

Arctic sovereignty important

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any serious issues. Harper had been strongly critical of Paul Martin for failing to discuss many issues with the American president, including softwood lumber, mad cow disease, and the situation in Iraq.

Frank McKenna resigned as Canadian ambassador to the U.S. on Jan. 25. Harper said he would replace the diplomat with someone close to the prime minister. In the past, he had been critical of the political nature of the appointment, saying the job should be a non-partisan position.

Harper said it remains to be seen whether his government will recognize the Palestinian election results.

"We support a secure Israel and a democratic Palestine, but for a nation to be truly democratic that nation must renounce any use of terrorism," said Harper.

Arctic sovereignty was an im-



portant issue for Harper, as he specifically responded to U.S. ambassador David Wilkins' statement that they don't recognize Canada's claims to the Arctic.

Harper said that they would be reinforcing Canada's presence in the North. "The Canadian govern-

ment will defend our sovereignty," said Harper. "We have significant plans for national defense and defense of our sovereignty, including arctic sovereignty. We believe we have a mandate for those from the Canadian people, not from the U.S. ambassador to Canada."

Leave class and still pass

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the matter is now underway and could take upward of a month to complete.

Until the investigation is complete, Dr. Joe Velaidum, a professor of religious studies and the Director of the UPEI Centre for Christianity and Culture, has replaced him in the classroom.

Under the proposed deal, students still had to pay the registration fee for the class and notify Weale of their intentions via email.

Following a news story carried on CBC and scrutiny from The Cadre, the university's student newspaper, the UPEI faculty association released a statement condemning Weale's decision.

The deal was "a scheme," said Wayne Peters, president of the UPEI Faculty Association in a release, which "would not be tolerated at any university across the country and is certainly not condoned by the Association at UPEI."

According to Peters, there are two possible outcomes of the investigation into Weale's offer to his students: a letter of warning, or outright dismissal. "Following that, David has the right to ask the union to file a grievance on his behalf," said Peters, noting that the UPEI Faculty Association does not allow individual members to file grievances with their employer.

Peters refused comment on whether or not the union would agree to file a grievance on Weale's behalf.

Approximately twenty students accepted Weale's offer to receive a B- for non-attendance, but many more students at the university are more critical of the idea.

While some students are empathetic to the situation, said Ryan Gallant, president of the UPEI Students' Union, most are in agreement with the university.

"He has been a great professor for many years," said Gallant. "But some students find this inexcusable."

According to Gallant, the UPEI Students' Union will not be involved in the investigation process or the discussions between Weale and the University.

Weale retired in the spring of 2005 and was contracted to teach the course on the history of Christianity on a sessional basis. He has built his reputation as an island

historian over thirty years at the University of PEI and published a number of children's books about island lore.

"He has a knack for interviewing islanders and gathering a thorough history," said Katie MacLeod, an island native. "I guess I consider him a local hero for his historical preservation work."

Weale also ran as an independent candidate in the 1988 federal election on a single-issue platform opposing the fixed link to the mainland.

While the university's response has been overwhelmingly negative, The Cadre (UPEI's student newspaper) wanted to offer Dr. Weale the opportunity to explain the motivation behind the offer. What follows is a transcript of that conversation:

The Cadre: Why offer this deal?

Weale: I felt it was in everyone's best interests, certainly, by eliminating the overcrowding in the room it provided an enhanced learning environment for the approximately 70 students who were really interested in the course, and not just the credit. That surely is worth a few raised eyebrows.

The Cadre: Is it fair to students?

Weale: You would have to ask them. There was a lengthy discussion about the option with the entire class, and not one of the students who remained has complained to me that they are being treated unfairly. Ironically, I think the people who are complaining the loudest about it being unfair are those - both students and professors - who believe that everyone must "play the game" the way they have been forced to play it. Is it fair what I am doing? I suppose that means playing by the rules, and at that level perhaps it's not fair; but there is another level, a deeper one, and that is the question of who made the rules, and in whose interests, and whether or not the rules themselves are fair.

Rule makers hate rule breakers - as a rule.

The Cadre: Is it ethical?

Weale: Demanding ethical or moral behavior is often just a way of getting people to comply with a pre-arranged program. I could only have second thoughts about my decision if it could be pointed out to me that what I did was clearly injurious to individuals. Did I harm anyone? I don't believe so, but am open to talk to anyone who feels they have been hurt or damaged by what has happened. Is it ethical for young adults to be forced to fit into a system where they have no say about how they are processed and evaluated? I suspect that the people who are most concerned about what has happened are not thinking about the individuals involved, but about the challenge it poses to the status quo. And what could be more unethical than that - putting the system ahead of the individuals within it. The question of whether or not all of this is ethical would make a great classroom discussion. Perhaps I'll suggest that to my friend Neb, in philosophy.

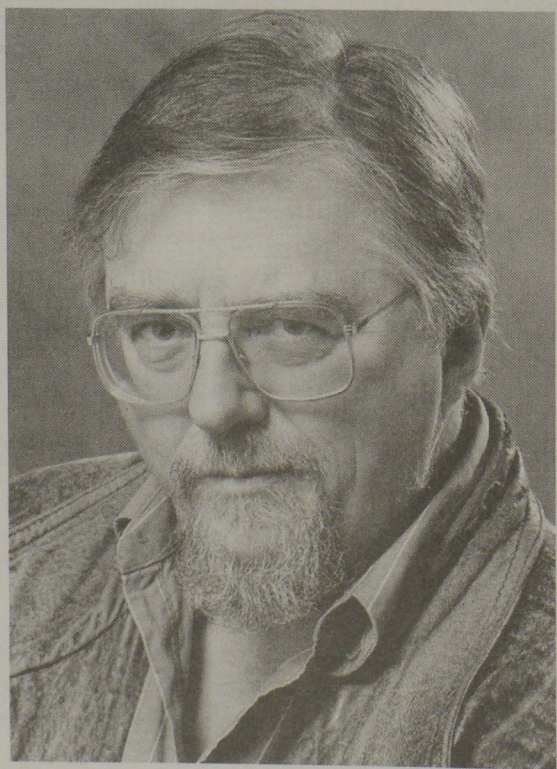
The Cadre: Does it undermine the value of traditional education?

Weale: The question of the value of a university education is an interesting one. I think the university is a wonderful place; but not for everyone; not for the many students who are pressured into going there, but who would probably be better off following some other avenue of learning. The expensive credits many students receive at UPEI are largely worthless, and when their time there is over many are left with a crippling debt-load that greatly limits their ability to pursue what they really love. In a word, time spent at university is a great benefit to some, and a great waste of time to many others, and I don't believe most universities are really honest about that.



Venue: The Cellar
Time: 7PM until close
Date: Friday, 3RD Feb 2006.
Fee: \$ 5.00 at the door
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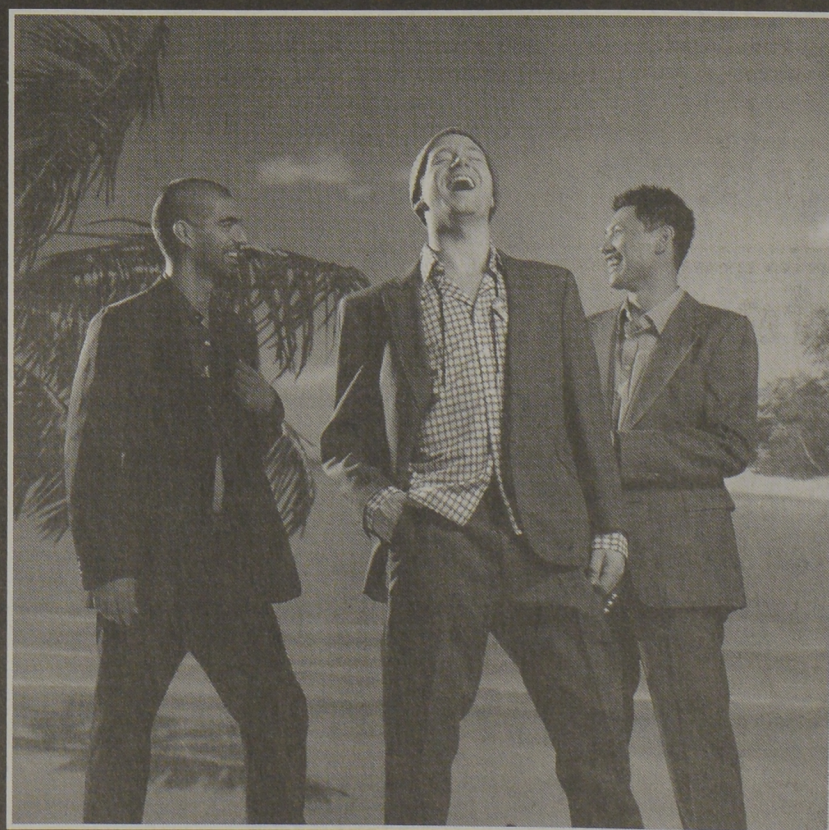
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