



University of
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FACULTY ASSOCIATION

2006-07 Officers & Staff

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To: All Members of the Faculty Association
Date: March 16, 2007
Subject: Employee and Family Assistance Plan

On March 5, 2007, the University's Board of Governors approved the implementation of a new *Employee and Family Assistance Plan* for UPEI employees. Prior to the Board's decision, all employee groups on campus, except the Faculty Association, endorsed the *Plan* as presented by the Employer and committed their memberships to participate in it.

At this point, however, the Faculty Association is still in the process of assessing the *Plan* and its value for Association members. Notwithstanding the Board's approval of the *Plan* without the Association's participation, the Association reserves the option under Article D5.3 of the Collective Agreement to join the *Plan* at a future date.

To this point, the Association Executive has identified several concerns and issues with the *Plan* which have prevented it from recommending that the membership participate in the *Plan*. These include:

- *the 50/50 employer/employee cost-sharing formula.* The Association Executive feels strongly that the entire cost of such a plan should be paid by the Employer given that such plans are known to save the Employer money in the long-run. An informal survey, done by the Executive, of Canadian universities indicates that the vast majority of those with plans have a 100% employer-paid plan. Notwithstanding the low initial premium rate, which is only guaranteed for three years, the Association Executive objects to any cost-sharing of the *Plan*.
- *a lack of assurance of confidentiality.* In our small University and Island community with limited availability of professional resources and services, the Association Executive is concerned that the privacy of an individual's usage of the *Plan* and its resources will be difficult to guarantee.
- *the substance of the Plan.* Based on a review by the Executive Committee of a *Plan Overview* provided by the Employer, it appears that the *Plan* provides limited access to face-to-face counselling and relies largely on self-help programs and referrals to community resources at the employee's expense.

Over the next while, the Association Executive will continue to assess the *Plan* and its value to the membership. At this point, though, the Association has not opted out of the plan but rather has simply not yet opted into it, pending a more thorough assessment of it.