



Unsupported claims...lacks evidence and citations

# UPEI Student Update...Graded

The following "update" was sent to students by Administration on March 21, 2023

## UPEI Student Update: Responding to student concerns

The University wants to address the concerns raised by the UPEI Student Union (UPEISU) in its statement on March 17, regarding issues in the current labour dispute with the UPEI Faculty Association (UPEI FA). We share a number of the same concerns.

### Removal of Mandatory SOTS (Student Opinion of Teaching Survey) Scores from Tenure-Track Applications

The University has remained steadfast in our support of a mandatory student voice in the evaluation of professors for both tenure and promotion. We have proposed modifications to ensure that potential bias in the process is recognized and addressed. The UPEI FA remains immovable in their position that SOTS should be provided in the tenure and promotion at the exclusive option of the professor.

Not true! UPEI has not made any proposals to address bias, only to acknowledge it.

### Smaller Class Sizes

The University is supportive of managing class size for the benefit of students. UPEI continues to rank highly with respect to our comparators nationally on faculty to student ratios—scoring 4th out of 19 Canadian comparator universities. Further advancement in this measure, within our requirement to balance our budget, will require additional resources. UPEI runs very efficiently and lean to sustain the lowest possible tuition, while maintaining teaching excellence. We are proud to rank number one among our regional comparators for the proportion of budget spent on items like instruction, student supports, and library versus administration.

Citation needed...who said this? Please list source, and year of publication.

Citation needed...who are these comparators?

### Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigenization

UPEI entered negotiations with the FA with two main goals; to manage faculty salary and benefit costs so as to minimize impacts on student tuition, and to promote a number of measures in hiring, training, promotion and tenure that support EDI and Indigenization. We support the student position on EDI training for hiring committees and have gone further to promote EDI champions on these committees. UPEI has been a driver of diversity within the PEI community and is taking a lead nationally through the delivery of our IKE 1040 Indigenous Teachings of Turtle Island course and other initiatives. More needs to be done and we are pleased to partner with the UPEISU in this area.

### Improvement to Teaching and Lab Space

The issue of teaching and lab space has not been a specific item during bargaining. The UPEI FA has raised items such as mandatory humidity and temperature ranges within restrictive limits (beyond current regulatory standards) in all FA Member offices and other work spaces, building of a new campus childcare with priority for FA members, and free access for faculty to the UPEI Chi-Wan Young Sports Centre and Bell Aliant Centre aquatics facility, plus a fitness spending account.

The University has focused upgrades to infrastructure on student spaces, such as air handling upgrades in classroom spaces and the library. We have also invested in new teaching spaces in the new residence. Recently, the Vice-President Academic and Research and Vice-President Administration and Finance, along with staff from the Teaching and Learning Centre, ITSS, and Facilities Management, began a review of teaching spaces to determine future priorities for renovations and upgrades.

Not true! The FA has made a number of proposals that would require suitable teaching, office, and lab spaces to be maintained, cleaned, and meet air quality and temperature/humidity standards.

### Tuition Increases

The University understands that any tuition increase is challenging for students, who are highly impacted by rising housing and food costs. The University signaled the tuition increase in an earlier message to be transparent regarding our rising labour and other costs. The increase was based on the University's proposals—to accept all that the UPEI FA has on the table would require much greater revenue growth. The UPEI FA has indicated that tuition has risen 30% in the past six contract years. Using public data from the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC), the actual increase for domestic and international student tuition rates has been 13.4 and 13.6%, respectively. These increases were less than half of the average growth in costs among Maritime universities. During that time, UPEI's budget for teaching rose 30%. UPEI ranks number one among comparators in the region for managing administrative costs and will continue to work hard to maintain the lowest undergraduate tuition cost in the region for our students.

Details needed: what was this money spent on?

We are disappointed the UPEI FA chose to take their members on strike, and while we are committed to ensuring that you are able to finish your term, we are concerned about the impact of this labour action on students.

Then...why won't you come to the negotiations table?

The University will do everything it can to support students during this time. We agree with the UPEISU that students should research the issues and come to their own conclusions. We encourage you to visit the [upeu.ca/labour](http://upeu.ca/labour) website for information and FAQs. If your question is not answered, please reach out to [communications@upeu.ca](mailto:communications@upeu.ca).

If you need assistance, UPEI has a number of resources for students through UPEI Student Affairs, including personal counselling ([studentserv@upeu.ca](mailto:studentserv@upeu.ca)), and the International Student Office ([irostu@upeu.ca](mailto:irostu@upeu.ca)).

UPEI withdrew this proposal, and instead proposed an MOU to "discuss the idea..."

Why would they not consult with the teachers about teaching spaces???

Actually, we said tuition has gone up more than 30% over the last decade...click here to see our data.

The FA is its membership...those members voted to strike because they are disappointed UPEI has failed to work with their union to solve serious problems at our University.