

Student finds issue with online course, registrar

Student Nic Frost signed up for an online course for convenience, but it came at an unexpected price

By Jarrod Yeo
The Cadre

When Nic Frost registered for UPEI's Christian Thought and the Moral Imagination course in the summer of 2007, he imagined he'd spend the fall semester studying The Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Instead, he spent the next year embroiled in a bitter dispute with the university's registrar.

When Frost became a UPEI student in 2006, he enrolled in Prof. Joe Velaidum's Christian Ethics 101 class, something he said he enjoyed.

"I thought Christian ethics was a very interesting course, and Joe Velaidum was an incredibly easygoing professor who could teach your without putting you to sleep."

After earning a 79, Frost decided to continue pursuing religious studies. In Sept. 2007, after relocating to Summerside to look after his young daughter, Frost elected to enroll in online courses to reduce transportation and babysitter fees.

One of those courses was Christian Thought and the Moral Imagination, again taught by Velaidum. For two months, Frost performed readings associated with the class. In late October while on Moodle, Frost noticed the course offered a scholarship. That's when he sent his professor an email inquiring about it. The response

shocked him.

"That's when he (Velaidum) informed me I had already taken and passed the course the year before. He seemed surprised I was enrolled."

Between 2006 and 2007, UPEI changed the name of Christian Ethics to Christian Thought and the Moral Imagination. It also became exclusively available as a web class. Once Frost informed the registrar of the problem, he was given permission to drop the course. However, this presented a new dilemma.

"According to Student Loans, I was a full-time student. When I dropped the course, I was only registered in two classes, so it put me in an overpayment situation. I had to go on the hunt for another class."

Frost was able to enroll in an anthropology class early in November, two months after the class had begun.

"It was the most daunting academic challenge I ever faced. It made all my other grades suffer as well."

Frost failed anthropology but immediately appealed the result to the registrar. He said he could not have been expected to pass the course after missing half the semester, and that it was UPEI's fault for the situation arising in the first place. His appeal was denied.

Frost would go on to have a successful second semester, earning an 81 average with four courses. However, in April he received a letter

from the registrar informing him he had been placed on academic probation due to his first semester performance. After speaking with a campus counselor, he arranged a meeting with the registrar.

"She told me that even if the F was taken off my student record, I'd still have a problem with Student Loans.

"So I spoke to them and they agreed I had been wronged so they would overlook the over award."

After forwarding this information to the registrar via email, Frost said he was told

there was still nothing that could be done.

"She basically said 'tough luck, we already told you we aren't doing it.'"

The registrar's office responded by saying it cannot discuss individual student accounts due to privacy issues.

However, in a prepared statement issued to The Cadre, it encouraged students to make use of tools that have been put in place to prevent this type

of occurrence.

"Through the electronic degree audit system, available to students on the Web, students can see how current registrations impact their degree progression. If there is a course duplication a student can see a flag on their degree audit indicating this course is a repeat of another course already taken."

It was noted how in some instances some students will retake a course to earn a higher grade.

It also encouraged students to contact the office if they had any questions regarding registration.

Frost however rejected this defense.

"If they want to put the onus on me to use that, I'd like to deflect it back on them to perhaps take the initiative to document any radical changes to course names by either changing the number, or by indicating the course was formerly known by a different name in brackets.

The fact that they don't, despite all this, is just further evidence to substantiate exactly how bush league of an operation it is."

The matter remains in appeals.

Student Health and Dental Plan

How am I enrolled?

All full time students are automatically enrolled in the mandatory Student Health and Dental Plan upon registration. The premium cost is charged on your student account.

What if you are covered by another health insurance plan?

If you are already insured by another extended health plan you may *choose* to opt-out and receive a refund of the premium previously charged on your account.

Can I add my family?

You can add your family for an additional charge. See the Student Union Office for details. *This must be done prior to the Opt Out Deadline of September 26th, 2008.*

How to opt-out?

You *must* provide proof of your health insurance plan to the Student Union Office in the following form:

* A copy of your current insurance plan card, or a letter from your insurance company clearly indicating the insurance company and policy number.

(Note: Handwritten information is not valid)

AND * Proof of full-time student status

Deadline to opt-out?

The deadline to present proof of your other insurance plan to the Student Union Office is

Friday, September 26th, 2008

-NO EXCEPTIONS-

For more info contact Melissa at the Student Union office 566-0530, 2nd Floor South W.A. Murphy Student Centre