

To share each party's views regarding post-secondary education with the students of UPEI, the Student Union forwarded some questions to the Provincial Election candidates. Unfortunately, we did not receive a reply from the NDP. But here's what the Liberal and Progressive Conservative parties had to say:

1. *Government funding for post-secondary education has significantly declined over the past decade. These funding cuts have resulted in large tuition fee increases, seriously deferred maintenance, larger class sizes, and less professors teaching a larger number of students. What is your party's plan for increasing core operating funding for UPEI?*

- PC:**
- will invest an additional \$1 million next year into core funding for a total of \$5.3 million
 - will invest additional funding of \$500,000 in the Atlantic Veterinary College
 - will continue to work with UPEI on a long-term funding plan
 - will support a \$30 million expansion and renovations at AVC
 - will cost-share in a new National Research Centre, also to be located at the University
 - will support the expansion at the Food Technology Centre

- Liberal:**
- will provide increased funding to UPEI and Holland College to address issue of deferred maintenance
 - will provide UPEI and Holland College with long-term funding projections

2. *Increased tuition fees mean less access to post-secondary education for low and middle income Islanders. How does your party propose to deal with the problem of high tuition fees? Will your party commit to fully funding and legislating a tuition fee freeze or reduction?*

- PC:**
- will increase student in-study income from present exemption of \$600 to \$1700
 - maintain the government-sponsored "Community Services Bursary" for Island youth who volunteer in their communities
 - increase the Island Student Award" from \$600 to \$1000 annually
 - introduced the student "Interest Relief Program"
 - S.A.V.E. Program (partnership agreement between government and UPEI, which has University provide three Island charitable organizations with services of a UPEI cooperative education student [whose salary is paid by government])

- Liberal:**
- will provide increased funding to UPEI to help address the issue of rising tuition rates
 - we propose a comprehensive two-pronged approach to addressing these issues
 - will improve access to student loans - to improve accessibility to attending University will provide tax relief to students choosing to make a living on PEI - to improve affordability of post-secondary education

3. *Will your party commit to implementing a system of up-front needs based grants? If not, how do you propose to deal with the student debt-crisis?*

- PC:**
- sponsoring "Debt Reduction Grant" - a provincially funded non-repayable grant for Island students, which provides maximum assistance of up to \$2,000 per year of study with maximum funding based on required length of program plus 1 year; is paid to lending institution that negotiated your P.E.I. Student Loan and is issued after graduation
 - will institute a tax-relief program for graduating students who live and work in Prince Edward Island; this program will see a portion of individual's provincial income tax used to offset student loan payments

4. *Will your party make funding for-secondary education and other social programs your first priority, or do you support tax cuts that mainly benefit wealthy Islanders?*

- PC:**
- supporting tax cuts which benefit all Islanders
 - increased threshold for personal exemptions which means that up to 17,000 Islanders

have their income taxes reduced or eliminated altogether

- signed on as a full partner with "Canada Millennium Scholarship (CMS) Foundation"; almost \$1.3 million will be awarded annually to PEI students in Canada Millennium Scholarships

- Liberal:**
- our priorities will be the same as Islanders – education, health care and improvements to our social safety net – it will not be tax cuts that mainly benefit the wealthy

5. *Since the creation of the Canada Health and Social Transfer in 1995, funding for post-secondary education from the federal government has been included in a block transfer with other social program funding. A Canada post-secondary education act has been proposed that would ensure increased accountability from both the federal and provincial governments for post-secondary education spending. Does your party support a Canada Post-Secondary Education Act and the dedicated education transfer from the federal government that such an act would provide?*

- PC:**
- yes, would support a Canada Post-Secondary Education Act, which would reflect our commitment to our country's most important resource, its young people

- Liberal:**
- without further information about Canada Post-Secondary Education Act I could not commit the Liberal Party to supporting it specifically
 - believe that Government should be accountable for all monies it spends, including those for post-secondary education, and would support measures such as legislation that clearly set out requirements for how that accountability would happen

6. *Island post-secondary education graduates continue to leave our Province in large numbers in search of greener pastures and are consequently becoming one of our largest exports. What solutions can your party offer our graduates to stay and work on Prince Edward Island?*

- PC:**
- Entrepreneur Loan Program, designed to stimulate small business activity, increased by \$25,000 already this year
 - will cover up to 50% of the costs associated with the development and production of promotional tools and materials for Island-made products
 - will continue to partner with Island entrepreneurs to see that they have capital to succeed and create jobs
 - will enhance "tax-free zones" program so that our manufacturing sector and business parks can continue to grow

- Liberal:**
- committed to creating more opportunities for Islanders of all ages to live and work here
 - believe the first step to keeping people in the Province is encouraging them to earn their post-secondary education here
 - our platform... outlined a tax relief program for graduating PEI university or college students who return to or remain in this province
 - will focus on creating meaningful, well paid jobs, on maintaining our environment, and on making our health and education systems a model of excellence

NOTE: Party responses were edited for publishing purposes.

September 29, 2003, is Provincial Election Day. Cast your vote and do your part to help make post-secondary education a priority

Open Ringette

All girls 19 and over are invited to participate in the upcoming Ringette Season by joining the Open Ringette Team. The first session is Thursday, October 9 at 7:30 p.m. at the North River Arena. Sessions will be continue each Thursday evening. For further information contact John Francis at 368-8085.

Celebrate Climate Change solutions at the Climate Change Fair, Friday, October 3rd from 2 to 5p.m., and Saturday, October 4th, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.. at Confederation Centre of the Arts, Admission is free and everyone is welcome!