

POLLARD NEW OMBUDSMAN

UPEI Student Union Position Deals with Student Problems

BY RANDY MCDONALD

Have problems with UPEI? Treated unfairly by a professor? Problem with your on-campus job?

If you have any type of grievance regarding UPEI affairs, then talk to Ryan Pollard, fourth-year English and Political Studies major and the newly-appointed UPEI student union ombudsman.

The ombudsman is a position that was first developed in Scandinavia, designed to work out problems between labour unions and big business. When the posi-

tion crossed the Atlantic, it took on new meanings, and evolved into a general platform upon which anyone could complain about the services offered by an institution. At UPEI, the position of ombudsman was added to the most recent draft of the UPEI student union constitution.

The position has been left vacant for the past three semesters. Although it is included in the constitution as a vital aspect of the university, there has been a general lack of applicants for the position.

Student Union Vice-President Internal Pauline Tran eventually took the initiative to actively seek an individual to fill the job.

"After no one applied for the position at elections, I went around asking people to take the position. Finally, Ryan agreed," she says.

Pollard's involvement stems from an interest in student politics.

"I guess that I first got interested in student politics last year, when I addressed the Student Union about the lack of debate in last year's student union elections," he

explains. "I thought that everyone who went up for election should have campaigned on a platform, not coasted along."

He marks that episode as the first thing that got him involved in student union politics.

"I stayed involved in politics, and then, when Pauline [Tran] asked me if I wanted to go for the position of ombudsman, I said 'sure.'"

Already, in his short tenure to date, he has dealt with some problems posed to him by some students, confirming the essential nature

of the post. "I think that every university needs the position of ombudsman," he stresses.

Pollard will continue in the position of ombudsman only until the end of the semester, at which point he will graduate from UPEI. He urges other students to get involved.

"We need more people involved in campus politics."

Any student who has a problem with UPEI can contact Ryan Pollard at <rpollard@upe.ca>.



Any grievance may now be forwarded to Ryan Pollard, UPEI's new Ombudsman

Photo by Richard Haines

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