

Concerns raised over Planetarium closing

By Jonathan Orlovski

"Lots of students are interested in us just that we don't know what's going on."

This is the main response in a recent GEM survey on how

U.P.E.I. students feel about the Planetarium and its closure for the summer months.

In interviews with 70 students, 73% are interested in the Planetarium but only 39% have actually

been inside. Why?

One interested student replied, "The students are never invited, it's the general public. Students don't really consider themselves the general public."

An idea put forward by another student, "Why not have the Planetarium shows as a part of the Freshman's initiation during Fresh week. That way the new students can get to know what the University has to offer." The student continued; "Almost everybody is curious about what the space shuttle is discovering and also what is the worlds beyond."

Another student commented "Because there is little or no advertising on campus nobody talks about it."

Advertisement?" "No this is not the major factor in closing down the Planetarium", said Dennis Clough (U.P.E.I. Director of

Finance and Administration).

"We are losing \$21,000.00 a year which comes from a \$28,000.00 budget revenue with an overall coverage of \$49,000.00." Clow continued, "All the necessary advertisement was done when the Planetarium first opened with information given in the daily newspaper. We rely on the general public to attend the Planetarium shows."

Fifty-three percent of these students interviewed did not know that the Planetarium was closing. If man is looking to space and the stars for expansion, it is important to have knowledge at hand, via the Planetarium," said one student. Another added "Because of its unusual structure it is unique to the Island way of life."

Eighty-nine percent stated that they cared about it closing down. One optimist didn't believe it was

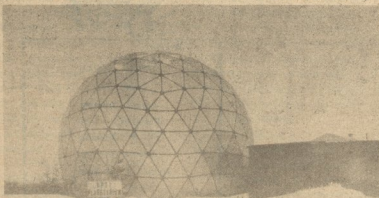
closing down. "If it closes down it doesn't look good for the University and we are the University, so it doesn't look good on us. I care because we might be losing a part of us."

A physics major said it adds economic and stamina values to the University and suggested, "Why not have a private enterprise take over the Planetarium."

When asked this question Clough said that private enterprise would not do any better. And contrary to speculation, money is not to be lost in the winter, but summer. Clough said that this loss is due to the hiring of students and therefore spending a higher supply budget.

When asked, would the students attend the planetarium shows if they had a chance (fit into schedules), 89% say yes.

The majority do care.



Photos: Wheaton

Red Deer Professor Suspended for Supporting Keegstra

RED DEER, ALBERTA (CUP) — Red Deer, Alberta, college professor Gary Botting says his Jan. 7 suspension may be a result of his support of convicted hate-monger James Keegstra.

But Red Deer College president Ed Luterbach said English professor Botting was suspended for "unprofessional conduct" after the Dean of English, John Tobias refused to sign Botting's performance evaluation last July.

Botting said he doesn't know why Tobias refused to sign his evaluation, but believes it is connected to his appearance as a witness for the defence in Keegstra's trial last year.

"I believe he was concerned about my allegedly skirting college procedures to help Jim Keegstra's lawyer, Doug Christie," Botting said.

Luterbach said Botting sent a series of letters to the faculty association in December saying Luterbach is "out to get" Botting and should be fired. Luterbach refused to say whether the letters prompted Botting's suspension.

Faculty association chair Jim Scott said the association has

made recommendations to Luterbach concerning Botting's dismissal, but refused to comment on them.

Response from RDC students has been minimal, although one of Botting's students is actively protesting the professor's suspension. Wayne Ungstad said he will drop out of the college unless Botting is reinstated.

"As far as I'm concerned, I've suspended myself, too. It's sort of a protest," Ungstad said. "Dr. Botting is an excellent instructor who is well-informed and interesting."

But at least one of Botting's students is not impressed with his teaching abilities.

"He is often unnecessarily crude and vulgar during lectures" said the student, who asked not to be identified. "Essays are marked inconsistently and it's not necessary to go to class in order to pass the course because his lectures often have nothing to do with the material the course covers."

Botting said he will retain Keegstra's lawyer, Christie, as court, if the case ever goes to court.




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