

UPEI Requires Portable Classrooms

by Jessica Boohe

UPEI classrooms are getting a little too crowded for comfort.

The solution to this problem appears to be temporary classrooms. Starting in the fall of 2001, portables will be added to the campus to provide more space for students. UPEI students and faculty members are concerned.

Erin Green, a first year student, does not like the idea of temporary classrooms.

"I find it annoying that they are adding portables to the campus," Green said. "I have never taken a class in one but I've seen them and they don't look pleasant.

"I think that UPEI has a beautiful campus and we're going to litter it with portables," added Green. "I also would feel isolated from the rest of the classes if I was in a portable. I like the idea of a warm, comfy classroom instead."

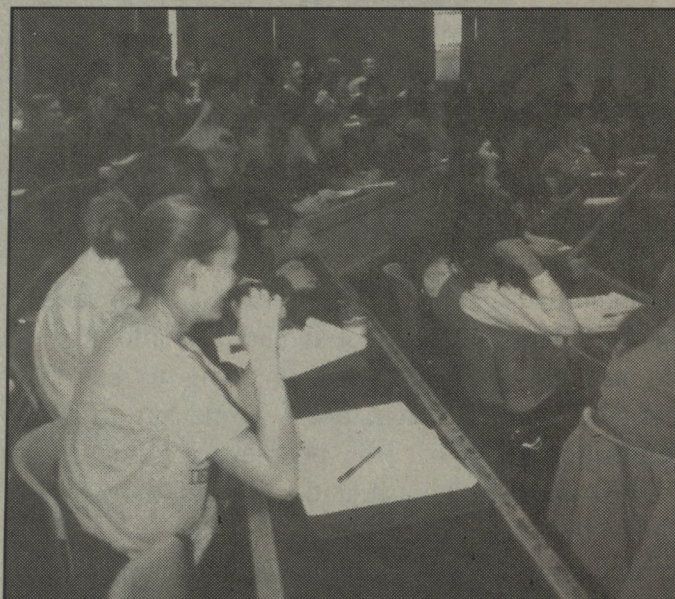
Vickie Johnston, assistant professor of psychology, began her academic career at UPEI in 1978 and most of her classes were in mobiles.

"When I was a student at UPEI, what is now the Sports Centre was then a pig barn," Johnson said. "Beside that, there was a few portables which held arts classes, english classes, and psychology classes. I remember feeling like I was in a tunnel because they were so long and narrow. The pillars in the middle of the rooms made seeing the board difficult as well."

She feels that portables can offer a good working environment if all essentials are met.

"They should be comfortable for both the students and the professor and offer good acoustics. The air quality must be healthy as well as good temperature control," Jonhston said.

"I also think that we could make them look really nice on the inside," she added. "They're tem-



porary so why not have fun with them. Even adding a warm colour of paint could make the room more comfortable."

She has seen several different classroom environments.

"In 1986, the University 100 classes were held where ITEC is now. It was a very comfortable atmosphere," Johnston explained. "Then about five or six years ago, we were moved to the Alumni Gym. The environment in there is not as nice, especially the temperature system. It's either too hot or too cold." She adds, "I hope they are 'temporary'. In three to five years we will have a beautiful new Students Centre. I look at the temporary classrooms as being short-term with long-term gains."

Neil Henry, Vice-President of Finance and Facilities, explained why temporary classrooms are necessary at UPEI.

"There is a loss of classrooms to other purposes, most recently the planned incorporation of the Alumni Gym into the new Student Centre," Henry said. "Also because of rising enrollments. This

year we have added about 360 full-time students, an increase of 15%. This ensures that we will see a per-

manent increase next year. While we hope this is a permanent increase, this may only be a temporary situation."

At this point, UPEI will be adding at least six temporary classrooms. "The university has issued a Request For Proposal for the temporary classrooms," he explained. "We are

determined to have at least six, maybe more, classrooms of 50-60 student size, available before next fall. For the longer term, if these

enrollment increases are sustained, then a permanent classroom building may be necessary."

He discussed where the classrooms will be placed and how long he believes they will be needed.

"We are exploring sites that are as close as possible to the academic core of the university," explained Henry, adding that if a permanent classroom building were required, it would take some time to get the funding and then design and build it. "I would expect that temporary classrooms will be here for three to five years."

"The fact that we are subject to this particular pressure is inconvenient but it reflects the very positive fact that UPEI is booming," he added. "Our objective is to make sure that academic programs and the students are not affected."

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