

## Message from the Co-Editors:

As a student who spent many **years** in an undergraduate program, and then a Masters program and now four years in a PhD program I realize I knew very little about how universities operate. I have learned so much about the reality of graduate students, services available to grad students, and how universities work since joining the GSA. I also appreciate the hard work a few students are doing for the good of the graduate student body across the country! It has also been personally rewarding to connect with other graduate students on our campus and nationally. The social aspect of the GSA is also a fantastic perk. Please come join us at our meeting or next events. – *Mary*

p.s. as always, if you want to contribute or send Kudos, please email us at [gsa@upei.ca](mailto:gsa@upei.ca)



**Brittany Jakubiec** is a PhD Student in Educational Studies



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**Kudos** to all grad students working hard to complete their thesis and coursework. Congratulations to those who have celebrated significant milestones! Kudos to **Yan (Lizzie) Yan** who successfully defended her Master's Thesis in Education!

I'M HERE TO HELP

SSP

Did you know that UPEI has a student support program, where you can get immediate and confidential help for any concern – 24/7/365 and at no cost. You can chat online with a counsellor or get access to book services online. Support is available in 200+ languages. For more information, see [www.mystudentsupport.com](http://www.mystudentsupport.com)

## UPEI GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Valerie Campbell (President), Brittany Jakubiec (VP Internal), Hannah Gehrels (VP Finance)  
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## THREE MINUTE THESIS COMPETITION AT UPEI

Developed by The University of Queensland, the three minute thesis (3MT) competition is a skill development exercise that celebrates exciting research conducted by graduate students. The 3MT challenges participants to explain the breadth and significance of their research project to a non-specialist audience in three minutes or less. One take. One static slide. No props.

This year, UPEI Graduate Studies, along with the UPEI Graduate Students' Association and the UPEI Student Union will be hosting the annual three minute thesis competition on Tuesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Wave. Any graduate student in a Masters or PhD



program at UPEI undertaking a thesis or major research project (which would be eligible for Tri-Council funding) can participate. The deadline for registration is Friday, March 4 at 4:00 pm. To register, please contact Colleen Gallant at [cgallant@upei.ca](mailto:cgallant@upei.ca)

This is a great opportunity to develop presentation and communication skills, and to share your research. First place will receive \$200 and a trip to Memorial University to compete in the Regional 3MT competition. Second place will receive \$100 and third place will receive \$50.

To get a feel of what a great 3MT presentation looks like, watch the 2013 regional winner of the 3MT in this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h01ouCHph0s>.

## WHAT IS GRAD STUDENT LIFE ALL ABOUT?

By Louise Roux



The first Grad night in The PIT was held on Thursday Feb. 11th at 6:30pm as part of a series of events happening in the Pit this semester. The night brought together both undergraduate and graduate students from various disciplines to meet and discuss what graduate student life is all about.

Graduate students presented their experiences leading up to and navigating graduate school as well as what their research projects are and how their research interests were developed. Engaging discussions surrounding the importance of support systems and research mentors were had. The event allowed for graduate students to learn about each other and for undergraduate students who may be considering graduate school to learn what it's like. Overall a wonderful event and opportunity for students to connect with one another.

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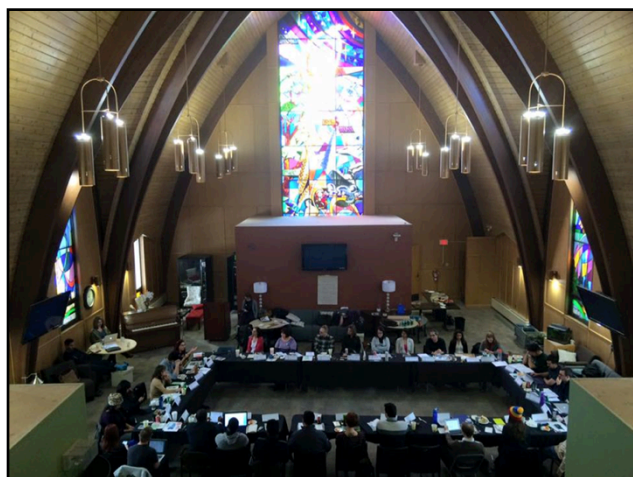
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# UPEI DELEGATES AT NATIONAL GRADUATE CAUCUS

by Mary MacPhee

Despite the -20 degree temperature in Saskatoon, I feel very fortunate to have represented UPEI Graduate Students, accompanied by Valerie Campbell, out-going UPEI GSA president and current Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) Prince Edward Island representative at the annual general meeting of the National Graduate Caucus (NGC) of the CFS, February 19 - 21, 2016.

This NGC event offered CFS graduate student representatives from post secondary institutions across Canada an opportunity to meet together. We discussed questions, information, challenges, suggestions, and motions to work toward improved conditions and access to education for all graduate students in Canada. The group also shared some fun social time, including instruction in a favorite Canadian activity-curling!



The NGC group was composed of 30 graduate student delegates and 4 CFS staff with 15 locals represented from across Canada. The small size of the group permitted us to function in a close environment and to discuss challenges and successes experienced by graduate student associations and graduate students.

The delegates had high levels of awareness and concern for regional, national, international, full-time, part-time, and parenting students' issues. Emphasis was placed on current and pressing issues on most Canadian campuses.

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## UPEI DELEGATES AT NATIONAL GRADUATE CAUCUS (continued)

Workshops permitted all in attendance to discuss how to encourage collaboration of GSAs with various groups and unions on campuses toward common student and employee goals. There was discussion about how space is or is not available to graduate students on campuses along with suggestions for the most effective uses of GSA and graduate student space and services to meet student needs. The group agreed on the importance of a variety of culturally sensitive and diverse mental health initiatives to be made available to graduate students across Canadian campuses.

Finally, the delegates were informed about and discussed the many damaging effects for students and workers on campuses caused by the corporatization of universities. As a result of these discussions, more research will be conducted and campaigns will be initiated to alert graduate students, university administration, government, and public to graduate student needs and approaches to help meet these needs. It was an informative and enjoyable weekend that mixed socializing with social action and hope many of you will take the time to participate in local and national meetings.



Any of UPEI's graduate students with an interest to join or a need to be represented and have their voice heard are welcome and encouraged to attend GSA meetings at UPEI (see upcoming events) and to consider representing UPEI GSA nationally.

There are many advantages of belonging to CFS, including services and resources available to student bodies, positive change initiatives within student bodies, universities, and government, and the potential to make connections and build community with other students across Canada.

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# HOW TO WRITE AN ABSTRACT

By Dr. Tim Goddard

Some people would argue that the abstract is the most read – and most important – part of a paper or article. If someone doing a literature review is trying to determine where to invest their time in reading the whole paper, they read the abstract to help make that decision. If you are writing a paper then the professor will read the abstract first to get a sense of what to expect.

There are two types of abstract. The most common one is a paragraph abstract, which provides a clear and accurate summary of the paper. It must accurately report the purpose and content of the paper in a coherent and reader-friendly way. Each sentence should be as concise and brief as possible. If you are reporting on an empirical study, then you should let the reader know what you were investigating, provide some important characteristics of your participants, describe the key

points of your method, report the key findings or results, and present the conclusions plus any important implications. The APA Manual (2010, pp. 25-27) has a good section on this type of abstract.



A second type of abstract is the structured abstract. Often a page and a half or two pages long, this includes all the elements of a 'paragraph abstract', but goes into more detail. You might add more description about the setting, the intervention, the data analysis methods, and so on. This gives you the opportunity to explain more fully the main features and findings of the research. A structured abstract gives more information about the paper and allows readers to conduct a critical appraisal of the findings. It is more often found in the Health and Science disciplines than in the Arts and Humanities.

Whichever form you choose the abstract should be the last thing you write. Once you have finished your paper, you should read it and then imagine that you are trying to explain your work to someone you meet briefly, perhaps in an elevator. What would you tell them? What are the key things about your paper that you want them to know? Write those ideas down on a scrap of paper and you have the key content for your abstract. Then organize that information into a 3C sequence (clear, concise, coherent) and type it up.

# BUILD A SOLID ARGUMENT IN A MASTER THESIS

by Yan (Lizzie) Yan

To complete a master's thesis with a precise, critical, and convincing argument is not easy. However, the journey to complete my Master of Education degree was a very rewarding experience. Below, I am reflecting on my journey to building the argument in my thesis.

## From a Topic to an Argument

There are many ways to decide on a thesis topic. I selected mine based on a paper for a first semester course with Dr. Tim Goddard that focused on a case study involving inter-national assessments to rank schools. To investigate large-scale assessment practices in literature, I concentrated more on the Prince Edward Island context. When I found that PEI students constantly scored lower than others on national and international assessments, I was wondering what these statistics told us about student achievement or how the public perceived these poor results. Subsequently, I decided to survey public knowledge and perceptions towards large-scale assessment in PEI in Dr. Tess Miller's quantitative methods course. This gave me a head-start in designing a survey instrument and collecting data. My classmates' feedback was an additional benefit.



## Weaving Your Argument

As a novice researcher, there are some points I found helpful to develop a convincing argument. First, base your argument from a strong theoretical framework. Then, present your evidence to support your argument. This should come from a good literature review, drawing on current research, reports from authorities (for me, this was the Department of Education), and public media. Now that you have some theory and literature to guide and support your thinking, you are ready to organize your argument. Think about the story you want to tell.

Next, create a framework using headers to help guide your story, otherwise you will just get lost in your words – something I have experienced myself. Each header is a new point to the story you want to tell. Begin your story by first introducing the issue or problem and then under each header, critique the issue by citing research in support of or against the problem. Contrast the literature with what the theory says about your subject. Conclude each section making a case to rationalize why your study is needed to fill a gap in literature. Lastly, look back over each section and summarize your key points in the conclusion to your argument. Using a conceptual map, graph, or diagram to visualize your thinking may be helpful. You should end up with a tightly woven argument. If not, your examiners will poke holes in your weak areas! This is not a bad thing since even this is part of your learning journey and it is not over with your defense. I am now preparing a paper for publication with a tightly woven argument – taking the feedback from my defense.

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## UPEI MENTAL HEALTH WEEK, MARCH 7-11

For a complete list of events, see

<http://www.upei.ca/studentlife/student-affairs/mental-health-week>

**Social Media** From Monday, March 7 - Friday, March 11, join on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram as we celebrate mental health and the relationships that matter. Be sure to use the hashtag #upeimentalhealth.

**Info Booth** At the W. A. Murphy Student Centre Concourse (Monday, 12 noon - 3:00 pm; Tuesday to Friday, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm) volunteers will welcome you with handouts and resources. While you're there, add a patch to the quilt to show the relationships that matter to you.



**Zen Zone** Activities in the Murphy Student Centre Day Lounge are among a few of the many activities, including:

**Monday:** Grand opening with self-care kits to give away (2:00 - 3:00 pm)

**Tuesday:** "Reflection Matters: The Benefits of Daily Journaling" with Grace Wedlake of jack.org UPEI and the UPEI Writing Centre (1:00 - 2:00 pm)

**Wednesday:** "Embrace Yourself: Self-Care and Self-Compassion as Coping Skills" with Dianne Birt (12 noon - 1:00 pm)

**Thursday:** Art Session by Lyndsey Paynter Fine Art (1:00 - 2:00 pm)

**Friday:** A 30-minute guided meditations with Marian Curran (12 noon - 12:45 pm)

## UPCOMING EVENTS!

- The next GSA meeting will be held on Monday, March 7, 2016 from 8:00 pm – 10:00 pm (Dawson Lounge, SDU Main Building). Please attend! ☺
- Join us on March 7, from 12 – 1 pm, in an information conversation about the “work-life balance” in academia. It will be a brown bag lunch in the Faculty Lounge (SDU Main Building). All are welcome. If you have any questions, please email Brittany at [bjakubiec@upei.ca](mailto:bjakubiec@upei.ca)
- The UPEI Graduate Student Writers' Circle will continue to meet on Tuesdays from 2:30 pm – 4:00 pm at 412 Dalton.
- 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 (Mar 11, Apr 22), even if you are not in Education.

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