



25 April 2022

Dr. Greg Keefe
Interim President
University of Prince Edward Island

RE: UPEI EDI Concerns

Dear Interim President Keefe,

We write to you in your capacity as the UPEI Interim President and Chair of UPEI Senate.

We would like to begin by applauding your suggestion (January 13, 2022) that “advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) needs to be at the forefront of what we do as a university.” We could not agree more and thus we hope you will receive the following observations/suggestions in the spirit of our shared commitment to campus EDI issues.

You may recall that in February 2021, when UPEI Administration requested that UPEI Senate endorse the *UPEI Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy* prior to its proposal to the UPEI Board of Governors, the Motion to endorse included an amendment committing UPEI Senate to a review of the *Strategy* one year after the endorsement. As you will note, this was captured in the senate minutes (February 12, 2021):

UPEI Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy

The Vice-President Academic and Research gave some background on the development of the UPEI EDI Strategy, which had been distributed to the Senate for information and will be presented to the UPEI Board of Governors for approval. Following discussion, two amendments were proposed: 1) add the Joint Equity Committee to the list of groups on page 13 that will be consulted on an ongoing basis, and 2) add that the Strategy document be reviewed by the Senate and the Board of Governors in one year.

And here is the formal motion:

MOTION (K. Gottschall-Pass / L. Doiron) that Senate endorse the UPEI Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy as amended, to be proposed to the UPEI Board of Governors. CARRIED UNANAMOUSLY

With this context in mind, we would like to bring the following concerns to your attention:

- Although the UPEI Senate agreed to review the *UPEI EDI Strategy* by February 2022, to our knowledge no such review has occurred.
- Based on the agenda/minutes from the February 2022 UPEI Board of Governor's meeting, it does not appear that the *UPEI EDI Strategy* was reviewed by the Board despite the fact that it passed the same amended motion (February 16, 2021) as UPEI Senate.
- While the *UPEI EDI Strategy* makes it clear that the Joint Equity Committee will be consulted on an ongoing basis, the Committee has not been consulted since the strategy was approved by the Board of Governors (Campus Culture, #4, p.13).
- The UPEI EDI Officer tasked with playing a central role in implementing the *UPEI EDI Strategy* only recently returned from leave and had been away for the better part of a year. During her absence, we are not aware of anyone being hired to fill this important role. We must also point out that at present, the UPEI EDI Officer is not a full-time position.
- In preparation for bargaining, the UPEI Faculty Association (UPEIFA) recently asked your administration to provide it with academic staff demographic information. In response, UPEI Administration indicated that it had not collected that information even though such collection was identified as an important component of the *UPEI EDI Strategy* (Organizational Systems, #3, p. 10).
- Despite the central role played by the UPEI EDI Steering Committee in the implementation of the *UPEI EDI Strategy*, it is our understanding that the Committee has only met once (April 12, 2022) since the UPEI Board of Governors approved the *Strategy*.
- The UPEI EDI Strategy makes it clear that the "Vice-President Academic and Research and Vice-President Administration and Finance will report to the President on an annual basis regarding the progress made on this Strategy. Progress reports will be made publicly available" (Campus Culture, #4, p. 13).

While we do not know if you have received such a report, we are not aware of any report being made publicly available.

At this time, we respectfully request that:

- As Chair of UPEI Senate, you call a special Senate meeting to review the *UPEI EDI Strategy*.
- A Zoom link for the meeting be distributed to the entire campus community well in advance of the meeting.
- At that meeting, UPEI Administration will provide an update on what if any progress has been made in implementing the specific recommendations in our *UPEI EDI Strategy*.
- Moving forward, UPEI Senate will be provided with an update at each meeting on the steps that have been taken to implement the *UPEI EDI Strategy*.

While we recognize that as Interim President, you have only been in your position since December 2021, we note that the administrators tasked with implementing the *UPEI EDI Strategy* (Campus Culture, #4, p. 13) have been in a position to supervise the implementation of the *Strategy* since it was approved by the Board (February, 2021). If UPEI is truly committed to “building a culture of accountability” we believe a candid explanation to the campus community of how these oversights could have occurred and what concrete action is being taken to address these going forward would be an important indication that UPEI Administration takes such accountability seriously.

We look forward to you thoughts on these important matters.

Sincerely,

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UPEI Faculty Association

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