

Wade McLauchlan

An intimate discussion with UPEI's new president. He is an alumni of this fine institution and is the first Islander in recent memory to hold the position. He speaks about all things UPEI in this interview with **bruyneel**. The first in a three part series wherein we find out if the new boss is the same as the old boss.

Wade McLauchlan and I are sitting face to face in the teleconference theater, in the ITEC wing of Robertson Library. He is a strapping man, with forearms rounded from years of eco-activity, like kayaking (see UPEI magazine). The first thought in your mind is this, "you will not win". There will be no boxing this man into a corner. He is far too smart; too agile of mind; too much a lawyer. He answers thoughtfully, sometimes evasively. But he is here, in front of me, answering as best he can, without giving ground. One gets the impression that this man, who turned an average UNB law school into one of the country's finest, is bound for greater heights, perhaps provincial or federal politics on some level. He has obtained the presidency of a university without a P.H.D., and so it seems, from talking to him, that he could accomplish most anything.

But that is not what he is thinking about today; not politics, or law, but UPEI. And his answers to questions seem so thorough, so methodical, that the question, by the end of it, seems lost. McLauchlan asks if I want him in a shirt and tie (he has brought a change of clothes) I leave it up to him.

During the mike checks he asks for an overview of the questions, which he is given. Then we begin. I am not unaware that he has law degree from Cornell and has argued successfully with men much closer in intelligence with himself than me. Again, in my head, "you will not win."

Kent Bruyneel: Are students important, and how do you prove that to them?

Wade McLauchlan: Of course; students

are the heart of the university enterprise; wouldn't be any reason to be here if we didn't have students. Not just students here as consumers, but students here as critical contributors to the academic and intellectual, para-academic and social life of the place. We have 400 staff, 200 teaching faculty, and 2500 students; so it is not hard to figure out what the importance of students is in that overall mix. In terms of proving it, that's a good question Kent because a lot of this is about communications and being available, and being visible, and I suppose the principle that I operate on is one that I heard attributed recently to an African chief who said, "paths are made by walking." And UPEI's campus is of a scale, and the population is of a scale



"I should be able to give at least one lecture to each student."



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