



March 21, 2023

Mr. Dennis King
Leader
Progressive Conservative Party of Prince Edward Island

RE: Back-To-Work Legislation Concerns

Dear Mr. King,

Since the election campaign began, our members and supporters have been reporting many good conversations with candidates, “on the doorstep” and elsewhere, about our labour action and the future of our provincial university. Naturally, this has raised questions about where the candidates’ respective parties stand on key issues: we have already heard strong statements of support from the Green Party of PEI and PEI NDP, and are anxious to engage with the Progressive Conservative Party of PEI in the days ahead.

One of the most pressing questions for our members and supporters, and for Island workers generally, is your Party’s position on **back-to-work legislation**. As noted, the Green Party and NDP have emphatically stated that they will not support any legislation forcing workers to end lawful, Charter-protected job action. We will welcome clarification of your Party’s position on this pressing issue at the earliest opportunity.

It is extremely important that we hear a strong, unambiguous statement from the Progressive Conservative Party of Prince Edward Island that they will not introduce or support back-to-work legislation.

So long as the prospect of back-to-work legislation lingers, it will simply enable the UPEI Board of Governors in continuing the bad faith pattern of obfuscation, delay, and surface bargaining that we have now seen for nearly a year. The result will be a longer labour disruption, with a worse outcome for all parties, and our members and our students – including Island students – will pay the heaviest price for this.

The events now unfolding will set the path forward for our Provincial university for many years. Many serious difficulties face UPEI, including significant understaffing, lack of support for teaching and research, and a toxic work environment fostered by a decade of poor decision-making and lack of regard for the well-being of UPEI workers by the Board of Governors.

We hope to hear from you very soon on this matter, and look forward to further engagement in the days and weeks ahead.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Arfken', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Arfken, PhD
President
UPEI Faculty Association