

UPEI STRIKE

Faculty stages rally

No progress in talks as representatives from out of province join picket lines March 24

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No significant inroads are being made to end the legal strike by faculty members at UPEI, says the president of the UPEI Faculty Association.

Mike Arfken said March 24 the UPEI board of governors has made proposals but refuses to come to the table.

“Now, there are a couple of things that could form the basis of a negotiation, something that we could potentially work with, but that’s when you meet at the table and hash it out, and they’re unwilling to do that,” Arfken said during a two-hour rally at the main entrance to the university at noon.

Members of the faculty association have been picketing at each of the entrances all week but came together for a rally on March 24 that included more than 50 people.

The local members were joined by representatives from organized labour and faculty associations in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Ontario and New Brunswick.

Arfken wasn’t specific



Members of the UPEI Faculty Association host a strike rally at the main entrance of the university in Charlottetown on March 24. Representatives from faculty associations in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Ontario and the Maritimes were also there in support.

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about what has been discussed between the UPEI and the faculty association since the strike kicked off March 20, other than to say nothing has changed.

“Everyone I know of wants the parties to get back to the table, and we’re calling for it. Every political leader has said they’re calling for it. The only people resisting that is the

UPEI board of governors.”

The two sides have communicated only by email since March 20.

“They have sent a few proposals by email. We looked at it and said, ‘We need to talk about these, we need to negotiate’, and they’re saying, ‘No’, they’re not willing to meet.”

Here’s a snapshot of some of the key points of the strike:

WHAT STRIKERS WANT

The faculty association has been negotiating with the UPEI board of governors for more than 10 months. It said members are seeking more full-time faculty, support for contract academic faculty, adequate research support, reduced workloads, improved equity, diversity, inclusion

and indigenization and reasonable compensation.

UPEI RESPONDS

On its website, the university said it has not received responses or counter offers to the proposals it made on Feb. 28 and March 10.

WHAT THE UNIVERSITY HAS OFFERED

The university also said on its website that it now believes the only way to settle the issue is to have a neutral third party to step in, suggesting interest arbitration.

WHAT IS AT STAKE

All teaching, including classes, labs, tutorials and student supervision, etc., have stopped. Work-related contact with the UPEI Faculty Association bargaining Unit 1 members has also stopped.

WHAT IS NEXT

Arfken said faculty members remain unified and plan to hold rallies every Friday.

“If we could have avoided this altogether, that would have been good. We’ll be out here as long as we need to, until we can get a negotiated settlement.”

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