

Strikes to spare

UPEI students reminisce about past strike in the wake of Acadia's labour woes

By Martha MacIntyre

The recent strike at Acadia has left many UPEI students worried. Most students remember all too well what a strike is like.

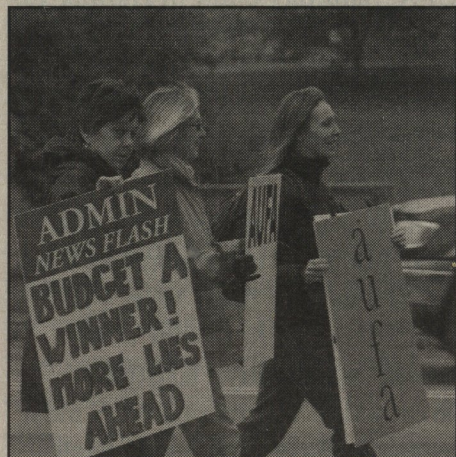
In March 2006, with 84 per cent of the UPEI faculty support, 375 professors and librarians walked off the job.

They hoped to resolve all their outstanding issues, including better salaries and a somewhat easier workload.

Students concerned over the Acadia strike voiced their opinions.

"My mother is paying good money for my education. It worries me. This isn't high school," said first-year student Lauren Murphy.

"There is a big difference between high school teachers, and university teachers going on



Professors at Acadia University march outside. This strike has brought back old memories for some UPEI students. CUP photo

strike."

First-year student Krystal Cousins agrees.

"There is so much stress involving university" she said. "Students put too much time, effort and money into university and we don't we need the added stress of worrying about our profs going on strike."

For 15 days classes were cancelled as talks between UPEI and its union proceeded.

With only three weeks left in the semester, many students worried they would not be taught the right material in time for their big, end of the year, three hour exams.

However, one thing about UPEI, is the wonderful reputation for all the professors.

It sure feels good, walking into a class, being known as a name and not just a number.

Professors generally treat students fairly so students were concerned

that in the strike situation they would not be treated fairly.

Fair seems to be a very powerful word.

April 6 was the day many students were waiting for. An agreement was finally reached that would have faculty wages increase by nearly 15 per cent over the next five years.

A professor's work load was also slashed by a course each. Reason being that every teacher, teaching one less class, would give more time for students, and independent research.

Although there were very few storm days missed during the semester, it would have been very hard walking into a class and learning two weeks of information in about an hour.

One good thing to note, is that no semester in all of Canadian university history has ever been lost because over a labour dispute.

So what happened at Acadia?

After feeling that they were not receiving any good offers from administration, the professors at Acadia did not know what else to do.

They had no choice but to walk off the job, and to go on strike. Faculty at Acadia are looking for an improvement in the compensation structure, equity, benefits and faculty complement. Students have been encouraged to talk to their teachers, to find out about upcoming assignments, or to try and get some clues for any upcoming tests.

Many class tutoring groups have been organized, and everyone is encouraged to attend. Recent talks, between the administration and the teachers have started to show a little light at the end of the tunnel. If a deal is reached, classes at Acadia could resume as early as Monday. However, time will only tell.

Acadia has around 3,000 students. For many the image of a strike, can have a severe effect with enrolment, and the image of the university.

About four years ago, students missed thirteen days when faculty were on strike. However, they did not lose credit for any of their courses.

Editor's note: As of Nov. 6, the strike at Acadia University was declared officially over.

Breast cancer survivor spreads word, hope

Breast Cancer mortality rate is at an all time low

By Martha MacIntyre

Imagine if yourself, and eight of your friends, go out for dinner one night. Statistics predict that one of your friends sitting around the table, will get breast cancer at some point in her lifetime. Breast cancer is no doubt the No.1 diagnosed cancer among Canadian women. In 2007 alone, 5,300 women will die from it.

What is it about breast cancer that makes everyone want to make a

"If I ever got cancer again, I would be ready for it, and I would be pumped"

- Marlene Cairns, cancer survivor

difference?

Every year, more people sign up for the Run for Cure. In Charlottetown this year there was 2,200 participants. The run in Charlottetown was obviously a very emotional and enthusiastic day for many.

It seems it doesn't matter who you talk to, everyone knows someone who was affected by breast cancer.

Whether it may be a friend, girlfriend, or wife.

In fact in 2006 alone, more than 26 million dollars was raised across Canada for Breast Cancer research. So with more money being raised, and technology being where it is today, mortality rates are now finally at an all time low.

In that case, there are now more women survivors, like Marlene Cairns. She is one special lady. In fact Marlene can say she is not only a Breast Cancer survivor, she is a two time breast cancer survivor.

"Being a Breast Cancer survivor is a lot like being a university student" she said.

"Not a lot of people make it this far, but when you do, you are considered very rare and special. Cancer can get anyone at anytime, when your least expecting it" she said.

"I was only 21 when I had my first lump removed".

In fact, only one per cent of Breast Cancer cases are in women under 29.

According to Cairns, it is important to keep your family and friends close when going through cancer treatment.

"Everyone around me did the worrying, I focused on getting better, and finally getting ride of cancer for good.

"I was ready to fight, although my children are grown I wanted to make sure that I got to see them get married, and I really wanted to be able to spoil my grandkids," said Cairns.

She also believes that technology, the research, and the many new drugs have improved so much for her second time around.

"There are such amazing drugs available now that weren't available a couple of years ago, I am so grateful to everyone, from the researchers who work long hours in the lab, to the kid that fundraises for events like the CIBC Run for the Cure. More and more people are surviving breast cancer just like me. It is so great to be alive."

After being a two time breast cancer survivor Cairns is not scared if this disease would come back.

"If I ever got cancer again, I would be ready for it, and I would be pumped."

Cairns concluded by saying, "Never ignore a lump, get it tested and removed if there is any doubt. You just never know".

If anyone wants to see this Special Lady in action, you can attend one of her exercise classes at the CARI pool.

She starts her day with a lot of energy, and a big bright smile that can make anyone's day, before most of us even think about waking up.