

UPEI FACULTY ASSOCIATION ON LEGAL STRIKE

On March 20, in response to the UPEI Board of Governors' utter failure to address the serious issues that are having an impact on the quality of education at PEI's only university, hundreds of UPEI Faculty Association members walked off the job. We initiated this legal strike reluctantly and in the hope that this action would make it clear that our working conditions are students' learning conditions and business as usual is no longer sustainable.

Not Enough Faculty

Despite increasing enrolments and tuition, and the near-doubling of the size of the University, **the number of full-time permanent faculty over the last decade has remained virtually unchanged.** As UPEI has grown and the number of programs increased, the same number of permanent full-time faculty members have been expected to take on significant additional work. This has led to larger classes, fewer course options, and less time and opportunity for instructors to support their students' success.

Instead of working with us to address this issue, the UPEI Board of Governors has insisted that everything is fine, and that UPEI faculty and students are somehow mistaken when they identify this as a significant concern.

Exploiting Contract Academic Staff

In a recent op-ed, UPEI's VP Academic & Research claimed that 90% of UPEI professors make more than \$100,000. This is misleading. **In 2021-2022, more than 500 courses at UPEI were taught by sessional instructors,** who work on short-term per-course contracts, and are paid considerably less than full-time faculty members doing the same work. Many sessional instructors teach multiple courses per year, with almost 70 people having taught 25 or more courses at UPEI - some as many as 50 to 100 courses. However, the most a sessional instructor teaching a full course-load at UPEI can expect to make is \$35,000 a year, with no benefits or job security. This level of exploitation is unacceptable.

Although the Faculty Association has proposed a part-time faculty solution that would establish pay equity for sessional instructors while providing them with much needed supports, the UPEI Board of Governors has refused to even discuss this proposal.

Toxic Workplace

Unfortunately, resources that could have been used to address these issues and more have instead been used by the UPEI Board of Governors to silence victims of harassment with non-disclosure agreements (NDAs), pay for investigations into allegations against members of UPEI Senior Administration, and pay for a year's worth of travel, lodging, and legal expenses for a Halifax lawyer to act as their Chief Negotiator.

At the same time, Islanders are being encouraged to put their faith in a new medical school that will take shape in this problematic environment. If such an ambitious project is the future of health care on our Island, we cannot ignore the financial mismanagement and workplace toxicity that continue to cast a shadow over our entire institution.

While we remain committed to negotiating a fair and reasonable agreement that meaningfully addresses these significant issues, **our prospects remain dim so long as the UPEI Board of Governors refuses to meet with us to negotiate a settlement.** The Board claims to care about students and the effect of the strike on their educations, but their actions say otherwise. **It's time for the UPEI Board of Governors to get serious about getting faculty and students back into the classroom, where they belong.**

Together, we can build a better UPEI!

To Learn More
About the
Bargaining
Issues
and to
Send a Letter
to the UPEI
Board of
Governors,
Visit:

www.upeifa.ca

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UPEIFA

UNIVERSITY OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
FACULTY ASSOCIATION