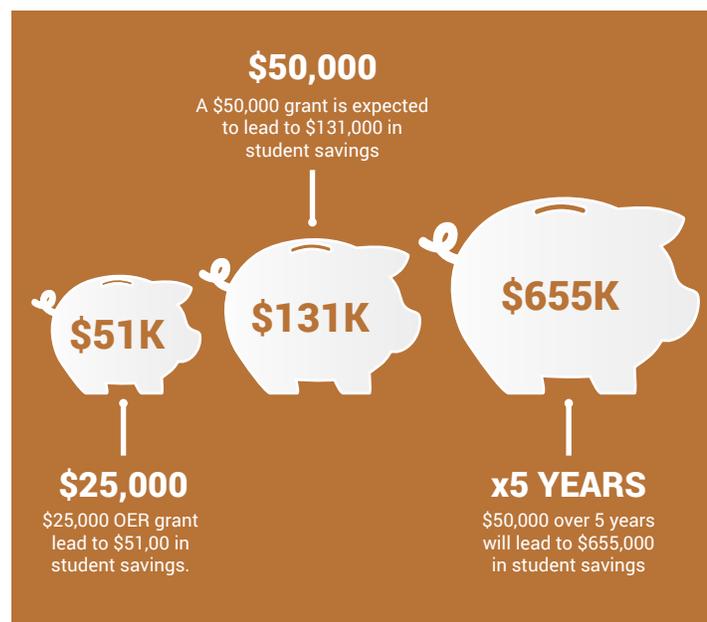


A feasible solution to this problem is the development of a long-term program at UPEI providing students with Open Educational Resources (OERs). OERs are “teaching, learning, and research materials in any medium that reside in the public domain or that have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation, and redistribution by others\*.”<sup>5</sup> They are also easy to share, free to use, adaptable and flexible. The use of OERs within post-secondary institutions is growing in popularity and OER programs are being implemented into a variety of prospering institutions across Canada, including the University of British Columbia, University of Calgary, and University of Ottawa.

<sup>4</sup> Whitford, Emma. “Textbook Trade-Offs.” Inside Higher Ed, 26th July 2018, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/07/26/students-sacrifice-meals-and-trips-home-pay-textbooks>.

<sup>5</sup> Green, Cable, et al. “7 Things You Should Know About Open Education: Content.” Educause, 14th June 2018, <https://library.educause.edu/resources/2018/6/7-things-you-should-know-about-open-education-content>.

The University of Prince Edward Island currently does have an Open Educational Resource Development Program. UPEI previously received \$25,000 from the Government of PEI which allowed the OER Development Program to be launched in February 2020.<sup>6</sup> This program was exceptionally successful. There was a positive response and huge uptake from UPEI faculty which resulted in the completion of five projects with 6 projects currently in progress. \$23,150 of the \$25,00 provided by the government has been used to create OERs. An estimated 5000 students have benefited from the first year of the OER Development Program which has facilitated approximately \$51,000 in student savings.<sup>7</sup> According to the latest 2021–2022 Provincial Budget, the Government of PEI has decided to provide UPEI with a \$50,000 grant which will go towards the OER Development Program. When taking the average cost of a university textbook into account, the \$50,000 grant provided by the Government of PEI will result in an estimated \$131,000 in UPEI student savings. If UPEI were to continue to receive support from the Government of PEI to facilitate OER development, it would result in approximately \$655,000 in student savings over the next five years.



<sup>6</sup> UPEI Robertson Library. "Open Education Resource Development Program." Robertson Library, <https://library.upei.ca/OERProgram>.

<sup>7</sup> Mears, Kim, and Donald Moses. "Open Educational Resource (OER) Development Program: First Year Report." 2021. UPEI Robertson Library.

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It is evident that textbooks pose a major financial burden to all UPEI students. The exorbitant price of textbooks has caused UPEI students to not only suffer academically, but has also left many food insecure while having to make major sacrifices when purchasing basic necessities which has consequently lowered their overall quality of life.

**UPEI  
SU**

## *Recommends:*

The Government of PEI invest **\$50,000** annually in a multi-year fund for Open Educational Resources to make post-secondary education in PEI more affordable.



# Supporting UPEI's Indigenous Community by Taking Conscious and Effective Steps Towards Reconciliation



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## PRINCIPLE

UPEI and the Government of PEI should take conscious steps towards Reconciliation by increasing Indigenous student supports and Indigenizing UPEI.

## CONCERN

There are insufficient resources allocated towards decolonization and Reconciliation at UPEI.

## RECOMMENDATION

The UPEI Student Union recommends that The Government of PEI collaborate with UPEI to make a conscious effort towards reconciliation by Indigenizing UPEI and actively implementing the recommendations made in the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action and Calls for Justice: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*.

## SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:

The University of Prince Edward Island is located in Epekwitk, which is a part of the ancestral and unceded territories of the Mi'kmaq people. The **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action** includes multiple recommendations directed towards provincial governments and Ministers of Education across Canada. Specifically, the TRC recommends that,

*“62. II. The federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to: Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.”<sup>8</sup>*

The TRC's Calls to Action also recommends teaching students about residential schools, Treaties, and Indigenous peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada by adding it to the curriculum taught at educational institutions.<sup>9</sup>

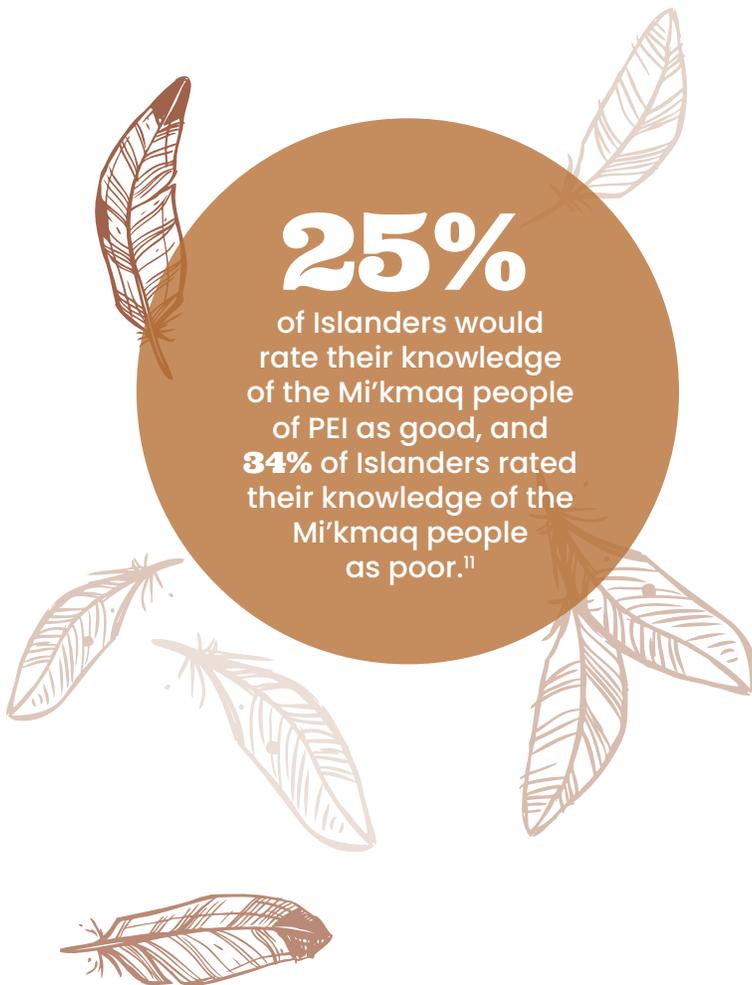
**The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls: Calls for Justice** recommends that post-secondary institutions include Indigenous Knowledge and History into University curriculum.

<sup>8</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. "Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action." 2015, p. 7. <http://www.trc.ca/>.

<sup>9</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. "Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action." 2015, p. 7. <http://www.trc.ca/>.

*“11.1 We call upon all elementary, secondary, and post-secondary institutions and education authorities to educate and provide awareness to the public about missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, and about the issues and root causes of violence they experience. All curriculum development and programming should be done in partnership with Indigenous Peoples, especially Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. Such education and awareness must include historical and current truths about the genocide against Indigenous Peoples through state laws, policies, and colonial practices. It should include, but not be limited to, teaching Indigenous history, law, and practices from Indigenous perspectives and the use of Their Voices Will Guide Us with children and youth.”<sup>10</sup>*

The addition of Indigenous content in educational institutions is supported by the majority of residents of Prince Edward Island. According to a survey conducted by MQO Research and commissioned by



<sup>10</sup> National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. “Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.” 2019, p. 179. [https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Calls\\_for\\_Justice.pdf](https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Calls_for_Justice.pdf).

the Mi'kmaq Confederacy of P.E.I. in 2019, 80% of the respondents were in agreement that reconciliation is incredibly important and they would greatly benefit from the improvement of education on Indigenous matters in both, K-12 and post-secondary schools. This survey also found that only 25% of Islanders would rate their knowledge of the Mi'kmaq people of PEI as good, and 34% of Islanders rated their knowledge of the Mi'kmaq people as poor.<sup>11</sup>

Universities across Canada are already taking big steps towards Reconciliation and Indigenizing campus. The University of Winnipeg mandates that all students graduate with 'knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and cultures' and are exposed to 'Indigenous perspectives and worldviews'. The addition of an Indigenous Course Requirement (ICR) was the result of student-led advocacy by the University of Winnipeg Students Association, and was unanimously approved by the University of Winnipeg Senate in November of 2015. The approval of this course is a step towards the University's response to the recommendations made in the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action.<sup>12</sup> Trent University and Lakehead University also have Indigenous Course Requirements (ICRs). Cape Breton University is the Atlantic Canadian Leader in Indigenous post-secondary education with Indigenous cultures, heritage, and knowledge ingrained in the university's curriculum. This gives students at Cape Breton University an opportunity to learn about these cultures, apply these teachings throughout their careers, and graduate as well informed, conscious individuals of society who acknowledge and respect the land on which they live.<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, the UPEI Strategic Plan (2018-2023) states that "UPEI is committed to advancing reconciliation through higher education." Some of the goals UPEI aims to achieve by the end of 2023 includes integrating Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing into curriculum, promoting a greater understanding of reconciliation within campus community, better understanding and implementing the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, collaborating with the UPEI Indigenous Education Advisory Circle and the Mawi'omi Student Centre, and working towards Indigenizing the UPEI campus.<sup>14</sup>

UPEI is responsible for the education of over 5000 students every year. As an institution built on native

<sup>11</sup> Yarr, Kevin. "Islanders support reconciliation, but want to know more, survey finds." CBC News, 23 May 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-mimmaq-reconciliation-survey-1.5146443>.

<sup>12</sup> University of Winnipeg. "Indigenous UWinnipeg." <https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/indigenous/index.html>.

<sup>13</sup> Cape Breton University. "Indigenous Affairs." <https://www.cbu.ca/indigenous-affairs/>.

<sup>14</sup> University of Prince Edward Island. "UPEI Strategic Plan (2018-2023)." [https://files.upei.ca/publications/upei\\_strategic\\_plan\\_2018-2023.pdf](https://files.upei.ca/publications/upei_strategic_plan_2018-2023.pdf).

land with the power to educate, it is imperative that UPEI take effective steps towards educating its student population about the Indigenous peoples of Canada with a focus on the Mi'kmaq People of Epekwitk.

The Government of PEI must assist the University of Prince Edward Island reach its goals of Indigenizing campus. All decisions made and efforts taken towards Indigenizing campus should be done in consultation with Indigenous folks.

**UPEI  
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## *Recommends:*

The Government of Prince Edward Island provide UPEI with a recurring Restricted Operating Grant of **\$100,000** that will specifically contribute towards the Indigenization of UPEI.

# Making HPV Vaccinations Free of Cost and more Accessible for Post-Secondary Students

## PRINCIPLE

All students should have access to the HPV (Human Papillomavirus) vaccination without the cost of the vaccine being a hindrance.

## CONCERN

The HPV vaccine is unaffordable for anyone who does not have insurance. The high cost of the vaccine makes it inaccessible even for students with insurance.

## RECOMMENDATION

The UPEI Student Union recommends that the Government of PEI work towards making HPV vaccinations free of charge for students due to the exceptionally high cost of the three doses of the vaccine.

## SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:

HPV (Human Papillomavirus) is one of the most common sexually transmitted infections. It is highly contagious and can infect the skin, mouth, and intimate areas of the human body. HPV has also proven to cause the development of pre-cancerous lesions that can progress into cancers of the mouth, neck, and intimate areas of both males and females.<sup>15</sup> HPV is responsible for causing over 99% of cervical cancers and 84% of anogenital cancers. One out of every three women diagnosed with cervical cancer die from it and thus it is imperative that HPV be eliminated to eliminate cervical cancer.<sup>16</sup>



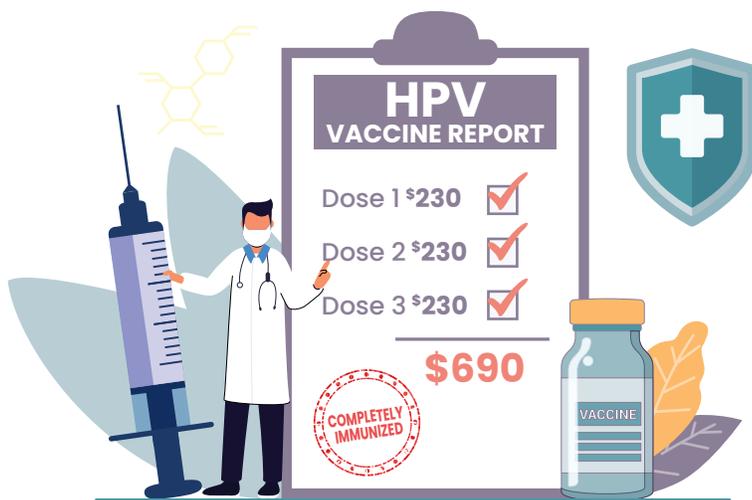
HPV IS RESPONSIBLE FOR  
CAUSING OVER  
**99%** OF CERVICAL CANCERS &  
**84%** OF ANOGENITAL CANCERS.

<sup>15</sup> Government of Prince Edward Island. "Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccine (Gardasil® 9)." 29 May 2018, <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-and-wellness/human-papillomavirus-hpv-vaccine-gardasil-9>.

<sup>16</sup> Concordia University of Edmonton. "The HPV Vaccine Project." News, 27 October 2020, <https://concordia.ab.ca/its-hpv-prevention-week/>.

Although HPV vaccinations are administered in school to grade 6 students, unlike many other provinces in Canada, there is no catch up program for any individual in PEI who may have missed the vaccination in grade 6. It is also important to note that PEI has seen an influx of people move to the province not only from other parts of Canada, but also from various parts of the world. UPEI has seen a huge increase in enrollment in the last couple of years with student numbers steadily continuing to grow. International students now make up 30% of the total university population.<sup>17</sup> Thus, it is clear that the HPV vaccination drive organized for grade 6 students in PEI may not be the most efficient method of immunization. It is important to take into account that a large population of individuals who have recently immigrated and continue to immigrate to PEI fall under the age group that is most prone to HPV infections.

PEI currently has a publicly funded HPV vaccination program, however, only individuals with a PEI Health Card are eligible to receive the three doses of HPV vaccination free of cost.



HPV vaccinations in PEI are offered at \$230 per dose. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that individuals between the ages of 18 to 26 years receive three doses of the HPV vaccination.<sup>18</sup> It is important to keep in mind that most post-secondary students fall under this age group. With a single dose of HPV vaccine costing \$230, students without insurance coverage for vaccinations pay a total of \$690 to be completely immunized. Thus, getting immunized serves as an exceptionally high cost and is usually overlooked as a less immediate or important concern. Consequently, this leaves many

<sup>17</sup> University of Prince Edward Island. "2020-2021 UPEI Enrolment (October 1, 2020)." UPEI by the Numbers, [https://files.upei.ca/president/upei\\_by\\_the\\_numbers\\_2020.pdf](https://files.upei.ca/president/upei_by_the_numbers_2020.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Dosing Schedules." HPV Vaccine Recommendations, 17 March 2020, <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/hpv/hcp/recommendations.html>.

individuals prone to HPV and increases the risk of infection and spread of the virus.

In most cases (including the insurance plan offered to UPEI students) vaccinations are covered at 90% and are included in the Prescription Drug Maximum.<sup>19</sup> The high cost of HPV vaccinations utilizes a large portion of funds available for prescription drugs, thus leaving students with insufficient funds that may actually be required to pay for prescription medication. This again makes students less drawn to make an effort to take the HPV vaccinations.

Thus, it is quite evident that the high cost of HPV vaccinations disincentivizes individuals with or without insurance from taking it.



## *Recommends:*

The Government of Prince Edward Island work towards making HPV vaccinations free of cost for all individuals within the age group most prone to infection.

<sup>19</sup> Student Benefits. "My Coverage." UPEI Student Insurance, <https://studentbenefits.ca/my-coverage>.

## PRINCIPLE

All students should have access to secure and affordable housing over the course of their education.

## CONCERN

The lack of affordable housing in Charlottetown has forced students to contribute large percentages of their income towards rent.

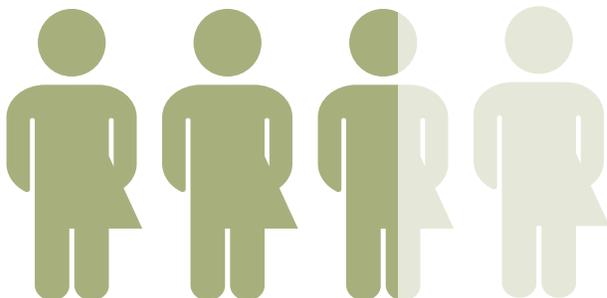
## RECOMMENDATION

The Government of PEI add a new post-secondary student dedicated stream to the PEI Rent Supplement Program.

## SUPPORTING EVIDENCE:

In the summer of 2021, the UPEI Student Union put out a housing survey to gauge how students have been affected by the Charlottetown housing crisis and what their housing situation looks like today. Students pay anywhere between \$450 to \$1000 for rent every month and utilities cost \$50 to \$100 over and above the money spent on rent.<sup>20</sup>

After further analysis and calculation, it was concluded that 50.80% of students pay an average of \$600 in rent and 24.40% of students pay a whopping average of \$1125 in rent. Furthermore, the housing survey also collected data on annual student income and it was inferred that 60.98% of students only earn an average of \$5000 during the school year, while 29.09% of students earn an average of \$10,000 during the school year.<sup>21</sup> Housing costs in PEI rose by 39% from 2016 to 2020<sup>22</sup> and the 2018 Charlottetown Youth Housing Report found that on average, 65% of students pay over 30% of their income on housing.<sup>23</sup>



**65%** OF STUDENTS PAY OVER 30% OF THEIR INCOME ON HOUSING

# Supporting Students through the Charlottetown Housing Crisis

<sup>20</sup> UPEI Student Union. "Housing Survey." Summer 2021.

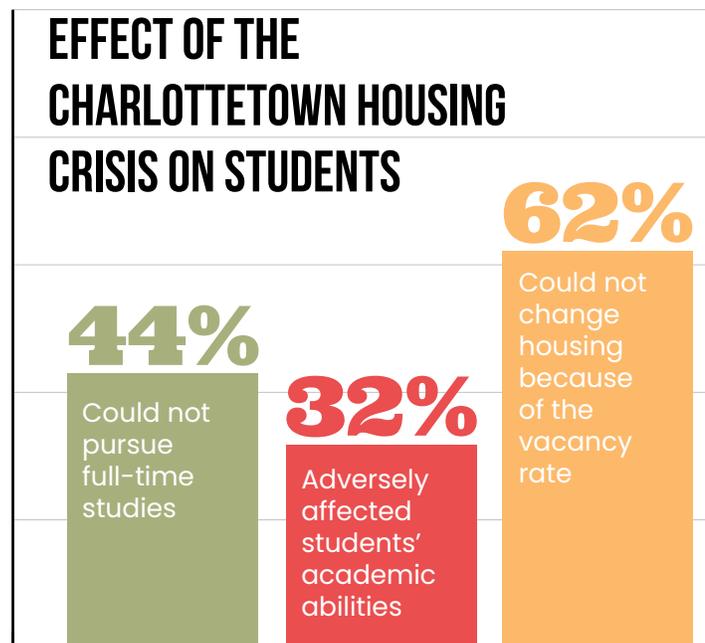
<sup>21</sup> UPEI Student Union. "Housing Survey." Summer 2021.

<sup>22</sup> Campaign 2000. "PEI Child Poverty Report Card." January 2020, <https://campaign2000.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/PEI-Child-Poverty-Report-Card-Jan.2020.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup> Charlottetown Youth Matters. "Youth Housing Report." 2018, [https://plcdn4static.civicle.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_10500298/Image/Events%20and%20Initiatives/Special%20Events%20and%20Initiatives/Youth%20Housing%20Report/Youth%20Housing%20Report%20\(Final\)%20Print%20&%20Web.pdf](https://plcdn4static.civicle.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_10500298/Image/Events%20and%20Initiatives/Special%20Events%20and%20Initiatives/Youth%20Housing%20Report/Youth%20Housing%20Report%20(Final)%20Print%20&%20Web.pdf).

It is also important to note that the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation explicitly states that housing can only be considered affordable if it costs less than 30% of an individual or household's income.<sup>24</sup>

The UPEI Student Union Housing Survey also found that the cost of housing in Charlottetown affected 43.90% of students' ability to pursue full-time studies and has adversely affected 31.71% of students' academic ability because they were forced to work longer hours or multiple jobs to be able to pay for rent.<sup>25</sup> Thus it is evident that the lack of affordable housing in Charlottetown is negatively impacting student education.



\*Figure rounded to nearest percentage.

According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, in the beginning of 2021 Charlottetown had a vacancy rate of 2.5%.<sup>26</sup> The population of Charlottetown has grown 11.7% since 2013, which has resulted in a corresponding crash in the housing market seeing that vacancy rates went from 7.9% in 2013 to 0.2% in 2018.<sup>27</sup> Although the Charlottetown rental vacancy rate seems to have recovered slightly since 2018, it is extremely important to note that the COVID-19 pandemic forced many students to return to their home countries and provinces, thus resulting in the slight increase in vacancy rate. The pandemic also forced many short-term rental owners to convert their housing units into long-term rentals which were then occupied by students in Charlottetown over the pandemic. When students return to Charlottetown to attend university post-pandemic, a dip in vacancy rate will be inevitable.

<sup>24</sup> Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. "About Affordable Housing in Canada." What is Affordable Housing?, 31 March 2018, <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/professionals/industry-innovation-and-leadership/industry-expertise/affordable-housing/about-affordable-housing/affordable-housing-in-canada>.

<sup>25</sup> UPEI Student Union. "Housing Survey." Summer 2021.

<sup>26</sup> Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. "Charlottetown Vacancy Rate %." Housing Market Information Portal, 2021, <https://www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/hmip-pimh/en/TableMapChart/Table?TableId=2.2.33&GeographyId=11&GeographyTypeId=2&DisplayAs=Table&GeographyName=Prince%20Edward%20Island#Total>.

<sup>27</sup> Yarr, Kevin. "What Kelowna can teach Charlottetown about its housing crisis." CBC News [Charlottetown], 3 July 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-kelowna-charlottetown-housing-crisis-1.5198553>.

The lack of affordable housing in Charlottetown combined with a low vacancy rate creates more than just financial problems. 62.20% students said that the Charlottetown rental vacancy rate has adversely affected their ability to change housing.<sup>28</sup> This is highly concerning because it curbs students' freedom to move out of problematic and unsafe housing situations.

The Charlottetown housing crisis is also forcing students to leave Prince Edward Island post graduation, consequently making it difficult to retain educated youth that could contribute to society and help PEI's economy grow. 43.03% of students stated that they planned to move out of PEI after graduation, however, 67.42% of those students confirmed that they would stay back to work and live in PEI if the vacancy rate were higher and housing was more affordable.<sup>29</sup>

**67% OF STUDENTS**  
ARE WILLING TO STAY IN  
CHARLOTTETOWN IF HOUSING WAS AFFORDABLE  
AND VACANCY RATE WAS HIGHER



The 2019 Provincial Progressive Conservative Platform states, "A Dennis King PC Government will: Launch a PEI mobile rental voucher program as an immediate action to help low-income Islanders, especially the 1,300 families and seniors currently on the provincial waiting list. This program will also be available to Island students."<sup>30</sup>

In March 2020, the Government of PEI installed a \$1000 rental subsidy program that included students. The temporary rental assistance benefit was aimed at assisting renters who had suffered financial losses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and was paid directly to the landlords. Tenants who had applied

<sup>28</sup> UPEI Student Union. "Housing Survey." Summer 2021.

<sup>29</sup> UPEI Student Union. "Housing Survey." Summer 2021.

<sup>30</sup> Progressive Conservative Party of PEI. "It's About People." PEI Progressive Conservative Party 2019 Platform, 2019. [https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/peipc/pages/1574/attachments/original/1555084646/PC-2019\\_Platform.pdf?1555084646](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/peipc/pages/1574/attachments/original/1555084646/PC-2019_Platform.pdf?1555084646).

for the program received a \$500 rental subsidy for the first month, followed by \$250 rental subsidies for each of the following three months.<sup>31</sup> Although this program provided some temporary relief to students who were suffering financially, it was extremely short-lived and students were left without assistance starting September 2020.

Currently, rent supplements are distributed through two housing assistance programs in PEI. The first is the Senior Assistance Program and the second is the Family Housing Assistance Program. The Family Housing Assistance Program functions on a needs based level wherein the program covers up to 80% of the market rate for rent for eligible families so long as the individuals contribute 25% of their income to housing.<sup>32</sup> The program's focus on families automatically excludes a majority of students and they are thus not eligible for housing assistance in most cases.

The 2018 Poverty Reduction Action Plan Background: Demographics of Low Income clearly states that 11.7% of PEI's youth are low-income, which was the highest of all other demographics.<sup>33</sup> The report also recognized that the majority of the youth population in Charlottetown are students, thus causing 17.8% of them to be low-income.<sup>34</sup>



## *Recommends:*

The Government of Prince Edward Island develop a separate needs based student dedicated housing assistance program that would offer rental supplements to students year round.

<sup>31</sup> Neatby, Stu. "P.E.I. expands rental subsidy program after facing initial backlash." Saltwire [Charlottetown], 7 May 2020, <https://www.saltwire.com/prince-edward-island/news/pei-expands-rental-subsidy-program-after-facing-initial-backlash-433049/>.

<sup>32</sup> Government of Prince Edward Island. "Family Housing Assistance Program." Housing Assistance, <https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/social-development-and-housing/housing-assistance>.

<sup>33</sup> Government of Prince Edward Island. "Demographics of Low Income." Poverty Reduction, 17 May 2018, [https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/demographics\\_of\\_low\\_income\\_poverty\\_reduction\\_backgroundunder\\_may\\_2018.pdf](https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/demographics_of_low_income_poverty_reduction_backgroundunder_may_2018.pdf).

<sup>34</sup> Government of Prince Edward Island. "Demographics of Low Income." Poverty Reduction, 17 May 2018, [https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/demographics\\_of\\_low\\_income\\_poverty\\_reduction\\_backgroundunder\\_may\\_2018.pdf](https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/sites/default/files/publications/demographics_of_low_income_poverty_reduction_backgroundunder_may_2018.pdf).





**Anagha Muralidharan**  
VP Academic and External  
vpax@upeisu.ca

**Miyah Mistal**  
Policy and Research Coordinator  
prc@upeisu.ca