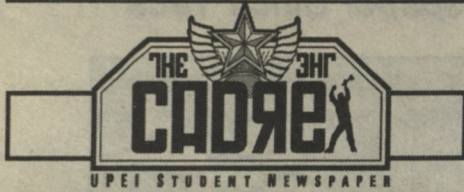


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# Editorial

by Sean Brady • Managing Editor

Stinky bathrooms, unaffordable tuition, and dorms with so much growing on the walls that the discovery of a new life form is right around the corner. These are the things we as students fight against. All good causes, but not where I'm focusing my own personal attention. What is the cause of my discontent? Allow your mind to "drift" back to last Thursday and Friday. Anyone see where this may be headed?

Now for those of you who live in town, the weather might not have been an issue. "What bad weather" you may be asking yourself. "It was fine in town so it must have been fine everywhere." Sadly, as ridiculous as that might sound, many of those who commute a reasonable distance to get to school are finding it to be a predominant thought process shared amongst "townies".

Thursday morning it never crossed my mind that school might be cancelled, but lo and behold, around noon the call was made to "shut 'er down" at 1:00.

Shock. Surprise. I was no less than dumfounded. At that point I was singing Mr. Bradshaw's praises, erecting small statues, you get the idea. By the time I had arrived home I was in slightly less of a good mood, feeling I had been dragged to town to attend no classes and go home when the weather had actually gotten worse, but seeing as how my exam had been delayed, overall I was quite happy.

Friday morning I was positive that there was no way that there would be school. Anyone with half-decent vision could see that the weather was worse than it had gotten at any point on Thursday. "UPEI is operating on its normal schedule" spewing from the phone receiver informed me that I was wrong.

On my way to town, finding myself in the middle of the third whiteout in less than a kilometer, I spontaneously jerked my wheel to the left. Nanoseconds thereafter I heard the loud scrape of drift against the passenger side of the car. I had missed plowing directly into a cliff left by the snowblower by less than a foot.

After getting to school I asked Nick to contact Mr. Bradshaw and ask him "given the road conditions yesterday and the fact that we closed, why do you feel it is necessary to risk the lives of students today?" Mr. Bradshaw's response was simple: "[Thursday] was a situation that evolved over the morning. We made the call [to cancel] at lunch after we surveyed the roads and received an advisory to close the school from the RCMP." Concerning Friday, Mr. Bradshaw said he checked with the Department of Highways and had security on the roads. "The roads weren't that bad this morning but obviously it has gotten worse" adding that he had not received any travel advisories from the RCMP. Within an hour of Nick hanging up the phone, the call was made to close at 3:30.

I contacted the RCMP Monday to inquire when travel

advisories had been issued, and why someone from the RCMP would be advising UPEI to close. I was informed that although they could not tell me when the travel advisories had been issued (they don't keep track of such information) that it was not the policy of the RCMP to call businesses or institutions to recommend that they close. Upon trying to clarify the conflicting information with Mr. Bradshaw, who was unavailable for comment, Ms. Diane Maclean explained that the officer had called to inquire about the university's status and had suggested that the road conditions may warrant closing. When I explained the RCMP policy that had been relayed to me, Ms. Maclean reflected that she also had thought it strange for an RCMP officer to call, adding that it was likely a personal issue (possibly a child attending) to the officer and their call was not made in an official capacity.

Now, I have heard two arguments defending the lack of University ambition to close due to inclement weather:

1/ "We're all adults here and it's up to students to make the call personally as to whether or not they can make it. Students won't be punished for such a decision." Fine and dandy but seems to me I pay to attend classes for a reason. If the weather is bad enough that I can't make it in, and might I mention that I'll drive through dang near anything, how can I be expected to have as firm a grasp on the material as those who managed to make it? Therefore, how is it

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fair to lay the decision to either risk my safety or miss what I pay to attend on me?

2/ "Professors can always make the call to cancel a class." That's an outright cop-out. Professors are responsible for enough without laying the responsibility for the safety and well being of their students on them as well. Shame on anyone who says that.

Apparently, according to a reliable source, the lack of a clear policy on storm closures prompted Mr. Bradshaw to promise, at a recent Board of Governors meeting, that in the future event of a travel advisory due to weather conditions, UPEI would close. Fine and dandy, but didn't that cause me and everyone else to be called in Friday only to be put back out on the roads when the inclemency of the weather had reached its peak?

I call on Mr. Bradshaw to realize that not all students are "townies" who can simply call a cab, walk, or hop a bus (oops, actually they can't) to get to school, and to understand that when school is open, people are going to do their damndest to make it, risking not only their own lives but the lives of other commuters as well. Does someone have to get severely hurt, or worse killed, before the severity of the situation will be realized?