

UPEI's Twenty-third Recognition of Founders Ceremony
UPEI Performing Arts Theatre and Residence
Wednesday, December 18, 2024, 2:00 pm

Citation for Ms. Vickie Johnston
Read by Ms. Inge Dorsey

Good afternoon,

I am so proud to present to you Ms. Vickie Johnston—a much valued former colleague, mentor, and friend.

A graduate of UPEI's Class of 1982, Vickie had a long and productive career over three decades as a faculty member and employee of UPEI. She retired from full-time employment in May 2020.

To thoroughly describe Vickie and the impact she has had on UPEI would take far longer than I have today. I will say this: Vickie is a true “servant leader” who identifies ways she can help and then goes about that work without expectation of reward.

As her colleague for over 13 years, I can attest to the dedicated leadership and service—formal and informal—she gave to her colleagues, students, the two programs she taught (University 100 and psychology), and the wider community.

Our students were always her primary concern, and she found unique and creative ways to serve them, even in the face of human or financial resource constraints. As the coordinator for the University 100 program from 1997 to 2020, she advocated for all students, particularly those in their first year. She had the ability to envision programs and opportunities and the determination and work ethic to make them happen.

One definition of leadership is “the actions of a person who makes everyone else better.” Vickie embodied this definition through her active mentoring and support of colleagues in the University 100 program. Those who teach in this program do so on a term contract or sessional basis. Vickie extended to us every courtesy, consideration, respect, and resource to make us feel valued and included as part of the teaching faculty at UPEI. Two of our current sessional faculty members are her former undergraduate students.

Vickie knows how to establish and foster meaningful relationships.

During her career, she served the UPEI community in a wide range of capacities. I will highlight just a few:

- Hosting an annual University 100 Student Showcase

- Establishing, organizing, and hosting the annual Vern Smitheram and Andy Robb Leadership Award for Student(s) and Leadership Development Speaker's Series (the series has been on hiatus since the pandemic but is expected to return in 2025)
- Reaching out to high schools to enroll students in UPEI 1030: University Studies
- Developing University 2030 and 3030 courses, and online, hybrid courses
- Supporting development of the Applied Communication, Leadership, and Culture program
- Serving on over 16 honours committees and 20 different committees at UPEI and in the wider community

During her tenure as Director of Student Affairs from 2013 to 2014, she effectively led the transition of two units—the Webster Centre and Student Services—into the current Department of Student Affairs.

As well, she was an early adopter of—and leader in—experiential education in the Faculty of Arts and the broader campus. She was doing service learning before most people knew about it.

Vickie was always willing to initiate, support people's efforts, and advocate for others—no job was too small for her. She made such a positive difference in the lives of her students and her colleagues during her career of service to others.

Today, we are proud to recognize Ms. Vicki Johnston for her dedicated service to our students, faculty, and staff by naming her a Founder of the University of Prince Edward Island.