



# THE CADRE

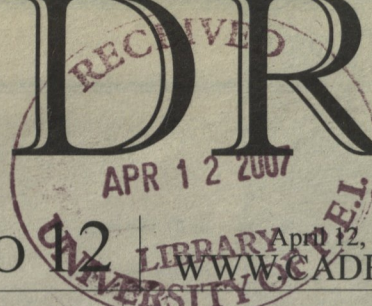
THE UNIVERSITY OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND'S STUDENT VOICE

VOL 37

NO 42

APR 12, 2007

WWW.CADRE.UPEI.CA



## Tuition rollback is election propaganda: Ghiz

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Premier Pat Binns, left, and Opposition Leader Robert Ghiz talk to the media Tuesday in the Legislature after the provincial budget was released.

Jarrod Yeo photos

Teresa Wright-Constable

*Wright-Constable is a journalism student at Holland College*

It's going to cost less to go to university and college next year, thanks to \$2.1 million in new provincial funding for a tuition rollback announced Tuesday.

As part of its provincial budget, the Pat Binns government said it will introduce a 10 per cent tuition rollback for undergraduate students on the Island, and work in partnership with UPEI to cap tuition increases at two per cent annually over the next four years.

This announcement comes on the heels of recent lobby efforts by Island students to lower tuition fees after a 6.5 per cent hike in fees this year and a four per cent increase the year before.

With this rollback, it basically costs the same to attend UPEI now as it did in

Provincial treasurer Mitch Murphy announced the budget in the Legislature Tuesday, saying he believed this funding will help attract new students to the province and to help Island students deal with mounting debts.

"Rising tuition fees concern all students. More Island students are graduating and many are forced to deal with increased debt loads," he said. "Our government recognizes the increased burden on our students and that rising tuition fees can sometimes be a variable for those wishing to pursue post-secondary education."

With this plan, UPEI tuition will be lowered from \$4,920 for 10 courses to \$4,428 next year. But with the two per cent annual increase, this plan also means tuition would be back to current levels in five years.

## Student union committee releases misleading referendum report

Beth Lassaline (with Rob Walker and Mel Bernard)

This coming September, the student body will be faced with a referendum concerning national representation.

The referendum proposal states that students should be asked to vote on whether they want to join the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA), who would then lobby on behalf of UPEI at the federal level for issues surrounding post

secondary education.

This decision has come after a formal proposal was released by the National Representation Committee (NRC). The committee, appointed by the Student Union and made up of Student Union councillors and executives, was given the task of exploring all options regarding representation at the national level. The two main options for representation are CASA and the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS).

The report concluded with a motion put forth by the UPEI SU Vice President stating "...that the UPEI SU conduct a referendum in the 2007 Fall General Election asking whether or not

members of the UPEI SU are in favour of joining the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations."

Since the release of the proposal, concerns have been raised regarding incorrect information contained in the report as well as how the committee was governed.

For instance, the committee's report states that a full time student would pay \$15 a year for membership in the CFS. However, when we contacted CFS they told us students would only pay \$7.50 a year, half what the committee's report claims.

Also, there was a deal brokered between CFS and the UPEI SU in 2001 to give %45 of that membership

money directly back to provincial representation, a deal no other province has. This money would be regulated by the UPEI SU and used for tuition rallies and other such projects.

Since its refusal to recognize its membership in the CFS, the student union never lowered its levies in response. This means that for the last two years students have been essentially paying fees for a service they are not entitled to. Where that money is being spent is unknown, as it was simply lumped in with the overall student union levy fee. At the rates CFS quoted us, at \$7.50 per student per year, that comes to over \$25,000 per year. Going off

of the committee's numbers, that's over \$50,000 a year.

Former committee member and student union Councilor Faiz Ahmed was concerned that the CFS was not contacted when the committee was compiling its research. Ahmed said this leads to a biased report.

The National Representation Committee never contacted the CFS to ensure that the second hand information they were receiving was accurate, citing legal concerns.

When the Cadre contacted the CFS to verify that they were in a legal dispute with the SU, the CFS was completely unaware of any legal action coming from the UPEI Student Union.

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