

## Message from the Co-Editors:

We hope everyone had a relaxing holiday! If your New Year Resolution is to establish some balance in your life, check out page 2 and 3 for a column on maintaining balance as a graduate student. In this newsletter, we also get to hear from Yemi regarding her successful thesis defense. But the fun doesn't stop there—there is much, much more! As always, if you want to contribute and/or send a Kudos to someone you know who has celebrated a milestone, please get in touch with us at [gsa@upei.ca](mailto:gsa@upei.ca). Have a great semester everyone. Sincerely, Denise, Mary, and Brittany.



**Brittany Jakubiec** is a PhD Student in Educational Studies at UPEI.



**Mary MacPhee** is in the 4th year of a PhD in Educational studies



**Denise Happ** is in her second year of her MSc at UPEI.

**Kudos** to all grad students working hard to complete coursework and congratulations to those who have celebrated significant milestones! Kudos to **Charlene VanLeeuwen** for passing your proposal presentation and Kudos to **Yemi Olajide** for passing your thesis defense!

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## Funding for Conference Travel by Brittany Jakubiec

Did you know you could apply for **\$250** from the Student Union for conference travel or for event or activities expenses? Check out <http://www.upeisu.ca/graduate-student-funding> for more information.

You can also apply for **\$500** from the research services office for conference travel! Check out [http://files.upei.ca/research/student\\_travel\\_funding\\_program\\_guidelines.pdf](http://files.upei.ca/research/student_travel_funding_program_guidelines.pdf) for more information. Both of these funds can be applied for at any time.

## UPEI GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Valerie Campbell (President), Brittany Jakubiec (VP Internal), Hannah Gehrels (VP Finance)  
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## MAINTAINING BALANCE IN GRAD SCHOOL

By Mary MacPhee

Whether as students or professionals, we all face the challenge of maintaining life-study or life-work balance. Often we are even trying to maintain life-study-work balance if you are employed and a student. Our health is important. One sick day with a cold or flu and we feel or notice setbacks in completing readings, assignments, or tasks at our work. Long-term illnesses can have a devastating effect on our lives and the lives of others who are dependent on us. Therefore, maintaining health is important for all of us and good physical health enhances mental and emotional health and professional and academic performance.

There are several strategies that may help you to maintain health and balance, including setting a schedule for yourself to include time for physical activity and promoting mental wellness, and deciding you want to make healthy choices. Also choose physical activities you enjoy so you are more likely to stick with them and participate with a buddy so you will feel motivated to keep going

(check out the recreational sports programs at UPEI including ultimate Frisbee or badminton). If you schedule time in your calendar for physical well-being you will be more likely to stick with it. This might be as simple as taking time to walk for 10-20 minutes outdoors or on an indoor track, or to practice some deep breathing in the morning, evening, or at stressful times like exam week. For others it means getting in a hard work-out.



Regardless of your workout intensity, remember when you work at a desk and at a computer it is important to rest your eyes occasionally and look away from the screen or page to focus your eyes at a distance every 20 minutes. Also, try to avoid being seated for long periods and get up and move or stretch your body every hour.

Setting goals and practicing effective time management help you to work smarter not harder towards life-work-study balance. Set steps that help you achieve a goal and remember to reward yourself when you do. Setting aside time to maintain or improve your physical health will mean rewards so invest this time in yourself –it will be worth it! Talk to friends to find out their best time management tips and strategies for well-being and this will hopefully help you maintain your life-study-work balance.

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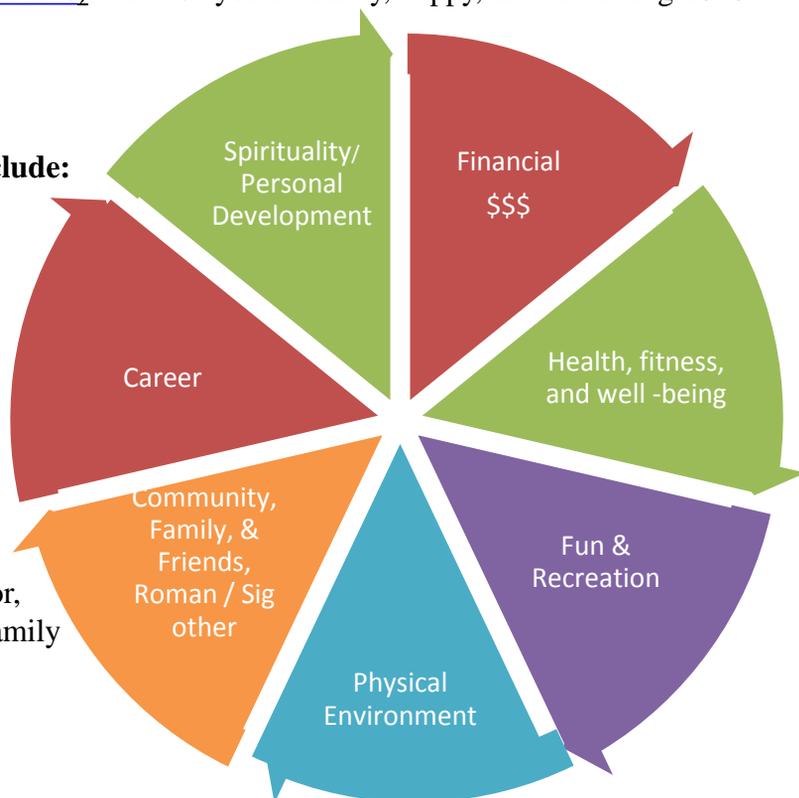
## MAINTAINING BALANCE IN GRAD SCHOOL

(continued)

Take advantage of the health and fitness (<http://www.upei.ca/ar/fitness-classes>) activities your student fees cover (pool, classes, track) and access programs that UPEI offers through student affairs (\*<http://www.upei.ca/studentlife/student-affairs>). We wish you a healthy, happy, and rewarding 2016!

### General stress management strategies include:

- Eating nutritious food
- Exercising
- Meditating
- Getting adequate sleep
- Thinking positively
- Organizing & planning (making lists)
- Addressing troubling issues\*
- Making small steps towards a goal
- Setting boundaries
- Finding support from your supervisor, other graduate students, friends or family



## GSA'S TOWN HALL MEETING: GRADUATE STUDENT ISSUES

On Monday, January 18<sup>th</sup> 2016, the Graduate Students' Association invited all graduate students to come to a Town Hall Meeting in the Dawson Lounge to discuss what kind of issues graduate students at UPEI are dealing with, and how the GSA can best represent graduate students.

A group of about 18 people got together and talked about many positive aspects but also a variety of problems, such as the lack of an orientation package for incoming graduate students, funding difficulties, and a need for more opportunities to connect with other graduate students. David Etherington, organiser for the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) – Maritimes, was our special guest who talked about some of the ways we can address issues that are of concern. In the next few weeks, the GSA will try to come up with a plan to tackle some of these items.

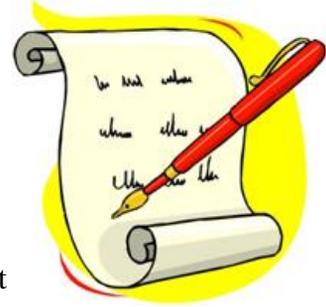
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## WRITING CIRCLE FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

An academic writing circle for graduate students has been formed and the group will meet Tuesdays from 2:30 to 4 until early April. The first meeting on Jan 26 will be in Dalton 412. This group welcomes graduate students in the humanities and sciences who are currently writing academic work (assignments, theses-dissertation, journal articles). The intention is to provide an opportunity for students to share and learn writing strategies, discuss their ideas and work, and benefit from reading and editing the writing of other members in the group. Please feel welcome to attend, share helpful writing tips you have learned, and support and feel supported by a group of writers. Contact Mary ([mmmacphee@upei.ca](mailto:mmmacphee@upei.ca)) or Gaby ([gsanchez@upei.ca](mailto:gsanchez@upei.ca)) to indicate your interest. Making a commitment to attend this group regularly will be an important part of contributing to our development as writers.



## WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO DEFEND A THESIS: MY EXPERIENCE

Yemi Olajide, Faculty of Education

I passed my master's defense on December 3rd, 2015 and the title of the thesis was "**Perspectives of mathematics education in Prince Edward Island**". It was quite an experience for me being an international student to defend my work in the presence of my dean, committee members, family, and friends. I was intrigued and nervous to see what my committee members would ask me. I was given 30 minutes to present- it went so fast because at the beginning I was tense and curious about answering the questions but after five minutes into the presentation, I regained my confidence and the presentation went well.



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## **WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO DEFEND A THESIS: MY EXPERIENCE**

(continued)

When it was question time, there were two rounds of questions. The first question was from the external reviewer and read by the chair. It was a rather long question and I found it difficult to address all the questions at a time, although I did make some notes. My supervisor came to my rescue and asked the chair to read the questions one after the other in order for me to address all the questions accordingly. After the first round of questions, other questions asked were like interactive sessions because the topic was a pressing issue in PEI and everybody present was interested in sharing their views.

Before I conclude, I would like to share some tips that made my thesis defense productive and successful:

1. Attend several defenses before your own to know what happens in a defense presentation.
2. Read your completed, corrected, and updated thesis line by line.
3. Prepare your presentation slides and think of potential questions.
4. Do a “dry run” with other graduate members and your committee members. Pay attention to all comments, suggestions, and corrections. Although, it is your thesis, don't argue with them and do explain your views in a logical way.
5. Practice alone in front of a mirror, or practice with friends, and don't wait until the last minute.
6. Try out the presentation room and equipment. Make sure the room is well organized to your needs.
7. Bring along your corrected and updated paper copy of your thesis and some water.
8. Let your presentation run between 20 to 25 minutes. Also, you can take a pause during the presentation to drink water.
9. Have confidence in yourself, pay careful attention to all questions and remember you are not alone. Your committee members are there to give you necessary support. If you were not capable of doing the defense, you would not be there.
10. Be humble and be comfortable with the knowledge of your thesis.

When all was said and done, the committee members left the room and they came back to congratulate me for successfully defending my thesis and asked me to do some revision. Finally, we had a reception to celebrate the end of my master's program.

### **WHAT A MEMORABLE DAY!**

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# GRADUATE STUDENT REPRESENTATION ON UPEI COMMITTEES

By Denise Happ

There are a great variety of committees, boards, and councils on campus to focus and deal with specific issues, such as the UPEI Health & Safety Committee. Unfortunately, many graduate students don't really know that these exist and what their specific duties are. Therefore, this article will summarize the main committees that have a Graduate Student Representative. Of course, this list is not complete and does not include department specific boards and committees. You can contact the UPEI Graduate Student Association directly or your departmental representative if you have any questions about other committees.

If you have any specific issues, please send an e-mail to [gsa@upei.ca](mailto:gsa@upei.ca) and we will refer you to the representative on the appropriate committee or try to find the right contact person for you!

## Senate Graduate Student Advisory Committee

The Graduate Studies Advisory Committee has been established through the Office of Graduate Studies to work toward expanding the role and impact of graduate studies and graduate students at UPEI on the University and beyond. The GSAC is comprised of the Graduate Coordinators for each program, a representative from the Registrar's Office, the President of the Graduate Students' Association, and the VP Research and Graduate Studies (as Chair).

## UPEI Library Council

The role of the Library Council is to discuss issues in a collegial setting and to make recommendations on the formulation of Library policy, operations, long-term planning, and future directions, ensuring that the Library meets the needs and requirements of the various academic endeavors of the UPEI community. It consists of all Librarians, two library technicians, one undergraduate and one graduate student and the University Librarian, as Chair.

## UPEI Student Union council positions:

The UPEI Student Union is a non-profit democratic representation of students on campus. They offer a variety of services to all students and staff, including insurance and student funding (see <http://upeisu.ca> for more information). There are two graduate student positions on the UPEI Student Union Council: the Graduate Student Representative, responsible for representing the concerns of graduate students to the UPEI Student Union, and the Graduate Student Senate Representative, responsible for sitting on both the UPEI senate and the Student Union council.

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# GRADUATE STUDENT REPRESENTATION ON UPEI COMMITTEES

(continued)

## UPEI Health & Safety Committee

The UPEI Health and Safety Steering Committee reviews and maintains the University safety program. Through the Office of the Vice President Research Services, the committee recommends health and safety policies and general procedures to the Office of the President. The committee also identifies health and safety hazards on campus and recommends corrective measures to addressing them. It is also the responsibility of the committee to ensure that all health and safety inspections on campus are carried out. To actualize its objectives, the committee cooperates with departments, consults with experts, and review reports of local health and safety committees.

## Senate Research Advisory Committee

This committee is chaired by Dr. Robert Gilmour, VP of Research Services at UPEI, consisting of co-executives and faculty members from different research disciplines, as well as a graduate and undergraduate representative. The committee aims to promote research at UPEI and reports to the senate. Recent discussion topics include launching data.upei.ca to provide support to scholars throughout the research data life cycle, and promoting research funding for UPEI scholars. Also, the committee is going to determine the composition of internal funding review roster, and review Open Access Policy to provide citizens with access to research data from UPEI.

## Senate Academic Planning & Curriculum Committee

The Senate Academic Planning & Curriculum Committee reviews existing programs and policies, considers curriculum issues of general academic interest, and deals with anything related to courses, such as reviewing offerings or considering new courses. The members of the committee include the VP Academic, the assistant VP Grad Studies, 6 Academic Deans as well as undergraduate and graduate student representatives.

## Senate Committee on the Enhancement of Teaching (SCENT)

This committee is mandated to support the work of the Faculty Development Office to enhance the practice and scholarship of teaching and learning at UPEI (for more information see: Senate Minutes, March 2010: [http://www.upei.ca/files/home/senate\\_minutesMar5-2010.pdf](http://www.upei.ca/files/home/senate_minutesMar5-2010.pdf)). There are three students on the Committee; two nominated by the SU and one nominated by the GSA.

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# RACIALISED AND INDIGENOUS STUDENT EXPERIENCE SUMMIT

## MARCH 18-22

### Attend the Racialised and Indigenous Student Experience Summit March 18-22 in Toronto!

Students at post-secondary institutions across Canada have been at the forefront of organizing against racialised and colonialist violence on their university and college campuses, as well as within their communities, for decades. The first national Racialised and Indigenous Student Experience Summit, organized by the Canadian Federation of Students, will be an opportunity for student activists to gather, share stories of success and struggle, and ultimately develop a common vision to combat racism and colonialism. This summit will include workshops, meetings, and information sharing with student activists from across Canada. Please note that spaces at the summit are limited and open only to the participation of racialized and Indigenous identified people, with special consideration for participants from traditionally marginalized communities, such as those who identify as womyn and/or trans\* and/or gender non-conforming and/or queer and/or with disabilities. (Shared from GSACarlton.ca and UPEI Grad students Facebook page)

There are problems with the email list that goes out to graduate students. An email went out as a reminder for the town hall grad students event we had Monday night, Jan. 18. If you did not receive this email, you can contact Colleen Gallant to get put on this list, so you aren't missing important info!

## UPCOMING EVENTS!

- The next GSA meeting will be held on Monday, February 1, 2016 from 8:00 pm – 10:00 pm (Dawson Lounge, SDU Main Building). Please attend! ☺
- The UPEI Graduate Student Academic Writers' Circle will have their first meeting this year on Tuesday, January 26, 2016 from 2:30 pm – 4:00 pm in Dalton 412.
- The Faculty of Education offers a variety of Winter Workshops that are open to the public (check out <https://upeied.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/2016-calendar-of-education-events-jan-june.pdf>). Consider attending the CER Workshops on Research Methodology, Critical Research Voice and Research Publishing (Feb 19, Mar 11, Apr 22), even if you are not in Education.
- The Faculty of Science Environmental Science/Human Biology Seminar Series is every Friday at 12:30 pm in the Duffy Science Centre 204. There is also a Biomedical Sciences & Pathology and Microbiology Seminar Series every Tuesday at 4:30 pm in the AVC Lecture Theatre C.

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