

ADVANTAGE **NEW BRUNSWICK**

A PROVINCE REACHES TO FULFILL ITS DESTINY



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IN MEMORIAM

Jennifer Kathleen MacKenzie

1974-2007

Daughter of Commissioner Miner

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September 2007

Dear Premier Graham and Minister Doherty,

On the 19th of January 2007, when you appointed us as commissioners and asked us to review the New Brunswick post-secondary system, we had not idea of the magnitude of the task and the extent to which New Brunswickers wanted and were willing to embrace change. Over the last eight months, we have been consistently impressed with the quality and quantity of the individual and institution submissions we have received. Over 100 formal briefs were submitted and we heard from hundreds and hundreds of people during the 12 public sessions we conducted around the province. In addition, we met with scores of others who had particular interests in New Brunswick's post-secondary system. We certainly had a wealth of ideas to draw upon, and clearly your decision to review your post-secondary system was a decision supported by many.

Reforming any post-secondary system is not a task that meets with instant approval. This is an extremely complex problem that becomes even more complex when the system is defined as broadly (public, private, university, college, apprenticeship) as you did in your terms of reference. So one should be prepared for a variety of reactions to what we have proposed. Our recommendations are not provided lightly. We have proposed a student-focused system that we firmly believe is in the short and long term best interest of the province. It is highly integrated, as one would expect, and we have spent a lot of time and thought in trying to get the various aspects aligned in such a way as to provide New Brunswick with a strategic advantage in the area of post-secondary education.

Due to the complexities and interrelationships involved, this is a document that cannot be easily scanned. Readers will need to spend time understanding the dynamics and relevance of the issues raised. At the risk of stating the obvious, the recommendations are also highly interrelated and should not be considered discrete advice. Such an approach could result in the essence of the report being misinterpreted.

While we accept full responsibility for what we have done, we need to publicly acknowledge that we have received a great deal of support from a variety of people as part of this process. In particular, we would like to thank our advisors, our secretariat and the students of New Brunswick.

Our advisors were invaluable. We met with them often and they routinely challenged us, entered into robust discussions and demanded an evidence based approach. They made our report better and we are indebted to their commitment and would like to publicly recognize them: Isabelle LeBlanc, Anne Marie Levi, Denis Losier, Jean-Yves Ouellette, Léo-Paul Pinet, Gerry Pond, Andrew Steeves, and Elizabeth Weir.

As for our secretariat, there is not enough praise to go around. We were an extremely lean organization that required everyone to pitch in when help was needed. Our executive director, Léandre Desjardins, did a masterful job of organizing the resources and finding the people we needed to complete our work on time and under budget. A special recognition for David Cameron is needed. He worked with us throughout this process to turn our ideas into text that was accurate and easily understandable. On the communications

side, Diane Gauthier was efficient, competent and a supportive colleague. Tim Andrew helped us with our research needs, Pascal Robichaud supported us in a variety of administrative ways, and Joanne Neilson provided a great deal of administrative support for everyone in the office. Finally we had some occasional support that was also extremely valuable. Suzanne Cyr helped us with our public hearings by recording the information presented. Louise Chené and Lucie Roy fulfilled the important role of reviewing and summarizing submissions to ensure that key ideas were not inadvertently missed.

Finally, there needs to be some recognition of the student contributions and these come in two forms. First, over the summer we had a number of students working with us providing valuable insight and research. Some of their contributions can be seen in the report in the form of vignettes. Thanks to Xavier Bériault, André Caissie, Brendan Glauser, Kevin Godbout, Jennifer Pitre, Lyne Robichaud and Sophia Rodriguez Gallagher. Second, special recognition must be given to all the student leaders in the province. We were impressed with their insightfulness, thoughtfulness, and their willingness to look at issues from the basis of a problem rather than starting from a deeply entrenched position. Clearly, the New Brunswick institutions are doing a good job at conveying appropriate critical thinking skills. We take great pride in having been able to work with such a dedicated group of advisors, staff and students.

Now the hard work begins. You and your government will be tested. The recommendations are not easy ones to implement, but you asked us to be bold, as did many of the individuals we met. There will be controversy and resistance. Yet, we do think the direction provided is the one that New Brunswick should follow, and we are convinced it will provide the province with the educational advantage you directed us to achieve.

Sincerely,



Rick Miner



Jacques L'Écuyer

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Seizing the Opportunity: An Action Plan to Create New Brunswick's Strategic Advantage

Introduction

New Brunswick has the opportunity to take on a leadership role amongst Canadian provinces in the quality and effectiveness of its post-secondary education. By investing in its future it can offer students a fully integrated, seamless system that is accessible, affordable, and of high quality. The social, cultural and economic benefits to the province and its communities would be substantial. This would give New Brunswick an enormous social and economic advantage. We now live in a knowledge-based society in which a post-secondary education has become essential for the vast majority of individuals and should be the birthright of every New Brunswicker. This is an opportunity we cannot afford to miss. The alternative is neither acceptable nor prudent.

To seize this opportunity will require change; indeed, some significant changes. Yet, New Brunswick has never shied away from such transformational changes before. The improvements in the post-secondary system resulting from the Deutsch Commission's in 1962 recommendations were not made without inconvenience or cost. But what a difference they made! A rationalization of institutions and a commitment to equal opportunity for both francophone and anglophone New Brunswickers ushered in a period of growth and expansion that secured the foundations of a vibrant post-secondary system attuned to the needs of the times. Those times, of course, were characterized by an unprecedented demand for admission to universities resulting from the impending arrival of the baby boom generation, combined with the growing realization that a post-secondary education gave both the individual and society considerable advantages. Those times have changed. We are now faced with the reality of declining enrolments and, unless something is done, the prospect of even further declines resulting from

lower birth rates. At the same time, we know that the need for post-secondary education and training is reaching further and further into the workplace.

The new reality is that more and more of what we do, in work and in life, requires a level of knowledge and skill associated with a post-secondary education. We are told that within this generation, 75 to 80 per cent of those employed will need some form of post-secondary education (the current rate is around 55 per cent) while in the United States it is estimated that 90 per cent of the new economy jobs created will require a post-secondary degree, diploma or certificate. Combine these two factors – a declining population in the traditional post-secondary age group (18 to 24) and the increasing need for advanced education and training – and you have the outlines of the crisis we will face if we do not act appropriately and quickly. In short, we can celebrate the past, but we must build on it to secure our future.

In meeting this challenge, we believe New Brunswick's post-secondary system must pursue two overriding priorities. The first priority is to ensure that the system serves the needs of New Brunswick's students. The second priority, closely related to the first, is to make sure that the system is responsive to the needs of the province and its distinctive communities. These must be our major priorities. At the same time, we must be mindful of other considerations. New Brunswick is not a wealthy province, by Canadian standards, and our recommendations must be feasible within the resources available, even if we seek to stretch what is currently available. We must also appreciate the limits to change that human institutions can sustain. In short, we have to be practical while recognizing that people can be amazingly flexible when convinced that change is necessary and in their long term interest.

Our research, reflection, and the advice and suggestions of the literally hundreds of individuals and groups who shared their thoughts and dreams with us led us to a better understanding of the specific needs and opportunities of New Brunswick. One thing that sets New Brunswick's demography and geography apart from the rest of the country is the fact that it does not have one major urban centre serving as the primary development pole. Actually, the province has three principal urban centres of comparable influence while a significant proportion of its population lives in rural areas. There are two geographically large, but relatively sparsely populated, regions in the northeast and northwest of the province. Because of its distinctive geographic and demographic pattern, New Brunswick has to create its own model of post-secondary education. It cannot take its inspiration from other provinces, all of which have one or a very few large urban centres which dominate the economic and cultural life of the province and serve as development poles. Many of the best practices in structuring post-secondary education are based in large urban centres in other provinces and are not easily transferable here. Concentrating post-secondary education in a few relatively large institutions in the larger urban centres, at the expense of the more rural regions, would jeopardize both access and participation, and would simply not meet the needs of this province.

Our Vision

With this context in mind, our vision of post-secondary education for New Brunswick is of one system with the following characteristics:

- The post-secondary system will be bilingual and permit the equal development of both cultures;
- The post-secondary system will have access points in all regions of the province to give their populations the cultural, economic and social instruments they need to develop themselves and facilitate the access to post-secondary education of their youth;
- The post-secondary system will be a truly integrated system, with strong co-ordination mechanisms to avoid unnecessary duplication and to ensure resources are used efficiently;
- The system will be student-oriented and will have mechanisms to provide students with information, help them find their way and facilitate their progress in their post-secondary studies;
- The system will pay attention to the needs of students as well as to the needs of the communities; it will provide programs sufficiently varied to cater to the diversity of these needs;

Vision

New Brunswick post-secondary institutions are all part of a high quality integrated system that focuses on student needs. This system is tailored to the province's distinctive linguistic, demographic and geographic realities. It builds on existing assets and cultural identities and strives to support the socio-economic goals of each community and the province as a whole.

Specific Features

A system capable of becoming a model for regions that share New Brunswick's characteristics:

- Access for all students in all regions
- Existing institutions will continue to contribute
- No single urban development pole
- No desire to jeopardize rural and demographically challenged regions
- Best practices of regions with one major urban development centre not transferable to New Brunswick

- The system will be of high quality; this will be assured by robust quality assurance mechanisms;
- Special measures will be in place to favour the development of an intense high quality research activity; this activity will contribute to the socio-economic and cultural development of New Brunswick.

The system we propose will uniquely serve the needs and circumstances of New Brunswick. It may also serve as a model for other countries and regions that share New Brunswick's characteristics. New Brunswick will be proud to have such a system.

What kinds of changes are necessary to bring such a system about, to better serve the needs of New Brunswick students and society? We will provide greater detail later, but we sketch these recommendations here in order to provide an overview of the kind of system we are proposing.

What Type of Post-Secondary System Would be Best for New Brunswick?

We think the post-secondary system that will meet the needs of New Brunswick and New Brunswickers is one that embodies and promotes the following six principles or characteristics. It is a system that is:

Accessible

This means that the system gives every New Brunswicker the opportunity to pursue learning in the field of his or her choice, consistent with the needs and opportunities available within the province and elsewhere, at a cost that is fair and affordable.

Achieving this objective involves large commitments that affect the institutions in the province, the programs offered in those institutions, the relations among them, and how the system is financed, including tuition and student aid.

We put this principle first, because it lies at the heart of our commitment to serving the needs of current and

future students and of the province. New Brunswick needs to expand its post-secondary enrolment, to persuade a larger percentage of the population to pursue post-secondary education or training. This means encouraging those who are not now participating that there is a place or program for them, and encouraging others from away to enrol in provincial institutions.

Relevant and Responsive

Next to accessibility, this has to be the key to New Brunswick's future success as a province. It is one thing to offer students a place to learn it is at least as important that the place they are offered meets their needs, and the needs of the province, so that the place they are offered leads to success, in life and in employment.

We believe there need to be more opportunities for post-secondary educational experiences that cross disciplines, pedagogy and orientation. This should be a system of strength not a hierarchy of differences. To achieve this end we need a better balance between theoretical and applied learning, whether the difference exists in a degree, diploma or certificate program.

Relevancy takes many forms and there is not a universally accepted view of what is and what is not relevant. As we met with people during our consultations, many passionately supported the critical thinking skills that emerge from a well constructed and well presented arts curriculum. To us such learning is very relevant, but so is the learning that leads to success as an engineer, a journey person, a mechanic, a technologist or a nurse. The point is, there is not a hierarchy of relevance.

New Brunswick needs institutions that are capable of responding quickly and effectively to the needs of students and employers. This means governance structures must be capable of making decisions in a timely manner. It means they must have access to information about the needs of business and industry, as well as other sectors of the community, and they must be able to act appropriately on that information.

Comprehensive

While fully respecting the foundation embodied in the liberal arts and sciences, the system must provide a range of undergraduate, professional, post-graduate, applied and occupational programs attuned to the needs of the province and its linguistic communities, while recognizing the need to conserve resources and co-operate with other provinces and institutions as much as possible.

It must also ensure New Brunswick students have the opportunity to pursue post-graduate study in appropriately selected areas. In the case of research, institutions with recognized strengths in areas important to the province must be supported in a manner conducive to the achievement of excellence.

The system acknowledges and celebrates the contributions of both practical and theoretical knowledge and therefore recognizes as full and equal partners institutions with varying missions and orientations. It also acknowledges the legitimate place occupied by private post-secondary institutions.

New Brunswick needs a variety of graduates from a wealth of programs that provide the province with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed. When we look at the balance of program enrolments compared to other jurisdictions, it is clear that New Brunswick has fewer individuals in the sciences, technology and trades. It should take steps to increase enrolment in these areas. With a little creativity there could be ways of providing worthwhile and beneficial experiences that include both exceptional theory and exceptional practice.

Efficient

Since New Brunswick does not have the population or resources of some other provinces and jurisdictions, it cannot afford to be all things to all people. Trying to do so is a sure road to mediocrity. New Brunswick must not only be selective in what it does, but must also find ways to do what it chooses as efficiently as possible. It must be willing to do things differently, to do things smarter. If it only decides to follow others, it will always be out-resourced and out-maneuvred. Looking for

efficiencies through new and innovative approaches will be a key advantage for New Brunswick in the competitive world of post-secondary education and research.

Efficiency extends to the governance and administrative structures and processes adopted within the post-secondary institutions, which must facilitate timely and effective decision-making. There must be a high degree of co-operation and co-ordination among the province's post-secondary institutions, so that students do not confront dead-end choices and are able to carry learning from one situation into relevant paths offered in others. There must be a premium placed on accurate and timely information, so that students know what opportunities await them and what the consequences are in terms of cost and future choices.

Of High Quality

It is no good if all of the other objectives are met but we only provide a mediocre product. New Brunswick needs a post-secondary system of the highest quality, as good as any in the country if not the world. There will always be debates about what quality actually means and how we know when it is present, but we have enough experience with a variety of approaches to know that some do work, and that it is possible to improve the quality of post-secondary institutions and programs through systematic and rigorous evaluation and corrective action. At present there is a quality assurance regime administered through the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC). It needs to have more teeth and it needs to encompass the colleges as well as the universities.

Accountable

Finally, the post-secondary system must be held to account. Given the increasingly important role that post-secondary education will have for the future of the province, New Brunswickers must have access to timely and meaningful information that allows them to judge how effectively the resources they have placed at the disposal of their post-secondary institutions have been deployed. The lifeblood of accountability

is information – timely, accurate, and meaningful information. And there have to be governance and administrative structures and processes in place whose task includes analysis of that information so that it is employed in ways that lead to improvements or corrective action. There is too much at stake, in people and money, to not insist on an effective accountability system.

New Brunswick will not be the first province to attempt to reform its post-secondary education system. In the last few years British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, and Newfoundland and Labrador have all made efforts to significantly reform and reinvest in their post-secondary systems. Each has added something to our understanding of the importance of an educational system and the steps needed to achieve the desired goals. New Brunswick's contribution and its strategic advantage (Advantage New Brunswick) will be the first truly integrated and responsive system in Canada, if not North America.

A Brief Description of the System

Perhaps our single most important recommendation for change is to transform post-secondary education from an institutional focus into a true post-secondary educational system. We have some excellent institutions, but they operate too much within their own silos. Students may be well looked after, provided they make the right choices and do not deviate from the path they initially selected. But many students are not well served, and both time (student) and money (student and government) are often wasted. For example, when credits (educational achievements) earned in one institution are not accepted by another, or when students cannot find out from a single source what their educational options are, or what the full cost will be or, indeed, how much they will owe on their student loans, less than optimal decisions are made. We will recommend a more robust credit transfer regime and, because successful credit transfer depends on confidence in the quality of other institutions' offerings, we will propose changes that will strengthen the province's quality assurance safeguards. There are also the possibilities of substantial increases in efficiency through improved

institutional co-ordination. Is it necessary for each institution to be an island unto itself, or are there opportunities to share resources and services for the betterment of the entire system? We think far more co-operation is needed, and will recommend significant change in this area. A student should be able to apply to any publicly funded provincial post-secondary institution or program, for example, through a single application process.

The New Brunswick government will not be immune to the changes being proposed. There are some structural changes necessary at both the provincial and institutional levels if a more co-ordinated post-secondary system is to be obtained. For one thing, the provincial government needs to better clarify its own mission and purpose in the area of post-secondary education. For example, its institutional relations with universities are almost non-existent, while it often plays a far too intrusive role vis-à-vis the colleges and the apprenticeship program. There is a vitally important role for the provincial government in post-secondary education, but that role should focus primarily on policy, not on administrative detail. To use contemporary jargon, the province should steer, not row. With regard to colleges and apprenticeship, the government has been doing far too much rowing and has done little steering with respect to universities. As a result, we will propose a careful redefinition of the role of the provincial government. Part of this redefinition will affect the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour itself. Another part will propose the establishment of an arms-length co-ordinating agency for the entire post-secondary system, public and private. We will also recommend a significant reinvestment in the post-secondary system, designed to bring total provincial spending on post-secondary education closer to the average of other provinces, and we will propose a rationalization and expansion of student aid programs.

One dysfunctional feature of New Brunswick's post-secondary system is the absence of structured meetings of the senior officials of the institutions themselves, even of an informal nature. As a result, many opportunities for co-ordination are missed. For the institutions, the need for provincial direction could

be reduced if they had access to a robust forum within which they could work out solutions to problems themselves. We will propose such a forum.

A major concern has to be the enhancement of access for students, especially those who have not in the past considered a post-secondary education an appropriate or affordable option. One important way of increasing access, without adding unnecessarily to the cost of the system, is to offer the first one or two years of undergraduate degree education in all communities where a public post-secondary institution exists. This would have the multiple advantages of allowing more potential students to enrol in a degree program without leaving home, thus increasing the participation rate and reducing costs. In communities where colleges are the only post-secondary institutions, their scope will have to be broadened to allow them to offer those first years. Such a reform will have short and long term implications. First of all, it will require agreement among degree granting institutions as to what constitutes a core and transferable curriculum at the introductory level. Nothing in this proposal will weaken what the universities do themselves, and students will continue to enter a university directly after high school if they so choose, but it will be necessary for there to be increased commonality or transferable courses offered, at least in the first one or two years, in all institutions. The arms-length co-ordinating agency and the institutional co-ordinating forum will facilitate this.

Of course, access to post-secondary education is directly related to the level of financial support provided by the New Brunswick government, as well as the formula by which it is allocated to the institutions, and also the level of assistance provided to students and their families in meeting their share of the cost. The funding formula for universities that originated with the MPHEC is hopelessly out of date, both in its structure and in the amounts involved, and must be modernized so that it is both fair to students and their families and to post-secondary institutions, but also serves to promote provincial policy objectives. The funding of colleges is also in need of reform. Student aid is currently mired in a myriad of conflicting grants, loans, and tax expenditures and we will

propose action to begin the process of simplifying and clarifying this system. Co-operation from the federal government will be a necessary feature of this process.

We will propose the creation of a new kind of post-secondary institution that we believe will better serve New Brunswick and its distinctive regional communities. These institutions will be designed to work closely with their communities and thus to facilitate their economic and social development. They will build on the strengths and traditions of both university and college, but they will be much more than a mere combination of existing institutions. They will be able to bring to their communities a truly integrated approach to the needs and the promises that post-secondary education can offer. We call these institutions polytechnics, a term that is gaining widespread recognition and support.

We propose the establishment of three polytechnics, one serving the Saint John region, one the northeast of the province and the third the northwest. Each of these regions has unique opportunities and unique challenges, and the polytechnics will be designed to respond to these in new and exciting ways. They will offer students the opportunity to acquire both academic and practical knowledge, to receive certificates, diplomas, degrees, the first years of some degrees offered in other institutions and, in areas of special relevance to the region and/or of distinct competence, advanced degrees.

In order to give these new institutions the mandate and flexibility needed to respond effectively to the specific circumstances of their communities, we will propose severing the organic ties that bind the university centres in both Shippagan and Edmundston to the Université de Moncton (UdeM), as well as those that tie the Saint John campus to the University of New Brunswick (UNB). At the same time, the new polytechnics will be able to forge new and more productive relationships with their former senior partners, as well as with other post-secondary institutions and with community firms and agencies. For both UdeM and UNB, this change will create the opportunity to sharpen their distinctive missions and

revitalize their governing structures. In doing this, it will be important that they focus their program priorities and strengthen their work in graduate education and research.

Expanding university research and graduate education is one of the most important conditions of economic and social development for New Brunswick. Research and graduate studies both require a concentration of resources to create the necessary critical mass. For New Brunswick, this means that the province's efforts in this regard must be primarily concentrated in the two institutions already committed to this as a priority: the University of New Brunswick and Université de Moncton. Other universities as well as the colleges and the new polytechnics can certainly make contributions and in fact take a leadership role in appropriate areas or in different types of research that particularly complement their differentiated roles and missions.

Both St. Thomas University and Mount Allison University have well established traditions of undergraduate education, and they should be encouraged to continue with this emphasis. The one condition of continued public support, however, should be their willingness to embrace the goals of New Brunswick's post-secondary system and thus to participate in the institutional arrangements designed to give point and purpose to those goals. We do not expect this to be an onerous condition.

Ensuring quality in our post-secondary institutions is of critical importance to the students who study there and to the broader society, and it is a necessary condition for building the provincial system we believe is critical for the province's future. At present the MPHEC has a limited mandate to assess the quality of university programs in the three Maritime provinces. At the very least, the existing quality assurance regime needs to be strengthened and extended to encompass colleges, the polytechnics, and, in some cases, private institutions.

Access is of critical importance to the province in light of the projected demographic declines. Given this, there are some specific groups which do not

participate in post-secondary education to the extent they are capable of or to the extent the province requires. If we are to increase participation rates in the province, we will need to find ways of changing this. We refer to those who have grown up without the expectation that a post-secondary education is something appropriate for them. We refer also to those whose family income makes the cost of post-secondary education a daunting prospect. We refer as well to women who are still under-represented in certain occupational areas. And we refer to First Nations citizens whose experience, cultural traditions, and bureaucratic impediments have combined to create barriers to participation. Those with disabilities are an additional clientele that needs special support. Access for these groups must be improved, and the factors responsible for their lower rates of participation addressed, including the way we finance post-secondary education.

Finally, there is much that needs to be done to improve access for those already in the labour force who need to refresh their knowledge and skills or improve their qualifications. For many, especially those for whom the desired education or training is not available locally, distance education is the only viable option. Distance education in New Brunswick has to be improved, but it has to be done in a cost-effective manner, which means concentrating efforts.

While we do not presume to be able to magically solve these access issues that have vexed the rest of the country, we do have suggestions that we think will make the situation better.

This is a very brief and general indication of our approach to the reform of post-secondary education in New Brunswick, along with some of the issues we need to address. Of course, we need to be much more specific. In what follows, we can not possibly provide all of the details that will be required. That will be the responsibility of the department, with its new mandate, of the proposed new commission, and of the Presidents' Council. After all, there would be little need to establish or redefine the mission of these bodies if their function was merely to implement an already prescribed program. What, then, should New Brunswick's post-secondary system look like?

Setting the Context for Action: The Necessary First Steps

In order to achieve the kind of post-secondary system New Brunswick requires to succeed, the government must be willing to lead the way by implementing its own internal reforms. There needs to be a system of governance that is designed not only to make the kinds of changes required but also to ensure the structures put in place yield results on an ongoing basis. Change has to start at the top, and this will involve three key players: the provincial department, a new arms-length commission, and the post-secondary institutions. We shall discuss in turn what needs to be done by each.

Students of public administration have come to the conclusion that the most important role of government is to have a clear idea of the desired direction of public policy, the goals to be accomplished, and to possess the capacity to employ the necessary tools to get there. The administrative details required to carry out government policy are often best left to specialized agencies that have the capacity and flexibility to work out co-operative arrangements with organizations “on the ground.” Political accountability is preserved while administrative flexibility and creativity are enhanced.

This maxim applies with special force in areas such as health and post-secondary education, where significant aspects of the design and delivery of programs must be in the hands of specially trained and qualified professionals. The structure we are proposing is based on this understanding and we discuss each of these key components in turn.

The Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour

In one respect, New Brunswick has already put in place an important building block for success. Having created a single department with responsibility for post-secondary education and training, with labour an important player especially in the apprenticeship program, it means that one department has responsibilities that encompass virtually the full range of post-secondary activity. There is just one thing that needs to change: the role of the department needs to be refocused. There is a certain paradox here. On the one hand, the department is so distant from the universities that it has little capacity to influence their development, even using the “carrot” of money. On the other hand, the department is too close to the day-to-day running of the college and apprenticeship components, the result of which is that it lacks the capacity necessary to address the broader issues of system design and policy priorities. This is important, because only government can assume responsibility for post-secondary policy if democratic accountability is to be ensured.

Universities, polytechnics, colleges, and the apprenticeship program need to have essentially the same reporting relationship with government. This means the colleges and the apprenticeship program need to be removed from day-to-day management control by government, and operate in a more arms-length relationship, accountable to government through a board or commission. This will greatly enhance their administrative flexibility and creativity and their ability to forge partnerships with other institutions and with the private sector, while preserving their accountability to government.

Universities, meanwhile, have received little attention from the Government of New Brunswick, operating without a clear policy framework, even including financial incentives. This should change.

The principal responsibilities of the department should focus on:

- **Policy:** set the objectives of the post-secondary system and the instruments to be employed in reaching them.
- **Priorities:** identify the issues that need to be addressed and their order of importance.
- **Funding:** determine how much money can be made available for the institutions and student aid, and how it should be directed.
- **Governance:** prepare the legislative changes required and make the necessary appointments to boards and other institutions.
- **Data Analysis:** extract the information needed to support the other responsibilities of the department and present it in ways that actually inform public policy.

These are important responsibilities, but perhaps the most important feature is that they cannot be effectively carried out except by government itself. In order to focus on these responsibilities, the department must be relieved of its operational activities with respect to colleges and apprenticeship. Conversely, it needs to develop and strengthen its capacity for policy co-ordination and direction in the entire post-secondary sector (universities, colleges, polytechnics and apprenticeship). It will not be easy to move from an operational orientation to one focusing on policy, but it is a critical transition that must occur. This takes us to the second component of the proposed structure.

The New Brunswick Post-Secondary Education Commission

It is necessary to create a link between the department and the institutions. This is the role to be played by the proposed New Brunswick Post-Secondary Education Commission. This commission is not envisioned as a large, bureaucratic organization, but rather as a lean representative mechanism that works with both the government department and the institutions to operationalize the policies set by government, while being sensitive to the needs and constraints of the institutions. It would also provide system advice to the government. It would have its own executive head, appointed by the government. The commission board (Appendix A) would be made up in part by representatives of the institutions affected, and in part by government appointees who would constitute a majority of the membership. The quality of the members appointed by government will be critically important to the success of the commission. They must not be appointed for partisan reasons. They will need to bring expertise in various professional and occupational disciplines, and they will need to be broadly representative of the sectoral and regional interests of the province.

The commission should be responsible for the following activities:

Quality Control/Assessment/Assurance

Quality assessment and control, or quality assurance as it is often described, is the necessary quid pro quo of the operational independence granted to post-secondary institutions. It has to be rigorously applied, so that students and employers can be confident that what institutions say they are doing is actually done and so that the quality of the outcomes is of the highest order.

The quality assurance regime must apply to all institutions, colleges, polytechnics and universities alike. All institutions should submit to institutional accreditation. Whether offered through public or private institutions, accreditation of all degree

programs, should be compulsory. It may also be necessary to accredit some diploma programs depending on their nature and their relationship to other credentials. Degrees and diplomas are granted under authority delegated by the province, and the reputation of the province is at least indirectly at stake each time a diploma or degree is issued. It is therefore the responsibility of the province to ensure that any degree or diploma granted under this authority is of a quality acceptable to the province. The commission will see that this responsibility is discharged effectively.

It is worth noting that New Brunswick participates in the work of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) which seeks to advance the common interests of all the provinces in education, including post-secondary education. A recent and potentially important initiative of the council, agreed to by all ministers in February of 2007, was the establishment of a framework of standards for degrees granted under provincial authority. The impetus for this agreement was concern over the variety of new degree-granting institutions emerging in Canada, and a perceived need to protect the international value of a Canadian degree. The framework includes descriptions of the general learning outcomes expected of degree holders as well as standards for quality assurance reviews. The quality assurance regime proposed here would go well beyond the standards envisioned by the CMEC.

This will have implications for the MPHEC which currently administers a limited quality assurance regime. That regime has serious shortcomings, however. For one thing, it applies only to universities under its jurisdiction. It thus plays no role in assuring the quality of college programs, and under present conditions it would play no role with respect to the proposed polytechnics. Even with respect to universities, its mandate is limited to evaluating the quality assurance procedures in place in each institution and the quality of new proposed programs, but not of existing programs. And finally, it has very limited authority in enforcing compliance with recommendations that result from its evaluations. Its governing structure and its mode of operations allow the institutions to intervene in the evaluation process which undermines its credibility and can lead to watering down assessments.

The community colleges have also developed quality assurance measures. But in their case, the process is an internal one relying mostly on indicators. It does not have the rigour and distance which would make it a credible quality assurance mechanism.

There needs to be a major tightening up of the quality assurance regime for New Brunswick.

One way to accomplish this would be to change the mandate of the MPHEC and the composition of its board, in order to broaden its institutional reach to encompass colleges and private institutions, and strengthen its enforcement capability. For several reasons this would be the much preferred route, since it would preserve the regional scope of quality assurance. However, it would almost certainly require a change to the legislation governing the MPHEC. This, in turn, requires identical legislation passed by the three Maritime legislatures. The last time that was attempted, it took eight years to accomplish, and that was after agreement had been reached on the substance of the changes. New Brunswick cannot afford to wait that long.

Apart from changes in the legislation, changes are also needed in the MPHEC culture; that is, in its mode of operation and its evaluation criteria. It would have to establish more clearly the independence of its evaluations and put more emphasis on criteria related to planning, efficiency, and outcomes. It would also have to be open to new types of establishments and develop appropriate criteria.

An alternative approach might be to reach agreement with the MPHEC by which the quality assurance regime operating in New Brunswick differed materially from that in the other provinces. Or perhaps the other provinces could be persuaded simply to agree that the program would be expanded and interpreted more rigorously in all three provinces, without changing the legislation. There is also the possibility that legislation could be given a fast track to approval. We do not know whether any of these options is feasible. What we do know is that quality assurance has to be improved, and quickly. If the MPHEC cannot respond appropriately in a timely

fashion, and in a manner that recognizes the distinct and legitimate roles played by the various post-secondary system players, New Brunswick will have to explore other options.

An Application/Information Portal

This is without question one of the most important recommendations we will make. Our recommendation is for the commission to build a single point of access, or portal, to provide a range of information and action that is necessary for students to make their way through the public post-secondary system. It is difficult for those who are not in the midst of the system, or thinking of entering it, to appreciate just how complicated, even daunting, it can be. This is particularly true for individuals who do not have prior individual or parental experience in the post-secondary system. Just as one example: we asked a student to compile a list of the distinct student aid options and programs available, including loans, grants, scholarships, bursaries, tax reductions, debt relief, loan forgiveness, federal programs, provincial programs, private-sector programs. Just listing the various options, without explanations, took over two pages! No wonder students sometimes get confused. No wonder they do not always take advantage of programs ostensibly there for their benefit. And this is just student aid. Think about career choices. We heard over and over that both parents and students felt their knowledge of their academic and educational options was a mystery. Much the same applies when a student wants to know whether a university will grant credit, or advanced standing, for courses taken elsewhere, or when a high school student wants to know what he or she needs to get into a particular program and what the job prospects are if he or she graduates, and how much it will cost. Much if not all of this information is no doubt available – somewhere. The point is, it is not available in a form and at a place that is readily accessible to students.

That is what we propose to fix. We strongly recommend the creation of a single access point, or portal, where a student or prospective student must apply for admission to any public post-secondary institution in the province, where he or she will receive a provincial student number, and where he or she can

survey the programs available in various institutions, how they are rated, and what the job placement rates have been, including where graduates are employed, if courses they have already taken will be accepted for credit and, using a financial calculator, can find out exactly what the cost will be, what aid is available, and provide application forms, right there, online. All this in a readily accessible, student-friendly, manner. This recommendation in no way takes away from the admission role that must be maintained by the institutions but rather provides a required port of entry that will enable all students to get the information they need to make appropriate choices based on knowledge, not on suspicion.

No other province has such a comprehensive system. What an advantage for New Brunswick! This will not only provide a valuable service for New Brunswickers, but provide a significant recruitment advantage in attracting both international and domestic students. And it need not cost an arm and a leg. The Ontario common application centres, which unlike what we propose for New Brunswick require separate applications for university and college, actually operate at a profit. Incidentally, New Brunswick's growing sophistication in the field of information technology (IT) means that the development of the information portal is likely well within the competence of a local firm or a consortium of firms.

Data Collection and Analysis

Earlier we emphasized the importance of shifting the department's focus from operations to policy. The lifeblood of good policy is good information. Good information, in turn, requires accurate data carefully analysed. The collection of accurate and meaningful data, analysed to yield information useful for policy development, must be an important function of the proposed commission (as well, in some cases, of the department, as noted earlier).

The MPHEC has done a good job in this area and it might well continue to do so, perhaps under contract to the commission. The commission's role would be to ensure that good data are available, not necessarily to generate them. Furthermore, there needs to be a capacity to extract from data the information that actually informs issues important to the province and its post-secondary institutions. The commission must take responsibility for that.

Policy Advice to the Department

The purpose of data collection and analysis is to enable the commission to offer good policy advice to the department and to the several post-secondary institutions. The commission, of course, would have a particular responsibility to work with the department in generating ideas, based on data analysis, designed to solve problems and promote objectives important to the department and the government.

Review of Institutional Strategic Plans

We will propose later that an important responsibility of individual public post-secondary institutions will be to prepare and submit strategic plans for their institution, detailing where they place their priorities, what their enrolment targets are, and how they intend to move forward to reach their objectives. We will discuss this issue in more detail later in this report. But a necessary corollary of institutional strategic planning is that the plans not only be reviewed but that the process lead to action based on agreement between government and institution. Government funding will, to some extent, depend on this agreement. The iterative process through which agreement can be reached will be mediated by the commission.

It is important to emphasize the value of strategic planning. The post-secondary education system recommended here is based on institutions differentiating their roles in such a way as to create system strength and provincial advantage. The strategic planning process becomes the means to achieve this objective, and the role of the commission is crucial in leading the system according to the priorities of New Brunswick and assuring the essential differentiation of the institutions.

Not only do strategic plans strengthen the institutions' management capability, but they are the key to preserving institutional autonomy while satisfying the government's legitimate need for accountability. Effective strategic planning, with appropriate monitoring and follow-up, obviates the need for detailed reporting and scrutiny of institutional activities. It reflects a mature relationship of trust, one that benefits all parties concerned.

Credit Transfer

We heard a story from one post-secondary instructor who described how he taught the same course in a college and in a university. He used the same text book, the same curriculum, the same course requirements and examination. Yet students enrolled in the college version of the course could not obtain credit in the university. This is neither acceptable nor defensible.

To be fair, New Brunswick has made some progress in working out credit transfer arrangements. But it has been largely a bilateral approach, accomplished one institution at a time, course by course or program by program. At the rate we are going, it will take far too long to arrive at a comprehensive system. A lot of the difficulty is rooted in philosophical differences which are not easy to resolve. However, when such disagreements are patently disadvantageous to students and cost the system more time and money with little or no justification, the system has to change. Creating more general and transferable first- and second-year programs will constitute an important first step on the way to improved credit transfer protocols.

We should emphasize that we are not advocating blanket recognition of anything and everything a student may have done. Of course standards are important. That is why a robust quality assurance program is essential. Once the objectives and standards of a program or course have been attested to, it should be relatively easy to evaluate the transferability of a course taken at one institution for credit at another. The New Brunswick Post-Secondary Education Commission should play an active role in promoting credit transfer. It would not only oversee the process, but play a proactive role in collaborating with

the institutions. Since course contents are regularly changing, credit transfer requires sustained and continuous attention.

We were told...

A change of orientation is very expensive

Like many students with excellent grades, Marilyn registered in Health Sciences, a two-year program that, she was told, would open doors to a brilliant future for her.

Each year, she obtains the maximum amount available in student loans. Despite this financial aid, she often has to borrow money from her friends to make it to the end of the semester.

After her two years in the program, Marilyn does not embark on a career in health sciences. To give more thought to her career orientation, she puts her studies on hold for a year. Back at university, she registers in Education, heads toward a career teaching science. Although a number of the courses she took in Health Sciences can be used for her training in Education, the requirements of this five-year program are such that Marilyn will have a tough time completing her program in three years.

"If I finish in three years, in 2010, I'll have \$83,000 to repay in student loans. I wonder how I'm going to be able to pay that debt after I graduate," she confides.

Marilyn views the future with a great deal of concern, as she feels that her debt will be like a ball and chain for several years to come. Although she wants to have a family and a comfortable lifestyle, she knows she has to remain realistic.

"I know I'll be living like a student for many years, even after my education is completed."

System-Wide Support and Initiatives

We have made the point before that New Brunswick is a small, financially challenged province. In order to succeed in the competitive world of contemporary post-secondary education, it has to be strategic in the choices it makes as to where to put its resources. One attractive option is to select a small number of projects or programs which could make a real difference to the province and support centres of excellence in pursuing research and advanced education in those areas. The proposed commission could assist in identifying and evaluating such areas and could advise government as to the best way of supporting them.

There are also a range of services that could be offered more effectively and economically if resources were pooled among the several institutions of the province. Co-operative arrangements already exist in such areas as library and computer services, but even here the breadth of current and future services could be expanded as changes occur in several institutions. Many of the so-called "back office" administrative services required in post-secondary institutions could easily be shared. This would result in efficiencies which would increase the resources available for other institutional needs and priorities. This approach to shared responsibilities ties in with the single information portal discussed earlier.

Regional and National Co-ordination

The establishment of the MPHEC was greeted with much hope for a promised boost in co-operation among the three Maritime provinces with respect to university affairs. And while some notable accomplishments have occurred, many more remain to be explored. The fact of the matter is that under the current regime, co-ordination is only possible after the three provinces have agreed a common approach is desirable. The requirement for tripartite agreement is the reason it takes so long to do anything jointly. The problem is exacerbated when the provincial governments, individually, lack the policy capacity to work through possibilities for cooperative action. It is reasonable to anticipate, therefore, that strengthening New Brunswick's post-secondary system will facilitate increased co-operation in the longer run.

The point is, however, that we cannot wait, or we will lose the advantage that awaits us now. If we can get our house in order now, chances are others will see the advantages of a more co-ordinated approach. We wish to encourage regional co-operation and co-ordination. If ways could be found to accomplish this through the MPHEC, we would support such an approach. But we are forced to concede that the prospects are not promising and time is of the essence in this instance.

Duality and Linguistic Obligations

Besides its role in ensuring that the system develops and maintains vibrant institutions for the two main cultural and linguistic communities of New Brunswick, the New Brunswick Post-Secondary Education Commission will ensure that at least a minimum of post-secondary education courses are offered to the francophone minority in anglophone regions and to the anglophone minority in francophone regions, where numbers warrant. One way of achieving this would be to assign a lead role to one anglophone and one francophone institution, as will be discussed later.

The proposed New Brunswick Post-Secondary Education Commission may appear to be a heavy-handed, even excessively bureaucratic, organization. It does, admittedly, have a wide range of functions and responsibilities. But it is important to emphasize that these are functions and responsibilities that the commission needs to make sure are provided for in the system. They need not all be provided by the commission. We have already mentioned the MPHEC and quality assurance. Improving quality assurance and extending it to encompass colleges and the polytechnics does not necessarily mean that function has to be taken over by the New Brunswick commission. It could be contracted to the MPHEC if it is willing and able to make the necessary changes. The same applies to data collection. There could be others. Indeed, one possibility is that some of these activities might be undertaken by the universities, colleges and polytechnics themselves, on behalf of the entire system, if they had an organization capable of acting collectively. That takes us directly to the final player in the three-part organizational structure we

are proposing for the governance of post-secondary education in New Brunswick (commission, government department and the institutions).

The Presidents' Council

We propose that the post-secondary institutions, through their presidents or executive heads, join together to form a post-secondary Presidents' Council. It would be comprised of the heads of most of the public post-secondary institutions in the province – universities, colleges, polytechnics, the apprenticeship program, and representatives from the private institutions and high schools (their total representation is not possible given the numbers involved). There is no such body at present, not even among the universities alone (we did receive a brief from the “New Brunswick University Presidents' Group” but it appears to have no formal structure and the brief seems to have been prepared by the Association of Atlantic Universities). A detailed list of the proposed membership of the council is set out in Appendix B.

The council is intended to be primarily an advisory body, working out common problems and developing common positions to take to the minister, department, and commission. It could play an especially important role in developing and proposing system-wide initiatives, especially where economies are possible through co-operation, or where new or expanded markets could be created (international student recruitment, for example). It could advise on and facilitate credit transfer arrangements and in co-ordinating individual institutions' contributions to the provincial information/application portal.

The council could also take on responsibility for specific projects, perhaps delegated by the commission. Indeed, the more the institutions are able to work together, the more they might assume responsibilities otherwise assigned to the commission. The essential point, however, is that the council would share information and facilitate co-operation and system co-ordination. It could be an extremely cost-effective mechanism for this, especially if secretarial support were provided by the commission.

Governance structure of the proposed New Brunswick system

The Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour

- Policies and priorities
- Funding
- Legislation
- Data analysis

The New Brunswick Post-Secondary Education Commission

- Quality Control/Assessment/Assurance
- Application/Information Portal
- Data Collection and Analysis
- Policy Advice to the Department
- Review of Strategic Plans
- Credit Transfer
- System-Wide Support and Initiatives
- Regional and National Co-ordination
- Duality and Linguistic Obligations

The Presidents' Council

- Advisory role to the New Brunswick Post-Secondary Education Commission
- Specific projects

Organizing the System

A New Kind of Institution for New Brunswick

The present structure of post-secondary education in New Brunswick is very much a product of its history. Indeed, the founding of what is now the University of New Brunswick dates almost from the founding of the province itself. Each of the other public universities in the province has a long, proud, and, at times, traumatic history. That history has to be treated with great respect when we contemplate change. But sometimes change is necessary and sometimes it is essential.

Such was the case when Dr. John J. Deutsch proposed the consolidation of the scattered francophone colleges into the Université de Moncton, with campuses of the faculty of arts in Shippagan, Bathurst and Edmundston, and when he proposed the establishment of a second campus of the University of New Brunswick at Saint John with teaching rights for St. Thomas in Saint John. Dr. Deutsch came to those conclusions because of the burgeoning demands for post-secondary education in the province, and because the existing francophone colleges could not cope with the financial burdens that would be imposed if they attempted to respond to those demands in their existing forms.

In some ways the situation has changed dramatically since then. Instead of unprecedented growth, universities in the province face the reality of declining enrolment. For some of them, most especially the Université de Moncton campuses in Shippagan and Edmundston, declining enrolments threaten the very existence of the institutions.

At the same time there are other equally persuasive pressures for change. Since the restructuring of the

university system occasioned by Dr. Deutsch's report, New Brunswick has embraced a new entry to its post-secondary system: the community college. There are now 11 college campuses in the province: six anglophone (Miramichi, Moncton, St. Andrews, Saint John, Woodstock and the College of Craft and Design in Fredericton) and five francophone (Bathurst, Campbellton, Dieppe, Edmundston and Péninsule Acadienne), plus the Maritime College of Forest Technology in Fredericton which is currently not part of the college system. The college system has certainly earned a respected place in the province's post-secondary system, but it remains relatively underdeveloped, attracting proportionately far fewer students, for example, than in most other provinces. It is also constrained by being an integral part of government, without the flexibility to respond as quickly and effectively as it should to training needs and opportunities.

There have been several articulation arrangements entered into between colleges and universities, by which a student may progress from a college program to a related university program, or vice versa, with the credits earned in one applicable in the other, thus reducing the total duration of the combined program. We applaud these arrangements, but unfortunately they are one-off agreements, negotiated program by program and institution by institution. We need a more general protocol, one that assures all students that there are no dead-end programs in New Brunswick.

Science fields are expanding rapidly, with new technologies that are impacting fields like health, engineering and the environment, but also such other fields as communications and even the arts. Current and innovative programs are emerging in

other provinces and countries, preparing students in basic knowledge and theory as well as in working skills. These new initiatives reflect a paradigm shift in post-secondary education, where programs and institutions are more community-based, learner-focused, industry-connected and global in perspective.

These new initiatives have become associated with a new kind of institution that is emerging in other parts of the world and which we now wish to introduce to New Brunswick. This new kind of institution, the polytechnic, involves the combination of university and college activities into something greater than the sum of the two parts.

In New Zealand, for instance, polytechnics deliver technical, vocational and professional education. Their emphasis is on student-focused teaching, rather than research. Much of the learning is practical, and they all operate student support services. They offer programs at all levels – community interest courses, foundation programs, certificates, diplomas, degrees and some post-graduate opportunities. They encourage students to build from lower qualifications to higher ones. Their programs are well-regarded by New Zealand employers and many have achieved international recognition. They are very responsive to the needs of the community in which they are based, developing programs to meet the particular needs of local industries and businesses, and the special interests of the local community.

In Finland, polytechnics train professionals in response to labour market needs and conduct research and development activities which support instruction and promote regional development in particular. Polytechnics are multi-field regional institutions focusing on contacts with working life and on regional development. They deliver degree studies which give a higher education qualification and practical professional skills. All degree studies include practical on-the-job learning. They offer programs in various fields including humanities, social sciences, business and administration, natural resources, technology, communications, natural sciences, health, tourism, catering and domestic services.

Closer to home, in the United States, the name is commonly used and some polytechnics or institutes of technology have evolved to become some of the leading higher education institutions in the world. Think of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the California Institute of Technology (Caltech), the Rochester Institute of Technology, or the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. A trend is emerging in which universities, especially those operating as campuses of a multi-campus institution, are adopting the name polytechnic to signify a distinct orientation, one that emphasizes teaching and applied learning.

The idea is also coming to Canada. In Quebec, as in French speaking societies in Europe, the term generally used is *école polytechnique*. Thus we find the *École Polytechnique de Montréal* or the *École polytechnique de Bruxelles*. A particularly relevant example can be found in Quebec's *École de technologie supérieure (ETS)*, which developed highly sought after co-op programs in engineering for students with a technician diploma. In this way, ETS not only increased participation but also carved out a niche for itself in the highly competitive Quebec university system. In English Canada, the term is gradually replacing the older use of institute of technology. Consequently, the Southern Institute of Technology in Calgary is now SAIT Polytechnic. Polytechnic is coming to have a broader connotation than institute of technology. It connotes a comprehensive approach to post-secondary education, one that embraces many aspects of a traditional university but grounds it in a more practical approach that is quite easily meshed with college programs.

A current web publication, "Polytechnics Canada" describes the "polytechnic advantage" as based on a three-pillared approach: strength in academic offerings, strength in industry connections, and strength in applied research. That comes close to summarizing the concept we have in mind. We would only add a fourth descriptor: strength in community responsiveness.

In their most recent study of future trends in post-secondary education, the RBC Royal Bank and the

Brondesbury Group described polytechnics as "... rapidly emerging as the third stream (after universities and colleges) that blends applied skills with broad subject-matter expertise." They went on to argue:

We see them as a solid middle ground that is capable of meeting many of the labour market demands for skilled professionals in today's society. Since they are still finding their position, they are relatively flexible in adapting to new demands. We believe they will emerge as distinctive within the next 5-7 years. ("The Future of the Public Sector 2007: Post-Secondary Education Commentator Overview", p. 40.)

Here is a clear opportunity for New Brunswick to move ahead of this emerging trend and, in so doing, to claim the advantage of national leadership. For this reason, and because it fits the needs and circumstances of several communities in the province, we think New Brunswick should embrace the idea of the polytechnic.

The New Brunswick polytechnics would be created by combining a university campus with one or several college campuses. They would be authorized to offer college level programs, as well as university level programs and their professors would be expected and encouraged to teach at both levels, according to their competences. They would be governed by a board comprising a majority of members coming from the community, along with professors and students (Appendix C). They would have a senate, or more likely an academic council, that would report to the board through the presidents of the polytechnics.

The polytechnics would be closely tied to their communities, able to respond to the particular needs of the regional community they serve but also offer programs of provincial and national importance. They would have close ties with community institutions and agencies, including business, non-profit organizations and municipal governments. Their educational mission, for the most part, would be tailored to the needs of their region, and they would have the flexibility to adjust their teaching programs in ways

that respond effectively to these needs. Their research function would similarly be developed by building on their institutional strengths, and by addressing opportunities in their region in ways that contribute to its socio-economic development.

The changes that the adoption of the polytechnic model would bring are obviously important, but they would not mean a break in all activities. Many of the programs now offered would continue, and those that were to be modified would be phased in, with full and open consultation and with protection for students needing to complete programs. The point is that the institutions affected would acquire a new centre of gravity, one vested securely in the needs of their region and its students, and with a mandate that allows them to respond to a more complete range of post-secondary opportunities in an integrated fashion. Given the quality assurance mechanisms proposed, there would be no need for existing transfer agreements with an established university or college to be affected. Existing programs based on such agreements would continue or be modified, as determined by the partners (university, polytechnic, college). This would not be a loss for the province or its existing institutions. Rather, it would give New Brunswick the first post-secondary system with a well defined and functioning university, college and polytechnic system.

It would be a real shame if concerns for preserving the status quo, and protecting the vested interests of existing institutions, were to frustrate the opportunity to create something new and dynamic for the province.

These new institutions would offer students the opportunity to learn in a range of disciplines, spanning the educational ladder from relatively short, occupationally-specific programs, including the in-school components of apprenticeship training, through to university degrees. They would offer in all their campuses the first years of some university programs. They would be authorized to offer graduate degrees in some specific areas, up to and including the Ph.D. if they have the resources needed to deliver programs of high quality. This would not preclude involvement in other programs offered by UNB and UdeM.

The polytechnics would preferably offer integrated programs, mixing a good basic education with the development of specific skills. Their focus would lean toward the applied end of the spectrum (which is where the need in New Brunswick is most evident) but they would not lose sight of the important and meaningful contributions that the liberal arts, humanities and social sciences bring to educational programs. Their governance structures would be nimble, able to respond quickly to emergent needs and opportunities in the communities they serve, while still being capable of providing a longer term focus.

Faculty interests would be well represented and respected. Advisory councils would function to ensure this, but decision-making authority would rest firmly in the hands of an appointed board and president. An important feature of the new institution would be the possibility for faculty members to teach students in different programs. We recognize that traditional university systems place a premium on such things as publications and peer evaluations, so steps would have to be taken to ensure that the kinds of activities envisioned in this proposal – development of innovative programs, activities aimed at technology transfer, approaches to teaching that integrate the teaching of basic and applied knowledge – are appropriately recognized and rewarded in personnel decisions such as promotion. We firmly believe this new kind of institution could be an exciting and rewarding place for faculty, as well as for students and the broader community. This more integrated approach would also be at once more economical and more attractive for students and provide faculty with a whole new breadth of opportunity.

It should be clear that this new kind of institution in New Brunswick should not be called a “university college” or “university institute”. Such terms are generally associated with a bifurcated institution, retaining the separate traditions and orientations of the previous institutions. That is not what we are proposing. Quite the contrary, the essence of this proposal is to create a true fusion of the two cultures. The term polytechnic, as described previously, best captures the concept we have in mind. It is in general use around the world and, as noted before, has some outstanding exemplars.

We readily admit that creating such an institution will not come without challenges, and that the history of previous attempts at joining university and college work has sometimes been problematic. Yet, we firmly believe that there is a genuine willingness in key communities within the province to move in this direction and that with strong leadership and good strategic planning, it can not only work successfully but also create a new momentum that will provide New Brunswick with a significant advantage. Along with the quality assurance mechanism we have proposed, it holds the promise of not only solving some real problems facing the province, but also pointing the way to a more responsive, accessible, and productive post-secondary system. The tripartite relationship being proposed (universities, polytechnics and colleges) combined with a post-secondary system involving both public and private institutions, provides New Brunswick with a responsiveness that is unmatched anywhere else in Canada. Where might we see this new type of institution established?

The Saint John Polytechnic

This new institution would be created by combining the Saint John campus of the University of New Brunswick with the Saint John campus of the New Brunswick Community College. The new institution would ultimately be located in a common area. Some have suggested Tucker Park while others have suggested a downtown location. Regardless of the ultimate decision, the true strength of the arrangement will only emerge with a common location. It has been pointed out that the current physical facilities at NBCC Saint John are in need of replacements, so this might be a reason to accelerate the process. Again, we emphasize that this should not be a simple merger of two institutions. A new institution has to be created, combining strengths from the former two but building them into something distinct and stronger: an institution that takes as much pride in the educational services they provide to apprentices as they do to their Ph.D. students. Yes, this will be a tall order, but student-centred institutions are capable of such transformational change.

We were told by both parties that they already co-operate in numerous areas. This is certainly a good start. A single campus would facilitate this even further. There are some obvious examples where synergy between the college and university could yield very quick and positive results. One thinks immediately of health, energy-related and business programs. The proposed location of a unit of the Dalhousie University medical school in Saint John, joined with college programs in the health sciences, would create almost immediately the makings of a true centre of excellence in health. Saint John's emerging focus as an energy centre means that the polytechnic would be a natural extension of joint programming that would offer an enormous strategic advantage to the region and the energy sector. This would include technical, technology, and degree programs all related to energy, and offered not only in a single institution, but in an integrated fashion that facilitated synergy in research, teaching and learning. The existing strength in business education, in both the college and university campuses, would be an added strength and logical complement to this potential centre of excellence.

We are well aware that the University of New Brunswick, in its official submission to our commission, proposed a more limited form of co-operation, based on the physical co-location of the college and university campuses. This would certainly be a step in the right direction, but in our opinion it would not go nearly far enough. For one thing, it would leave intact the two very distinct cultures and governance structures. In itself, co-location would do nothing to enhance co-operation or integration. There is plenty of evidence to support this assertion. And why should New Brunswick settle for half a loaf when it can have the full advantages offered by full integration into the Saint John Polytechnic?

As mentioned, the Saint John campus of the community college is in need of expanded facilities. We were told there are five applicants for every training seat available, so it is obvious that demand outstrips supply and that the new polytechnic could look forward to increased enrolment. This is critical in expanding accessibility to post-secondary

education in the province. University, college and joint programming empowered by a new and more responsive governance model could develop in ways that better reflect the needs of the region. Saint John needs a post-secondary institution that reflects and contributes to both the region's strengths and potential, and to those of the province.

The small college in St. Andrews, with its specialization in the tourism and hospitality industry, and in aspects of the fishery and marine technology, should become a campus of the Saint John Polytechnic with the same opportunity to provide university credits as has been assigned to other colleges. The college is well within commuting distance and would add to the diversity of the polytechnic's programming. It would also preserve and expand access to post-secondary education in that part of the province.

The Northeastern New Brunswick Polytechnic

Post-secondary education in the communities of northeastern New Brunswick face some daunting challenges but have the opportunity for a creative response. These are all relatively small communities, and the existing post-secondary institutions reflect that. Community colleges, operating in French, have been established in the Acadian Peninsula, Bathurst and Campbellton. In the Acadian Peninsula, nine regular college programs are offered, but six of them have fewer than 20 students enrolled (as of 2005-06). Campbellton offered 17 programs, with 13 of them enrolling fewer than 20 students. Bathurst, the largest of the three college campuses in the region, offered 23 programs, some of which are noteworthy for their innovative nature, but 15 of them enrol fewer than 20 students. These small enrolments mean that the system is very expensive. And it can only become more expensive if, as current high school enrolments indicate, enrolments decline significantly in the coming years. An enrolment decline of 30 per cent, the number projected by the Université de Moncton, would render the institutions virtually unmanageable and unsustainable.

A similar story is told with respect to the Université de Moncton campus in Shippagan. Its current enrolment stands at just 456 students with an instructional staff of 48. That yields a faculty-student ratio of less than 10 to one. Again, the prospect of a declining school-age population of as much as 30 per cent in coming years has to put the future viability of this small campus in serious doubt.

In the context of northeastern New Brunswick, the new type of institution we described above, the polytechnic, presents some obvious advantages. By combining the university and college campuses into a new institution, it would acquire the flexibility necessary to use its resources more effectively. With the expansion of the previous college location's mandates (first or second year university courses), plus a new focus by the whole institution on responsiveness to regional needs, priorities and programming, there is the possibility of developing a sustainable institution. None of the strengths of the existing institutions would be compromised. Existing programs would continue where justified and new ones developed where needed. Transfer arrangements with the Université de Moncton would continue unless and until modified by mutual agreement. Above all, there is no intention and no need for this arrangement to lead to competition between the polytechnic and the Université de Moncton. The requirement to develop strategic plans will emphasize this and, if necessary, the New Brunswick Post-Secondary Education Commission will insist on it.

The administrative headquarters of the Northeastern New Brunswick Polytechnic would be located in Shippagan, where college and university campuses already co-exist, and it would have campuses in Bathurst and Campbellton. It should be encouraged to develop specialized training programs, as well as research, in areas important to the future development of the region. The existing Coastal Zones Research Institute, École des pêches, and the centres of excellence in woodworking, metal technologies and computer science offer examples of the kind of specialization that is possible, and that should be encouraged and expanded where possible, and justified.

The point is that if a post-secondary institution is to continue to exist in northeastern New Brunswick, it is going to have to change. The present bifurcation into colleges and university is no longer viable. A more focused curricular orientation, combining college and university work, as well as advanced education, training and research in carefully selected areas of special emphasis, offers the most promising route to success. The present course, to repeat, is simply not sustainable.

The Northwestern New Brunswick Polytechnic

The story is much the same in the northwestern communities of the province and, as in the previous case, the creation of a polytechnic presents obvious advantages. Its establishment would be even easier since both college and university campuses are located in Edmundston (with the Centre of Excellence in Agricultural and Biotechnological Sciences located in nearby Grand Falls). Enrolment in the college in 2005-06 stood at just 290, while that in the university campus was 522.

As with northeastern New Brunswick, the challenge is not simply to combine existing college and university work, but to build on that foundation to create a true centre of post-secondary excellence one that, by doing innovative things, can attract students not just from the region but from other parts of Canada and abroad. Again, this is not a prescription for abandoning everything that currently exists on either the community college or the university campuses. Where existing courses and programs can be justified, they should surely continue, as with existing transfer arrangements with the Université de Moncton. But there does clearly need to be program rationalization to increase efficiency and improve service to students. And new programs need to be developed, ones that integrate certificate, diploma, degree, and post-graduate qualifications, as well as associated research, in carefully selected areas of importance to the region, its students, and its social and economic development. And again, it bears repeating that the creation of the new polytechnic should not lead to competition with the Université de Moncton. With appropriate leadership, both can become stronger

and increase their contributions to their regions and the province.

Joining the college and university creates a stronger foundation from which the building could begin. Such fields as forestry, wildlife management, agriculture and tourism offer possible areas of specialization around which the polytechnic could be developed. The rest will be up to institutional leadership and community support. As in the northeast, it is going to require hard work and sacrifice, since it will be necessary to rationalize the institution's offerings. The proposed New Brunswick Post-Secondary Education Commission, working with the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour, could help with encouragement and transitional funding.

It is important that the development of both the Northeastern and Northwestern Polytechnics be planned carefully, taking into account the size of the francophone population in New Brunswick, the resources available, and the needs of the regions. Care will have to be taken to avoid duplication that could weaken the whole francophone post-secondary sector. This will be a responsibility of the New Brunswick Post-Secondary Education Commission. To thrive, the Northeastern and Northwestern Polytechnics will have to offer programs and activities that are different from what other institutions are providing. In the case of programs leading to a degree, a good mix of basic knowledge and skill development would be attractive for students wishing a more immediate preparation for entry into the labour market, and could constitute a niche for these institutions. Offering these kinds of new and imaginative programs in a few well selected areas, together with a wider range of shorter programs in response to the needs of their communities, will constitute the key to success for these institutions, and a real advantage for New Brunswick.

The New Brunswick Community College/ Le Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick

With the restructuring discussed above in place, five campuses of the NBCC/CCNB system remain: Dieppe, Miramichi, Moncton, Woodstock and the College of Craft and Design in Fredericton. The provincial government has indicated its intention to establish a community college in Fredericton. If the government pursues this intention in the near future, the new college should include the amalgamation of the NBCC-Woodstock, the New Brunswick College of Craft and Design and the Maritime College of Forest Technology. Indeed, this amalgamation should be implemented whether the government proceeds with its intention or not. Obviously, the regional mandate of the forestry college would have to be taken into consideration, but given Nova Scotia's decision to provide similar programming, the isolation of the Maritime College of Forest Technology from the college system no longer seems appropriate. As well, the small college in Woodstock, located less than 100 kilometres from the capital, would also logically belong with the new facility. Indeed, whether or not a new college is established in Fredericton, the other three institutions, the Maritime College of Forest Technology, the College of Craft and Design, and the Woodstock Community College, should be consolidated into a single unit. This will leave four colleges: one francophone (Dieppe) and three anglophone (Fredericton, Moncton and Miramichi). Dieppe should be assigned a special responsibility for instruction in French in the anglophone regions of the province, while Moncton should assume a similar role for English instruction in the northern areas of the province.

In order to improve access to post-secondary education for all New Brunswickers, the role of some of these colleges (Woodstock, Miramichi and Moncton) should be expanded. Specifically, they should offer the first year of university and, where it is possible and justified, the second year as well. We have learned that an important impediment facing

high school graduates (especially those from lower income backgrounds and those whose parents did not receive a post-secondary education and who did not grow up with the expectation that they would attend a college or university), is that the perceived cost, coupled with the prospect of leaving home, sometimes constitute formidable barriers. We know from studies by Statistics Canada that university participation rates decrease by nearly half when distance from a university exceeds 80 kilometres (Marc Frenette, "Too far to go on? Distance to school and university participation." Statistics Canada No. 11F0019 No 191). If at least the first year or so of university were available close to home, that barrier could be greatly reduced. Certainly the cost of room and board would be eliminated for many students.

Two features of the organizational structure of these colleges should be noted. They should operate as an integral unit, with one central administration and geographically dispersed campuses. In this sense, they will continue as at present. But the second feature is equally important. They need to operate outside of day-to-day control by the provincial department. This is crucial if they are to have the flexibility to respond quickly and effectively to the needs of industry and of local communities. Given the uncertainty surrounding a possible new college campus in Fredericton and the negotiations that will need to occur around the Maritime College of Forest Technology, a precise recommendation regarding a new governance model for the college system is difficult. However, a board model similar to that proposed for the new polytechnics (Appendix C), with a significant majority of external governors and faculty, student, staff and administrative representation, seems appropriate.

The proposal to create three polytechnics and to expand the role of the remaining community colleges will have significant repercussions for the four universities in the province. We turn now to address these implications.

We were told...

Finding the type of post-secondary education that suits you

A university education is not for everyone. Sometimes an emphasis on theory is unattractive to the practical mind. Travis, a graduate from the New Brunswick Community College in St. Andrews, can attest.

After completing one year at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton taking business administration courses, Travis spent over two years away from school before enrolling in the NBCC Pre-Employment Electrical program. Spanning 40 weeks, the program follows the 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. format, Monday to Friday, teaching theory in the mornings and practical lessons in the afternoons.

"I liked it a lot better than university," Travis said. "It was hands-on. I didn't feel like I was wasting my time taking electives."

Graduating from the program gave Travis a community college diploma and his Block 1 papers from Apprenticeship New Brunswick. He will now take six weeks of courses at the community college in Moncton, once annually, for the next four years – working in the meantime – before becoming fully licensed with his Block 5 papers.

College was also a cheaper option for Travis, costing him only \$2,600 for the entire 40 weeks.

"I just wanted a trade. I knew I never wanted to go back to university," he said.

Travis now works for Dobbelsteyn Electric Ltd. in Fredericton and recently bought his first home near Keswick Ridge. After becoming a fully licensed electrician in four years, he hopes to continue working in the Fredericton area and someday start his own outfit. He said the trend of trade workers moving out west makes it quite easy to find work in Fredericton.

"I'm very happy with my choice," he said. "Really happy."

New Brunswick's Four Public Universities

One proposal that will affect all four existing public universities in the province, and in some cases polytechnics as well, is that except for Fredericton (if a college campus were established there) and Dieppe, the four remaining community colleges and the campuses of the polytechnics should offer the first one or two years of university work, at least in arts and science. We except Fredericton and Dieppe because of the presence of universities in the same or a nearby regional community. This will require that the universities and polytechnics adjust their own programs to ensure compatibility with the new entrants to the system. This is absolutely critical in order to ensure that students completing the first year or two of university in a college or polytechnic will have assured access to programs in a university or in another polytechnic, assuming of course that their performance was up to standard. What we have in mind is a more generic first year, reasonably common to all institutions, with less specialization and designed to provide students with a sound general education. The second year, where offered, would continue the emphasis on general education, but with some increased specialization. The new commission, in conjunction with the Presidents' Council, will assist universities, polytechnics and colleges in adjusting to the new curricular requirements. In the short term it is possible that university enrolments will decline, as a result of the first and second years being done elsewhere, but with the increased participation rates and the lower drop-out rate that are expected, this trend should be reversed over the longer term.

The universities will also have to adjust to the presence of the New Brunswick Post-Secondary Education Commission and the new role proposed for the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour. They will have to present their strategic plans and will need to be more accountable, in the money they spend and in reporting on the quality of what they do. Their strategic plans will be used as part of the quality assurance and program approval processes. We do not anticipate that this will be an onerous adjustment, but it is a necessary one.

The University of New Brunswick

UNB will need revisions to its legislative act, in order to take account of the change in status for what had been its Saint John campus. At a minimum, it will need to modify the composition of the board, removing the five Saint John representatives (two faculty, one student, the mayor and one alumni representative). As it approaches this task, it might at the same time take a good, hard look at its governance structures more generally. Certainly there is room to streamline its operations, putting greater emphasis on developing speedier decision making processes. In this regard, consideration should be given to a change in the role of the university senate, one that would make it clear that the reporting relationship of the senate is through the president.

We will have more to say later about the importance of graduate studies and research to the province, and of enhancing those areas. UNB, as the principal anglophone institution with a recognized mission in this area, must be, along with the Université de Moncton, a leader in meeting this objective. The possibility exists, therefore, to shift some of the responsibility and resources for the initial years of undergraduate education to others, in order that the university expand its work at the advanced level and in research. We will also address how this factors into the funding of the university later in this report. Let it be clear that both UNB and UdeM will be asked to take on a role that will significantly impact on the long term prosperity of the province. There will be an increased level of responsibility that will require increased resources.

Université de Moncton

The changes for UdeM attendant upon the establishment of polytechnics will be more substantial than for UNB, not only because the two northern campuses played a much greater role in the governance of the Université de Moncton, but also because the internal organization of the university is in need of reform. At the same time, Moncton must remain the anchor of the francophone component of the higher education system in the province. We believe that establishing its own board will free UdeM

to focus clearly and effectively on actions that can be taken to strengthen its role. That role, as with UNB, must include a stronger presence in graduate education and research. At the same time, in revamping its governance structure and the role of the board, it also has the opportunity to consider ways in which the operations of the institution could be rendered more efficient.

There is no doubt that the impact of the proposed restructuring on the Université de Moncton will be substantial, but its extent should not be exaggerated. For one thing, faculty, students and budgets are already split between the three campuses. Nothing in the proposed establishment of the polytechnics will change this, at least immediately. UdeM will not lose students to Shippagan or Edmundston. They are already there. It will be a new arrangement among institutions, and it will create new opportunities for students. However, the transition will require careful planning to ensure that UdeM and the northern polytechnics are structured appropriately and that problems are avoided which might prevent the establishment of a spirit of co-operation between these institutions. We would not propose such a change if we did not consider it necessary for the future well-being of the whole province and its francophone communities.

The intention is to strengthen the Université de Moncton. We firmly believe that the proposed restructuring will enable UdeM to refocus its energies, sharpen its mission, and expand its work in graduate studies and research. It should explore opportunities to broaden the scope of its program offerings, in ways that escape the narrow confines of traditional disciplines. It should encourage its researchers to focus their efforts with a view to developing niches of excellence. It should not hesitate to develop real and effective agreements with the best francophone universities, including the new polytechnics in New Brunswick, but also in other provinces or states, and it should encourage student mobility.

In short, the Université de Moncton will have the opportunity to review its mission and in so doing, to reposition itself so that it becomes a real flagship for the francophone intellectual community, not only in the field of Acadian culture and traditions, but in the larger sphere of its socio-cultural development.

As noted above, the composition of the governing board will have to change. It will lose six members coming from the northern campuses, two professors, two students, and two alumni, leaving one professor, one student and one alumni member from the Moncton campus. This creates an opportunity to take a more comprehensive look at the board's composition, including the specification of the geographic location of board members. Like most boards of Canadian universities, the UdeM board should have a majority of members from outside the institution, but with a better representation of faculty and students. As the only francophone university in New Brunswick, its board members should come from all parts of the province, but appointments should be made primarily on the basis of competence and potential contributions to university governance.

The University Senate will also have to be reviewed and revised. It will automatically lose 10 members coming from the north. This would be an appropriate opportunity to reduce and streamline its composition and operation in order to make it a more efficient and effective governing body. In this, consideration should be given to a change that would have the senate report through the president of the university.

St. Thomas University

St. Thomas has managed to build a national reputation as a very good undergraduate liberal arts university. Its proximity to UNB, and the opportunity that location affords to share some overhead facilities and services, works to its advantage and to that of the province generally. We see no need to drastically alter this arrangement. However, co-operation has to improve. The two institutions do not, in fact, take full advantage of their proximity. With a first year that should be comparable in the future, St. Thomas and UNB should explore ways to deepen their collaboration, particularly in the field of arts and

science, where exchanges of professors and students, joint seminars, and other co-operative arrangements would enliven the intellectual life of both universities. There is scope for enhanced co-operation in other fields as well. Indeed, a mutually agreed form of federation might be an approach worth considering, with appropriate financial support.

St. Thomas describes itself as “a small Catholic institution”, although it remains open to non-Catholics in its student body, faculty and staff, and does not impose any religious tests. Still, the issue of religious affiliation does raise questions for a public, and publicly funded, institution. This issue will become even more pronounced as other clearly religiously-oriented institutions grow and offer increased opportunities to the general public. St. Thomas needs to decide whether it is a public institution with a proud Catholic heritage or whether it is a Catholic institution open to the public. Its decision will materially affect its provincial funding level and governance model. This is a decision only St. Thomas can make, and is not within the purview of this commission to decide. It is, however, our responsibility to raise it as an issue.

St. Thomas clearly suffers from the results of a funding anomaly that needs to be addressed. While its enrolment has increased substantially, tripling since the 1970s, its funding has not been adjusted in a manner commensurate with that growth. The result is that St. Thomas is supported at a level well below other universities in the province. A one-time adjustment was made some years ago, but the case can certainly be made that the relative size of the university, together with the range of its program offerings and its level of funding, should be brought closer in line with one another. This should be an element in the review and revisions of the funding formula to be proposed later in this report.

Addressing the financial inequity that currently afflicts St. Thomas should, however, depend on the university’s willingness to enter fully into the new relationship with the provincial department and the proposed commission, and to clarify its religious orientation, as outlined above. This would mean it would accept adjustments to its curriculum required to facilitate

transfers from the first year or two in a community college or polytechnic, as well as the expanded credit-transfer arrangements to be developed under the aegis of the commission. These are not expected to be onerous requirements, but they would signal the university’s willingness to be a full participant in the provincial post-secondary system that is proposed herein. That should be the minimum expectation of full provincial funding.

Mount Allison University

Mount Allison has earned a reputation as one of the best undergraduate universities in the country. While it describes itself as a full-service university, its programming is limited to undergraduate work in the social sciences, humanities, science, commerce, and the fine and performing arts. Its total enrolment is currently just over 2000 and, as with the other universities in the province, has declined slightly in recent years.

While Mount Allison is owned by the United Church of Canada, it operates free from sectarian influence. One of the noticeable features of the university is the fact that a substantial majority of its students come from outside the province. In some respects this represents a positive contribution to the province, and certainly to the Sackville area. At the same time, it raises a larger question regarding the equity involved in the interprovincial movement of students. While there is a rough balance overall between students leaving the province to study elsewhere and those coming into the province, the net effects are not necessarily neutral. For one thing, New Brunswick pays other provinces, especially Nova Scotia and Quebec, in a number of instances where New Brunswick students study in other provinces, but other provinces do not pay for students from their provinces studying in New Brunswick universities. More importantly, many of the students coming from elsewhere to study at Mount Allison and other New Brunswick universities return to their home province upon graduation, while a large proportion of New Brunswick students who study elsewhere remain there after graduation. This is a serious problem for New Brunswick, and steps should be taken to level the playing field. For one thing, Mount Allison could make a special effort to play a

more active role in the provincial society and it could try to give its students more opportunities to integrate themselves into the New Brunswick society.

This raises the larger question, as it did in the case of St. Thomas, of whether the university is prepared to become a full and active member of the provincial post-secondary system, with implications with respect to curriculum, credit transfer, quality assurance, and participation in the commission and the Presidents' Council.

An Emphasis on Graduate Studies and Research

A knowledge-based society, which is the present reality for New Brunswick and the developed world, thrives on advanced study and research, as well as on the solid foundation embodied in a well-educated population. New Brunswick, if it is going to succeed in this competitive environment, must make a greater effort to judiciously expand its work in graduate education and research. At present it stands last among Canadian provinces in terms of funded research per faculty member. This has to be put into context, of course. New Brunswick does not have a

Public post-secondary education institutions in the proposed New Brunswick system

Four universities

Two comprehensive universities

Université de Moncton in Moncton
University of New Brunswick in Fredericton

- Offer undergraduate and graduate degrees
- Research mandate

Two liberal arts universities

St. Thomas University in Fredericton
Mount Allison University in Sackville

- Should concentrate on liberal arts undergraduate degrees

Three polytechnics

Saint John Polytechnic in Saint John with campus in St. Andrews

Northeastern Polytechnic in Shippagan with campuses in Bathurst and Campbellton

Northwestern Polytechnic in Edmundston

- Offer college programs, including trades
- Offer first year of some university programs
- Can offer second year of some university programs where it is possible

- Can offer undergraduate and graduate degrees in some specific areas
- Can do research

One college, four campuses

The New Brunswick Community College (NBCC)/ Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick (CCNB) would have one head office with four campuses operating outside the provincial department:

CCNB – Campus de Dieppe

NBCC – Fredericton Campus with a sub-campus in Woodstock

NBCC – Miramichi Campus

NBCC – Moncton Campus

- Offer college programs, including trades
- Woodstock, Miramichi and Moncton can offer first and second year of some university programs where it is possible
- CCNB Dieppe will be assigned a special responsibility for instruction in French in anglophone areas
- NBCC Moncton will be assigned a special responsibility for instruction in English in the francophone areas

medical school, and that alone counts for a significant portion of the discrepancy, since medical research counts for so much of the total sponsored research dollars in this country (even Prince Edward Island has the veterinary college).

Graduate study and research operate as two sides of a single coin. Graduate students assist faculty members in their research, often becoming co-investigators as they progress to their research thesis and post-graduate work. Graduate students also contribute to undergraduate teaching, as lab and tutorial assistants and eventually as classroom instructors. The relationship is even stronger, since in most disciplines graduate students receive at least a portion of their incomes from the research grants of their professors. The upshot of all of this is that the development and expansion of graduate education and research go hand in hand. Each requires the other in order to succeed.

New Brunswick must expand its productivity in graduate education and research, and it must do so especially in areas important to the future of the province. The province needs a research strategy, the objective of which should be to bring the province into the first rank in selected areas of special interest to the province. There are two critical steps in developing such a strategy.

The first step is to adopt a policy of topping up federal grants directed to the indirect costs of research. This needs some explanation. Until recently, federal contributions to research primarily through the three granting councils (the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council) covered only what are called direct research costs. Direct costs of research include such things as the salaries paid to research assistants and other employees, lab supplies, computer facilities and other equipment. Federal grants did not pay for what are called indirect costs of research. These costs include the salaries of the principal research investigators, lab space and renovations used for research, and all of the overhead costs associated with running a university or hospital

research facility (heat, light, and all the administrative services provided by the institution). These indirect costs of research, it is generally agreed, amount to at least 50 to 60 per cent of the direct costs.

When the federal government refused to pay for these indirect costs, it was in effect imposing a tax on universities that were successful in attracting research grants. The money to cover these indirect costs had to come from somewhere. The only place it could come from was out of the provincial grants intended for teaching, or out of tuition fees charged to students. In other words, universities had to take money from their teaching budgets in order to cover the indirect costs of research. And this raiding of teaching budgets increased the more successful the university faculty were in attracting research grants. It would be hard to think of a more dysfunctional practice in a situation where the federal government is in the business of supporting research and innovation.

Fortunately, the federal government changed this policy and in 2001 made a one-time contribution to the indirect costs of research in Canadian universities and hospitals. This policy was made permanent in 2003, with an annual commitment of funds in the amount of \$300 million. The federal government has also provided substantial amounts for research infrastructure through the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI). Nonetheless, federal research funding still does not cover the full indirect costs and so universities continue to suffer a financial penalty for engaging in research, at the expense of their teaching mission.

Several provinces, most notably Ontario and Quebec, supplement the federal indirect cost contribution in order to further reduce this burden on their universities, if not to eradicate it completely. Indeed, both these provinces had introduced such programs well before the federal government finally acted. This gives universities in these provinces a huge competitive advantage in attracting research funding. New Brunswick should do the same. One way of doing that is to include the provincial contribution to the indirect cost as a special item of the funding formula, calculated on the basis of the research grants obtained in the previous year.

New Brunswick should do more. The Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour, in consultation with other departments and the New Brunswick Post-Secondary Education Commission, and in consultation with the University of New Brunswick and the Université de Moncton, with input from other public institutions, should develop a research strategy, identifying areas of current and potential importance to New Brunswick and investing in their support. Other universities, colleges and the polytechnics should be welcome participants in this program, but the lead institutions would most logically be UNB and UdeM. The goal should be to substantially increase research in areas identified as important to New Brunswick's development. Identified centres of excellence would be a useful means of channelling this funding.

An important element in developing and implementing this strategic plan should be more effective use of the resources available through the federal government's research development programs like the Canada Foundation for Innovation and the Network of Centres of Excellence. The CFI, for example, was established in 1997 with a lump-sum grant from the federal government, which has since been replenished several times. Some \$3.75 billion has so far been contributed to support research infrastructure, mostly in universities and hospitals (colleges are also eligible to apply, as would be the proposed polytechnics). CFI works with 40 cent dollars. That is, it contributes 40 per cent of an approved project, requiring that the remainder be raised through grants from provincial governments, other agencies or the private sector. Recognizing that the Atlantic Provinces were at a disadvantage in terms of private sector research activity and funding, the federal government, through the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) added the Atlantic Innovation Fund with the purpose of assisting in matching CFI contributions. There are also a number of other federal programs in support of research in universities and hospitals, particularly those sponsored by the granting councils that work like the CFI and rely on matching funds from provincial or private sources.

Herein lies a golden opportunity for New Brunswick to promote research initiatives that promise to make a direct contribution to the economic and social development of the province. By strategically providing matching funding (in partnership with private sector firms and other government agencies where possible) for selected projects judged to be of high priority for the province, New Brunswick could lever substantially more research than the cost of its contribution. Quebec follows a similar strategic approach and it has yielded huge rewards for that province. The timing is also fortuitous. In its June 25, 2007 budget, the federal government announced the addition of \$510 million in new funding for the CFI, intended to finance a new competition before 2010. New Brunswick has the opportunity to prepare strategically to take full advantage of this additional federal support.

Finally, the development of research and graduate studies could form part of a performance contract between the institution and the department. We will discuss the proposal for performance contracts later in this report.

We therefore recommend that New Brunswick establish a program of research support that would top up federal contributions to the indirect costs of research and would contribute to matching federally supported research infrastructure projects, in each case according to the research strategy developed by the province.

Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship differs from other forms of post-secondary education or training in several respects. Perhaps the most significant difference is that the onus is on the student/apprentice to find an instructor who will take him or her through the lengthy period (usually about four years) of on-the-job training in which the apprentice learns the essential skills or competencies required. The apprentice is paid during the training period, at rates that gradually increase as the training progresses. Complementing the on-the-job training are blocks of in-school instruction usually provided by colleges, but occasionally by

trade unions. Examinations are administered after each block of in-school instruction and at the end of the apprenticeship. Successful completion of all steps and examinations leads to certification as a journey person. There are 72 designated occupations for which apprenticeships may be arranged. Fifty-eight of these are available in New Brunswick, while certification in the remaining 14 may be obtained in the province (but not the training). Forty-four of these occupations are standardized across the country through the interprovincial Red Seal program.

The apprenticeship system is administered under the *Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification Act* by the Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification Branch of the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour. The branch handles virtually every aspect of the apprenticeship system. It registers new apprentices, supervises the employer's contract to ensure its terms are respected, specifies the in-school training to be provided and secures the services of instructors to provide that training. It administers the examinations and grants the certification. It also provides educational upgrading for individuals who do not possess a high school graduation certificate.

New Brunswick is considered to have one of the better apprenticeship systems in Canada. Its completion rate, at 55.1 per cent, is the third highest in Canada and well above the national average of 38.8 per cent. At the same time, there are some areas where improvements could be made. One of these is the administrative arrangement by which the apprenticeship program is run as a branch of the provincial Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour. This constrains the branch from developing the kind of relationships with employers that would facilitate expansion of apprenticeship opportunities. Conversely, we heard of instances where the branch was subject to political pressure to allow improper treatment of apprentices by an employer to continue. The latter kind of situation puts the student/apprentice in jeopardy, since he or she needs employment to continue in the program.

We also heard that relations between the apprenticeship branch and the colleges, which do most of the in-school instruction, are less than ideal. There is a history to this relationship, we understand, but it is not healthy and should be addressed. The colleges and polytechnics that offer the technical (in-school) part of apprenticeship training should be more involved in developing the training programs and supervising the students and grading their results. At the same time, colleges and polytechnics must develop a better understanding of the nature of apprenticeship training and the role in-school instruction plays in the total learning of the students.

We think this is part of a larger problem that has to do with the relative isolation of the apprenticeship program among the several constituent parts of the post-secondary system in the province. In fact, apprenticeship needs to become, and be seen to be, a fully legitimate participant in the post-secondary system. Students in apprenticeships, before or after completion of their programs, should be able to obtain recognition and transfer of credits into other college, polytechnic, or university programs. There should be research and analysis into best practices in apprenticeship training, and there should be sharing of information and experiences between apprenticeship and other forms of co-op education, of which apprenticeship is really just a specialized form.

All of this would be facilitated by removing the Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification Branch from direct administration by the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour. The branch should be established as a quasi-independent operating agency, perhaps a Crown corporation, with the flexibility appropriate to a self-governing post-secondary institution. We understand both Saskatchewan and Manitoba provide illustrations of how this can be done successfully. The new agency should work closely with the colleges, universities and polytechnics, within the framework of the Presidents' Council and the New Brunswick Post-Secondary Education Commission. It should also, of course, retain and strengthen its relationship with unions and with industry.

Distance Education

Distance education is relatively underdeveloped in New Brunswick. Apart from some private universities, like Yorkville and Lansbridge which offer a few programs, and the modest efforts of some public institutions (mainly UNB and the Shippagan community college), little has been done to develop post-secondary distance education. But distance education has the potential to contribute to the objective of increasing access and reducing costs. It is clear that major investments are required and they must be concentrated in the University of New Brunswick and Université de Moncton, ideally through a joint, bilingual operation. In order to avoid unnecessary duplication, care will have to be taken to keep abreast of developments in other institutions, especially those like Alberta's Athabaska University and Quebec's Télé-université, which are devoted exclusively to distance education. Other universities, colleges and the polytechnics should be encouraged to participate through UNB and UdeM. Earmarked funding will have to be provided to encourage the development of a stronger distance education facility and programming, but the objective should be to achieve long-term financial sustainability.

Distance and continuing education are certain to become of increased importance in the post-secondary system, as individuals need to refresh their knowledge and qualifications. It also has a critical role to play for individuals who do not live near a post-secondary institution or for whom the required training is not available locally. In the knowledge society that we have entered, life-long learning has to be a core element of the post-secondary system. However, in developing these educational alternatives, care should be taken not to duplicate an educational opportunity that already exists in a cost-effective and accessible manner.

Private Universities and Colleges

There are essentially two kinds of private post-secondary institutions in the province: those that offer career-specific training, and those that offer university or college degrees or diplomas. There are some 72 career colleges registered under the *Private*

Occupational Training Act. They offer training in a variety of occupations from hairdressing and truck driving to business administration, child care and human resources management, for a fee which sometimes can be substantial.

There are very good career colleges which represent an important complement to the post-secondary system in New Brunswick by offering training in fields not offered by type or in volume in public institutions. Indeed, we were told of an implicit understanding that the community college generally avoids open competition with career colleges. Because of this, we believe they should be recognized as a component of the provincial post-secondary system and they should be represented on the New Brunswick Post-Secondary Education Commission and the Presidents' Council.

At the same time, some career colleges have been cause for concern because of the very high default rate associated with students borrowing under federal and provincial programs. Some of this is undoubtedly attributable to unscrupulous operators training students for non-existent jobs, at tuition rates that, in comparison with future earnings, almost guarantee that loan repayment will be a problem. The proposed information portal could play an important role here, letting students know the reality of the situation they are contemplating.

The New Brunswick Association of Career Colleges is currently developing its own quality assurance system. This initiative must come to fruition and lead to rigorous and independent evaluations. Being accredited will be a good sign of an institution's seriousness and ability to offer an education of quality. Attendance at a college accredited under such a system should be a condition for receiving student aid.

In addition to career colleges, there are also private universities offering degrees and diplomas under charters granted by the provincial legislature, some for profit and some not-for-profit. The latter typically have a specific religious orientation. There are currently two for-profit institutions, Lansbridge University and Yorkville University, both situated in Fredericton, and a third one planned to open shortly. There are three not-for-profit

institutions, the Atlantic Baptist University in Moncton, Bethany Bible College in Sussex, and St. Stephen's University in St. Stephen. None of these institutions currently receives public funding, but if they develop as planned, it would not be difficult to imagine future overtures in that regard.

We take the view that a university degree represents an important brand or trademark granted under the authority of the provincial government. It follows, therefore, that the province must protect the quality of such a degree. The province already recognized this need when it signed the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) agreement on a framework of standards for degrees and quality assurance reviews, as we indicated earlier. For this reason, any institution offering a degree under provincial legislation should be required to submit to the quality assurance program administered by or under the authority of the New Brunswick Post-Secondary Education Commission. As well, private colleges that would like to have their programs considered for public degree and/or diploma credit transfer could submit their programs for quality assurance review.

Private universities' representatives, whether for profit or not, if they have been accredited under the provincial quality assurance protocol, should be represented on the commission and the Presidents' Council.

Reaching Out

International Students

New Brunswick's policy with respect to the recruitment and admission of international students has progressed through a series of adjustments that reflect growing liberalization on the one hand, but an underlying indifference on the other. Beginning in 1979, under a policy administered by the MPHEC, New Brunswick established a policy by which international students were charged a differential fee which was collected by the provincial government. In 1994 the differential fee was set at \$1,700 per year. Then in 1997 the provincial government withdrew its involvement, and following an adjustment to the operating grant, it allowed universities to set their own fees for international students. An interesting experiment took place between 1998 and 2003 in which, for the first time, New Brunswick adopted a strategy respecting international student recruitment, known as the New Brunswick International Student Recruitment Project. Under this strategy post-secondary institutions agreed not to compete for foreign students, but to co-operate in their integration and support. A target was set to increase international enrolment to 1,000, and financial assistance was provided by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. When the strategy was wound up in 2003, it had witnessed an increase in the proportion of international students in provincial post-secondary institutions from 2.5 per cent in 1995-96 to 9.5 per cent in 2004-05.

Recruitment of international students offers many advantages to New Brunswick and its post-secondary institutions. International students give a cosmopolitan boost to the institution and the community in which they study and reside. They provide an important economic injection into the province. They bring new ideas and establish contacts that can last a lifetime and lead to all manner of future initiatives. They also

offer an important antidote to the declining enrolment that may otherwise face the province's post-secondary institutions.

There are several things New Brunswick and its post-secondary institutions can do to increase the number of international students. One thing we know is that money is not the most important factor in attracting international students. What matters most is how they are received and supported, including assistance with language training, integration into the community, visa and citizenship counselling, and help and advice in obtaining employment. The full scope of such a strategy takes us beyond our mandate, but one thing that is well within our mandate and which we recommend, is that our post-secondary institutions commit to using a significant amount of any differential fees they charge to go toward programs and services designed to assist the settlement and integration of their international students. We do, at the same time, urge the government to give serious consideration to the development of a more comprehensive strategy that would place international student recruitment in the full context of a provincial immigration policy with quantitative and national targets.

New Brunswick should not wait for this comprehensive approach. Concerted action is required now. We recommend that the New Brunswick Post-Secondary Education Commission, in collaboration with the Presidents' Council, develop a recruitment strategy for international students. It should be designed with a view to eventually becoming a component of the broader provincial immigration policy.

We were told...

The challenge of finding work when you are an international student

All the work is done. There is nothing left for Chiaki to do but wait until this spring's graduation from St. Thomas University. The Japanese student has undergone a four-year Bachelor of Arts, Major in Journalism, and will set out this summer in search of work in the media.

Graduation is an exciting time for Chiaki, but as an international student, it brings with it pressure Canadian students may not experience.

"We international students must find jobs that relate to what we study in the four years of university. We currently have 90 days to find those jobs; so me, for example, I have to find journalism-related jobs in 90 days after graduation."

She said obtaining a student visa – permitting an international student to study in Canada – is not overly difficult as long as one scores well on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) exam.

It's obtaining a permanent-resident visa after graduation that can be difficult.

"Of course, one can simply go back to his or her home country and do all the paper work in order to get a working visa, which will probably take a lot of time," Chiaki said. "So those people, including me, who want to start working right after graduating, have some difficulties finding a job and get the working visa all at once during the limited time."

Chiaki said she has heard of attempts on behalf of the government to extend this 90-day time period. For now, she said she's glad to have met some contacts who may help her find a job.

"I wouldn't say that Canada does not provide us with job opportunities, but those international students who don't have a lot of connections with people simply don't know who to talk to about job hunting and stuff. As for me, I am just lucky to know several people in Montreal who work in the fashion industry and in journalism."

First Nations and Post-Secondary Education

If we learned one thing about the issues facing First Nations and post-secondary education, it is that it is virtually impossible to separate post-secondary education from other social and economic issues. Especially for those living on reserves, federal and provincial rules and regulations intertwine to create an interconnected web of programs and services that defy easy separation. We do not wish to suggest adding any more layers of isolated programming to this already complex web. But at the same time, we cannot simply leave the situation as it is. It is not working effectively.

There is self-interest at play here as well. The First Nations population in New Brunswick, while relatively small, is the fastest growing segment of the provincial population. It is also relatively poorly represented in our post-secondary institutions. If New Brunswick is to increase the proportion of its population with a post-secondary education, which it must for its own well-being, then addressing the needs of First Nations citizens could be one of the most effective strategies for the province to adopt.

The question, then, is how best to do this. We suggest the best way to begin would be to adopt a policy similar to that in British Columbia, by which the provincial government has decided not to allow jurisdictional issues to stand in the way of addressing real problems. Provincial services are to be offered to First Nations populations as full citizens of the province, with federal-provincial responsibilities to be sorted out independently. We think a similar approach could yield substantial rewards.

The real challenge will be to sort out federal and provincial jurisdictional issues. This is a challenge that has long been with us, and solutions will not be found without a great deal of good will and determination. The federal government has shown itself willing in other instances to enter into province-specific arrangements of an experimental or demonstration character. Could not a New Brunswick solution be developed in partnership with the federal government? The rewards

of a successful co-operative approach that increased First Nations' graduation rates would be substantial.

Having said that, some actions should be taken as soon as possible to increase access to post-secondary education for First Nations people. First, institutions should be encouraged to make special efforts to increase the number of their First Nations students. This could be done through performance-based contracts between the interested institutions and the department. The concept of performance contracts will be discussed at greater length later in our report. Second, all efforts should be made to streamline the education path of First Nations students. This streamlining appears to be particularly necessary in the case of apprenticeship, where apparently First Nations students do not always get the timely support they need to enter an apprenticeship program and sometimes even face discrimination.

New Brunswick High Schools

While beyond the scope of this commission, the amount of written and oral input we received regarding the New Brunswick high school system clearly indicates that this is a topic of particular interest and concern to the public. It is also an area where very strong views exist. High school preparation and performance are important to the commission, since it has a direct impact on the performance of the New Brunswick post-secondary system. For this reason, we were quite pleased to learn of the government's intention to undertake a review of the New Brunswick high school system. Yet over the long term, there needs to be more ongoing interaction between the two systems. It is for this reason that we recommend that high school representatives serve on the Presidents' Council as a means of encouraging dialogue and increased understanding.

Paying for Post-Secondary Education

Tuition Fees, Debt and Student Aid

At present, New Brunswick university students pay the second highest tuition fees in Canada, second only to Nova Scotia. New Brunswick is also known as a “high debt” jurisdiction. The average university undergraduate with a government loan owes \$32,000. The national average is just \$20,500. Not only is student debt high, it is also rising, while in the rest of Canada it is stable. Student debt in the Atlantic provinces is 30 per cent higher than in Ontario. Six years ago it was only five per cent higher. With high and rising debt levels, it is not surprising that loan defaults are also high.

These factors are all interrelated. High tuition contributes to high debt levels, especially when, as in New Brunswick, students tend to have lower levels of savings and parental support and fewer and lower-paying jobs. High debt levels are a contributing factor in loan defaults, especially for graduates who encounter periods of low income after graduation. High debt levels also contribute to higher drop-out rates. By way of contrast, we also know that students who receive bursaries which reduce their debts stay in school longer and are more likely to complete their program of study. It is also the case that undergraduates with higher debt levels are less likely to embark on graduate studies.

What can be done about this rather pessimistic scenario? There are two obvious possibilities. One is to reduce tuition fees and other costs of post-secondary education; the other is to improve student aid. We will address the second of these options shortly, but first we need to consider the wisdom of proposing a reduction of tuition. Before doing that, however, it is important to note that several of our earlier

recommendations should significantly reduce the total cost of post-secondary education for a number of students. The information portal proposed earlier will provide students with an array of information about their post-secondary options, including the cost and benefits of alternative programs. This should reduce the likelihood of students making inappropriate and costly choices that could lead to unnecessary debt and withdrawal. Improving credit transfer will also reduce the cost to students, since it will reduce the likelihood of paying twice for competences already acquired in a previous post-secondary context. And making at least the first year or two of university programs available wherever a post-secondary institution exists will mean that increased numbers of students will be able to live at home and thus avoid the costs of room and board.

New Brunswick needs to increase post-secondary participation and graduation rates. Tuition levels will affect access insofar as higher tuition levels are seen as a barrier to access. The trouble is that reducing tuition, if done across the board, is very expensive. There are about 26,000 post-secondary students in New Brunswick, so a \$1,000 reduction in tuition would cost the government about \$26 million annually. And the savings would go to all students, whether they needed it or not. Moreover, reducing tuition fees in this way would place the government firmly in control of tuition fee policy.

There are obviously reasons for regulating tuition fees, either by prescribing the absolute amount or by controlling annual increases. A number of provinces have experimented with this, but the results have been less than impressive. For one thing, it turns tuition

fee policy into a political contest that easily spirals into an inability on the part of government to escape a de facto freeze. Quebec offers the most vivid illustration of this phenomenon. For another thing, regulating tuition inhibits institutional differentiation which is important in promoting access.

On balance, we do not favour government regulation, but prefer to tie any tuition increases to a policy on student aid. We are particularly attracted to the approach used for a time in Ontario, by which post-secondary institutions were free to set their own tuition fees, but a portion of any increase in fees (30 per cent in Ontario's case) had to be allocated by the institution to a form of student aid. The definition of student aid in this case was quite broad, and included bursaries and part-time or summer employment. This would have the parallel advantages of both dampening any enthusiasm that might exist for excessive tuition increases, while increasing the funds available for student aid. We think this approach has considerable merit and we recommend that it be applied in New Brunswick.

While we want to maintain institutional autonomy in the area of tuition policy, we do not favour a situation in which colleges and polytechnics might use "discounted" tuition fees to compete among themselves in the area of university programs. This would be costly to the province and, in the end, counterproductive. We propose several steps that should avoid such a situation. First, we propose that the tuition fees charged by colleges and polytechnics offering the first one or two years of university work not be lower than the lowest fee charged by a university for that type of program (arts, science). We realize that this goes somewhat against at least the spirit of our preference to avoid tuition regulation, but it is a modest transgression and should work to protect the entire system. The second step we will propose as part of a new approach to government funding is that it be designed to remove any significant financial advantage to an institution that seeks to increase enrolment simply by poaching on other provincial post-secondary institutions. This will be done through the use of an enrolment corridor system, which will be explained in more detail later.

The new polytechnics will, of course, need to develop a complete structure of tuition fees. Such a fee structure will need to take into account the level of programs offered. But in developing this structure, we expect that tuition fees for college-level programs would not differ significantly from those charged in the community colleges.

A second critical issue concerns student debt. As pointed out earlier, New Brunswick students carry very heavy debts, averaging \$32,000 for those with government loans. This is too high and needs to be addressed. To begin with, New Brunswick's student aid program is far too heavily weighted in favour of loans as opposed to grants. Only 16 per cent of financial aid comes in the form of a grant, not requiring repayment. The comparable figure for Canada is 30 per cent. This contributes directly to the high debt ratio and high default rate. What is needed is a grant or bursary program that ensures that the total student loan in any given year from government sources, and therefore the total debt incurred over a normal two- or four-year program, does not exceed a fixed ceiling. What is needed, and what we recommend, is the introduction of a loan reduction bursary that ensures that a student's loan is paid down to a given amount each year. Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, and British Columbia all have such programs.

Such a loan reduction program is entirely feasible for New Brunswick. Calculations based on 2004-05 borrowing levels (excluding graduate students) indicate that capping the maximum loan at \$8,000 per year, or \$32,000 over a four-year period, would cost about \$7.4 million annually. It would mean that the current average student debt would become the maximum. But New Brunswick can and should do better than that. Setting the maximum loan at \$7,000 would cost an additional \$6.9 million, while \$6,000 would add about \$14.7 million. Due to changes in the New Brunswick loan program, the actual cost of those ceilings will be higher, but the exact amount is difficult to calculate. Such a program would also be relatively simple to administer. Once a student's financial need was determined, an amount of up to the specified ceiling would be provided as a loan and any need above that would automatically become a grant or

bursary. We believe, as we will demonstrate shortly, that New Brunswick can and should set a loan ceiling and institute a loan reduction program based on a maximum loan of \$7,000 or less.

A third important issue concerns students from low income families or from family backgrounds where going to college or university has not been a family expectation, who are reluctant to incur substantial debt and who are also likely to discount the longer term benefits, including increases in lifetime earnings, that are associated with a post-secondary education. Fortunately, there is a program in place designed to address this issue.

We refer to the federal government's Canada Access Grants which reduce tuition for dependent students from low-income families by 50 per cent in the first year of post-secondary study. As part of a two-year trial, with funds provided through the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation, this program was expanded in New Brunswick to include up to two additional years of reduced tuition. Unfortunately, the trial period expires this year and may not be renewed. This would leave students still eligible for the Canada Access Grants but only for the first year of study. An independent report provided by the Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation estimates it would cost the province about \$1.25 million to continue the supplement, and we recommend that it do just that.

The fourth issue that needs to be addressed concerns students who run into difficulty repaying their student debt, either because of low incomes after graduation or due to some form of financial hardship. New Brunswick does have limited interest relief and debt relief programs, but we are aware of a new approach being introduced in Nova Scotia for 2007-08, and we believe it would represent a considerable improvement over the current systems in New Brunswick. It is called an Enhanced Repayment Assistance Program. Benefits are available for up to 54 months, with loan payments geared to income, and a maximum repayment rate at 20 per cent of income. There is a 15 year "sunset" provision, for those with persistently low incomes, after which the loan is forgiven. Moreover, eligibility criteria have been

We were told...

The scary debt that sends you to work

Molly is freshly graduated from St. Thomas University and is an ideal candidate for graduate studies. Leaving STU with an honours degree in anthropology, she was designated the top student of her class. She received and maintained the institution's President's Scholarship, worth full tuition each year, and was named to the Dean's List annually.

Molly was also recently accepted into the New School in New York, and offered a \$9,000 scholarship to take on a Master's degree in international development and developmental anthropology.

She, however, will not be going.

A native of Wellington, Nova Scotia, Molly still had to pay for four years of living expenses in Fredericton despite her full academic scholarship. She is therefore now entering "the real world" with a debt of \$27,000.

"Because of that debt, I can't go to grad school this year with a clear conscience," she said. "It hangs over my head."

She attributes at least some of her debt to the fact that she traveled fairly extensively throughout her four years at STU. She helped organize a volunteer excursion to Ecuador twice and was awarded a scholarship to help fund a single-term exchange to Australia. But most of her money has gone toward rent and everyday necessities in Fredericton.

To pay her current debt and render herself able to take on graduate studies, Molly plans on traveling again – this time to where there's money to be made. Her first choice: Asia, to teach English.

Looking back on her past travels and the debt they added to, Molly has no regrets.

"I would do it again in a heartbeat," she said.

And as things look right now, she may have to.

simplified and the application process streamlined. It is estimated such a program would cost in the vicinity of \$850,000. It would be a logical complement to the proposed loan reduction program, particularly because it would address repayment problems encountered by students with outstanding debts that were incurred before the proposed loan reduction program could take effect, and therefore accumulated truly burdensome debt loads. It would also, of course, apply to any student who might run into difficulty repaying a student loan in the future.

We are recommending this multi-pronged approach to student aid. Its additional cost will be in the order of \$15 million (or somewhat higher if the government chooses to set an annual debt ceiling below \$7,000). That may strike some as a very large increase, but at this point we are compelled to contrast the benefits that would result from such a comprehensive student aid program with two recently introduced schemes, the tuition tax cash back credit and the \$2,000 up-front grant for first year New Brunswick students. As regards the tax cash back credit, there is no evidence to suggest that this measure will improve participation in post-secondary education, or graduation rates. It will certainly have no immediate impact on student debt, since it does not benefit students until after graduation. While it may help some students with debt repayment, it appears that students will not realize the full benefits of the tax credit even upon graduation. The credit will only be available in the first calendar year following graduation, and since it cannot exceed New Brunswick income tax payable each year, its full value cannot be realized until students earn larger salaries. Because defaults tend to occur during the first three years following graduation and are strongly correlated with low post-graduation income, it is unlikely that the tax credit will serve as an effective proxy for a debt reduction or management program. It is also not an equitable use of funds, since students with no debt benefit as much from the tax credit as do students with very high levels of debt.

As for the \$2,000 grant, payable to all New Brunswick students entering a university degree program, while we applaud the intentions behind the scheme, it too suffers from serious impediments. Primarily, it suffers

all the disadvantages discussed earlier regarding reductions in tuition fees. It is very expensive and it is not focused on needy students. It could be much better employed in a program targeted to students who actually need the assistance. Moreover, it discriminates against college students and would pose a problem in applying the principle to polytechnics.

We recommend, therefore, that both the tuition tax cash back credit and the \$2,000 up-front grant for university students be eliminated, and the proceeds devoted to an improved student assistance program, incorporating the three elements outlined above, and with a loan ceiling set at \$7,000 or less. According to the 2007-08 New Brunswick budget, elimination of the tax credit and up-front grant will save the government over \$13 million. This will cover most of the costs of the student aid program with a \$7,000 loan ceiling. The government could even envisage a further reduction of the loan ceiling to \$6,000 at reasonable cost. Our feeling is that debt reduction strategies will probably have a more positive impact on provincial retention objectives than “reward” programs that apply to everyone.

We do need to return for a moment to the idea of tying repayment obligations to post-graduation income as incorporated into the Nova Scotia debt relief program. This idea has received worldwide attention. Known generally as income-contingent loan repayment (ICLR), it was advocated most recently by Bob Rae in his Ontario report. ICLR involves tying the repayment of a student’s entire loan to his or her post-graduation income. That is, a student would repay a certain percentage of income, a percentage that would probably increase in stages as income increased (much like our progressive income tax system), until the debt was retired or until a maximum number of years expired, usually in the order of 15 to 20 years. ICLR schemes have much to recommend them, at least in principle. They mean, in their simplest terms, that a student is not faced with a fixed debt which, under present circumstances, can reach frightening proportions, but only with the obligation to pay a proportion of future earnings in repayment, and with the assurance that if his or her income falls below a specified level, he or she pays nothing.

Despite these apparent advantages, and despite the successful introduction of income-contingent schemes in Australia and the U.K., the concept has received a very negative reception among Canadian students, mostly because it is perceived as a thinly veiled justification for increasing tuition (which, unfortunately perhaps, was exactly why it was originally proposed in a federal “green paper”), and partly because the prospect of a 15 to 20 year debt obligation for some lower income graduates is seen as regressive. What is missed in these criticisms is the realization that current student loans, which average \$32,000 in New Brunswick and can reach in excess of \$100,000, have to be repaid without regard to post-graduation income (unless the student is eligible for existing and limited debt relief programs). Perhaps it is not surprising that default rates are high.

The more serious impediment in the way of an ICLR scheme is the necessity of obtaining federal agreement, at least under current arrangements. Repayment would require use of the federally administered income tax system, and while this would enormously simplify the system, it is apparently strongly resisted by federal officials. But whether ICLR is on the agenda or not, there is a pressing need to review and co-ordinate federal-provision student aid programs. Currently a lack of harmony exists between the two with, at times, conflicting objectives. A resolution of this situation should be a high priority for the provincial government which might, with appropriate compensation, go as far as a New Brunswick-run program as is the case in Quebec.

Government Funding

If New Brunswick is going to seize the opportunity to build a post-secondary system that aspires to excellence, that seeks to achieve the goals set out in this report, it will have to devote increased resources to that effort. Not to do so, or not to do so adequately, would be to miss the opportunity to provide this province with the leadership that can take it to a new level of social and economic progress and provide its students with the education and training that will put them in a competitive position to achieve their goals. We are confident that New Brunswick will not miss this opportunity.

New Brunswick currently spends the second lowest amount of all the provinces in transfers to universities. At just over \$8,440 per full-time equivalent enrolment (FTE), only Nova Scotia spends less. The Canadian average is \$12,170. Saskatchewan is the highest spending province, at just over \$16,000. If we add colleges to the calculation for New Brunswick, the figure rises from \$8,440 to \$9,000 but unfortunately, this precludes comparisons with other provinces (university data is taken from the Canadian Association of University Business Officers. CAUBO, and is the most reliable available). Data on colleges is notoriously weak and unreliable, seldom permitting useful comparisons across jurisdictions or between sectors. Because of this, the discussion that follows is based on university data.

Even more telling, perhaps, is that if we take the total revenues that New Brunswick universities receive from all sources (tuition, grants, ancillaries, donations, etc.), they actually come last of all 10 provinces, with a total of \$22,100 per FTE student compared with \$24,400 in Nova Scotia and \$27,700 in Ontario. Most serious, these illustrations are on the low end of the scale, and most other provinces are spending a great deal more than any of these.

Of course this has to be put into context. New Brunswick does not have the resources of most other provinces. As a proportion of total provincial resources, or gross domestic product (GDP), New Brunswick’s spending on post-secondary education ranks at the top of the provincial scale. New Brunswick spends 1.5 per cent of GDP on post-secondary education, the same as Quebec but well above the provincial average of 1.1 per cent

But that is not the complete context that we must consider. New Brunswick is a beneficiary of Canada’s equalization program, the essential principle of which is that each province should be able to provide its residents with a reasonably comparable level of services with a reasonably comparable level of taxation. Insofar as a province’s own resources fall below the national standard, federal transfers make up the difference. It is not unreasonable, then, to suggest that New Brunswick’s ultimate aim should

be to reach this national level. That is probably not realistic in the short term, but it needs to be achieved in the mid term. To reach the national average would require an increase in provincial spending on post-secondary education of about \$80 million.

We propose a more modest short-term goal, but one that could still make an enormous difference to the contribution of post-secondary education to the economic, social and cultural development of the province. Along with annual economic adjustments, we recommend that New Brunswick increase its spending by \$50 million over the next three years. This would still leave New Brunswick's spending on its universities below that in Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island, but it would be slightly above Ontario. It would bring total university revenues up to par with Nova Scotia and reasonably close to the average of universities in eastern Canada. About \$20 million of the additional funding should go to institutional operating budgets, including the proposed support for the indirect costs of research and any other matching research grants the government may decide to support. The remaining \$30 million should be devoted to the special purpose fund, to be described in detail shortly.

We observed substantial excess capacity in the college system which, as a result, has a higher level of spending on a per student basis than the universities. While some of the colleges have shown themselves to be particularly dynamic in their operations, the rules regarding applications and admissions for the college system as a whole are unnecessarily bureaucratic and not student friendly. As a result, some of the college campuses operate with lower enrolments than approved places (fewer students than "seats", to use prevailing jargon). As a result, we believe there is room to increase enrolment substantially without increasing spending. This will bring colleges closer to the national average in terms of both their share of total post-secondary enrolment and the cost per student.

We are also recommending that the government commit to a three-year plan of staged increases in funding, with a similar commitment to continue multi-year funding. This is important to give the institutions a framework within which to build their strategic plans. The reciprocal expectation is that the public post-secondary institutions will provide multi-year tuition commitments. This, in turn, is important for students, so that they can plan their futures in the knowledge that their cost will not be subject to the vagaries of annual budgets. Other provinces have been moving in this direction, and it is time that New Brunswick did so as well.

Let us be very clear on one thing. We are not recommending an increase in funding with no strings attached. There is no advantage for New Brunswick if we simply move to a more expensive version of the same post-secondary institutions. The system does need additional funding to sustain current operations at acceptable levels and make some of the changes recommended earlier. But the majority of the additional money recommended should be used in order to do new things, to do things differently and to do things better. Our proposals below should make this clear and give it substance.

The Current MPHEC Funding Formula

Before addressing in greater detail the proposed addition of new money to the system, we need to deal with the question of how the current provincial grant is distributed among universities. New Brunswick participated in the funding formula developed by the MPHEC beginning in 1978-79. It still uses that formula to some extent, but no longer includes a feature designed to adjust for significant increases in enrolment in particular universities. A significant feature of the MPHEC formula, which still applies, is that the majority of funding (75 per cent) is distributed as a flat grant, calculated simply as whatever each institution received the previous year plus (or sometimes minus) whatever the government's budget allocates by way of a general increase (or decrease). The remaining 25 per cent of the so-called "unrestricted" funding is distributed on the basis of relative shares of enrolment,

weighted according to the programs in which students are registered (there are also “restricted” grants, intended to support capital and capital-like expenditures).

There are three problems with this formula. First, because it was designed to place a greater value on stability, at the expense of growth, it penalizes a university with growing enrolments. This has worked to the particular disadvantage of St. Thomas University, although partial compensation for that was made in a one-time adjustment, and the Saint John campus of UNB. The formula is no longer appropriate to a dynamic post-secondary system that wishes to increase participation and requires a new level of responsiveness.

Second, the enrolment weightings are so old and simplistic that one wonders if they accurately reflect relative program costs, which was their original purpose. Fortunately, this issue of enrolment weights has generated a great deal of national and international interest and there is now or soon will be available a great deal of comparative data upon which a judgement of the appropriateness of the weights can be made. This issue will become increasingly important as the formula moves from a fixed to a more variable basis.

The final and most serious deficiency in the MPHEC approach, which is based on the sole use of a formula, is that it serves no public policy purpose, except to transfer money from the government to the universities.

A New Approach to Funding

We propose a new approach, with one part based on a formula and another part reserved for special purposes. This new approach will be more equitable for the institutions and will also promote and reward specific public policy objectives determined by the province. The first part of the new funding approach would be a revised version of the MPHEC formula, with a reconfiguration of existing funds and the injection of an additional \$20 million. The new formula would also cover grants to colleges and polytechnics. The second part, the special purpose fund, will require additional funding from the New Brunswick government. As indicated above, we propose that an amount of \$30 million be allocated for this special purpose fund. The exact details of this new approach, which should apply to colleges and polytechnics as well as universities, will need to be worked out by the department, in conjunction with the commission.

Funding of the proposed New Brunswick system

Government transfers

- **Present – ±\$250M**
- **Proposed increase (3-year phase-in) – \$50M**

Funding distribution

- **Small base grant**
- **Larger variable enrolment grant**
 - Weightings for different programs
 - Corridor of enrolment
- **Special purpose fund**
 - Performance-based contracts
 - Specific activities or projects

We look first at the new formula. It should incorporate two elements: a relatively small base grant and a larger variable grant based on weighted enrolment. The purpose of the base grant would be to recognize that all institutions require administrative and support services. Part of this base grant should be fixed and another part adjusted to the size, complexity and mission of the institution. The allocation of the base grant among the institutions should be determined by the department, with advice from the commission. It should take account of, but not be wholly driven by, total enrolment, program diversity, and any special responsibility assigned to the institution by government policy, such as the continuing commitment to instruction in French in several of the institutions.

The second component should be an enrolment grant, based on a three-year rolling average of weighted enrolments. The original MPHEC weightings may serve as the starting point in the development of a new enrolment formula, but, as previously stated, these should be reviewed and adjusted on the basis of a comparative analysis of program costs in comparable institutions, including colleges and polytechnics. Efficiency should certainly be a significant consideration here, and institutions should not be rewarded just because they choose to offer relatively costly ways of doing things, nor should low cost alternatives be accepted as a way of increasing revenue at the expense of program quality. To avoid this, as well as destructive competition, an enrolment corridor should be agreed upon as part of the strategic planning and system funding processes. Increases in student population above the corridor would be discounted in the formula, funded at a lower rate, or not at all. Similarly, decreases in enrolment outside the corridor would lead to decreased funding, while decreases within the corridor range would not change funding levels. Corridors typically run in the order of ± 3 per cent of approved total weighted enrolment. The detailed design of the enrolment grant should again be undertaken by the commission, yielding advice to the department.

The new formula should be phased in over a period of three years. If necessary, some help from the special purpose fund could be given to ease the transition.

The special purpose fund would support two policy objectives. The first of these two policy objectives should involve performance-based contracts (PBCs) agreed to and signed between institutions and the commission. They should account for about a third to half of the special purpose fund. The nature and purpose of these performance contracts need to be explained.

As with any contract, a PBC is an agreement between two parties, in which each party commits itself to delivering specific items described in the contract, subject to the other party fulfilling its commitments. When signing a PBC, the commission would agree to pay a pre-determined amount of money, in return for the improvement of the institution's performance in specified areas of its operations.

It is important to note that PBCs are not competitive grants. They are not designed to support specific projects, but to improve performance in a specified area. Such a target might be, for example, to improve access to post-secondary education from underrepresented population groups. Indicators would then be specified that measure the degree of underrepresentation and quantified targets set for its improvement. The institution that has signed the PBC must be given considerable latitude in selecting the strategies that it will choose to achieve the agreed results. These strategies can be quite complex. PBCs represent a way to ensure that institutions respond to the commission's priorities; they are not intended to involve the commission in managing the institution.

However, as with any contract, the paying party (the commission) wants to assure itself that the strategies selected by the institution are likely to be successful. For this reason a PBC should specify the goals and targets to be achieved, the strategies to be pursued, and a series of indicators that will permit monitoring the progress achieved.

If progress is not satisfactory, the commission can ask for an explanation or suspend or cancel the contract. The commission would not, to repeat, supervise or intervene in the implementation of the contract. It is important, however, that the goals be precise and clear and that indicators be carefully selected and trusted by both parties.

It should perhaps be pointed out that institutions would be under no obligation to enter into one of these contracts. They could simply choose to forego that portion of available funding. But if they choose to sign a performance contract, they would accept the obligation to live up to its terms.

The other component of the special purpose fund would be devoted to specific activities or projects important to the province, usually undertaken by specified institutions. The kinds of activities supported by this component of the special purpose fund might include an expansion of graduate education, distance education initiatives, or the establishment of provincial centres of excellence. These centres of excellence would require careful scrutiny and due diligence, but their funding could be in the nature of a competitive grant. The logic behind these centres would be to provide New Brunswick with a strategic advantage through the realization of a specific project or program. Institutions would submit detailed proposals for the establishment or recognition of a centre of excellence, and funding would be provided after thorough evaluation of its quality and feasibility, by experienced assessors. Colleges, polytechnics, and universities would all be eligible to apply for such funding.

With this approach, we believe New Brunswick would acquire the tools necessary to begin to steer its post-secondary education system in directions that serve identified needs of the province. We believe capital grants, including those associated with the CFI, as discussed previously, should continue to be determined by the provincial government, with advice and input from the commission and the institutions.

The Challenge of Change

We have now outlined the direction in which we believe New Brunswick must move, and the reinvestments it must make if it is to seize the opportunity of reshaping its post-secondary system to become the powerful instrument of social and economic growth and development of which it is capable.

At the heart of our recommendations is the vision of New Brunswick's post-secondary system as a true system, one in which the several parts are co-ordinated and which reinforce each other in the pursuit of goals of benefit to the whole province, its distinct regional and linguistic communities. It is a system in which carefully chosen goals are pursued with vigour and imagination, with the result that New Brunswick is able to compete with the best in the world in areas of particular importance and relevance to the province.

The post-secondary system we envisage is fixed on what is efficient and effective for students. The focus is on students, not institutions. Working within a student-oriented system will require important changes on the part of institutions. Some of these changes will not be made without difficulty, but they are necessary.

It is a system that puts a premium on excellence and promotes programs of high quality in all that it does, including both teaching and research. It is guided by a firm hand, in the department and commission, but it respects the necessity of giving institutions and individuals the freedom necessary to choose the best means to accomplish their goals.

Some reinvestment is required both to reach the goals we have set and to help institutions make the necessary changes. But it is not just more money. More of the same is not good enough. It has to be smart

money, designed to produce real improvements involving transformational changes. To continue on the current path is to accept a future of defeat.

There is no escaping the world we now live in. It is a world of increasing global competition dominated by giant economic players, both corporate and political. For New Brunswick to prosper in this environment, economically and socially, it has to make strategic choices, it has to choose where it can develop a strategic advantage, it has to invest in ways that make a difference, and it has to be prepared to make institutional changes.

New Brunswick will be in good company if it accepts the challenge of investing in post-secondary education as a key element in a strategy of economic and social growth. Think of Ireland and the model it has become of how a small jurisdiction can become a "Celtic tiger". Newfoundland and Labrador are attempting to emulate at least a part of that strategy. Ontario, Alberta, and several American states have recently reinvested in post-secondary education, some on a very large scale. New Brunswick cannot allow itself to be left behind. That is the route to mediocrity.

New Brunswick cannot compete academically in all areas. It does not have the resources for that. It has to target its investments strategically, ensuring a good basic education for all but with significant international strengths in selected areas.

The post-secondary structure we have proposed will go a long way to providing New Brunswick with an integrated system that can capitalize on strengths in areas of comparative advantage, in which the several parts work together to strengthen the whole system. New Brunswick will be the first province in Canada,

and perhaps the first jurisdiction in North America, to actually establish such an integrated, public-private partnership. That, plus the reinvestment that must accompany it, will be New Brunswick's strategic advantage.

We fully appreciate that the transformational changes we have proposed will not be accomplished without difficulty. There will no doubt be opposition to change, by those who prefer the status quo. They advance academic, philosophical and personal reasons to keep things the way they are. We were asked to give the government the best advice we could, from a student perspective. We have tried to do that. We do not believe the status quo serves students' interests adequately. Others may oppose our recommendations because they would like to see changes of a different nature. Some would like to see greater centralization, with fewer institutions, including campus closures. We do not believe this is in the interests of New Brunswick students or its communities.

Change may be difficult, but it is possible. And New Brunswick can do it. It can lead the country in new ways of thinking and new ways of working together. Given the high level of engagement we saw during our consultations, we firmly believe that New Brunswickers need and want to move in this direction.

Summary of Recommendations

A brief overview of **SOME** of the recommendations included in this report is provided below. Readers are encouraged to go to the section of the text identified to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the recommendation and the rationale behind it. As well, one should read the entire report for a comprehensive understanding of all the recommendations, some of which are not included in this summary. Because they cannot be easily “abstracted”, if the summary seems in any way to be inconsistent with the text of the report, the text should be considered the accurate version.

Setting the Context for Action: The Necessary First Steps

1. Post-secondary education in New Brunswick should be transformed from an institutional focus to a true post-secondary system.
2. The New Brunswick government should clarify its own mission in post-secondary education and move to a more policy-focused role.
3. A new arms-length co-ordinating agency should be established called the New Brunswick Post-Secondary Education Commission. It should be responsible for:
 - quality assurance
 - establishment of an application and information portal
 - policy advice to the department
 - review of institutional strategic plans
 - credit transfer
 - system-wide support and initiatives
 - regional and national co-ordination
 - duality and linguistic obligations
4. A Presidents’ Council should be established comprising the heads of most public post-secondary institutions and representatives of private institutions and high schools.
5. A new kind of institution should be created, called a polytechnic. It should combine university and college expertise, offering programs that range from diploma through graduate education in selected areas of particular interest and importance to the local communities or to New Brunswick.
6. Three polytechnics should be established in New Brunswick, the Saint John Polytechnic, the Northeastern New Brunswick Polytechnic and the Northwestern New Brunswick Polytechnic.
7. The Saint John Polytechnic should be established by merging UNBSJ with the Saint John and St. Andrews campuses of the NBCC.
8. The Northeastern New Brunswick Polytechnic should initially be established by combining the CCNB campuses in the Acadian Peninsula, Bathurst and Campbellton and the university campus of UdeM in Shippagan.
9. The Northwestern New Brunswick polytechnic should be established by combining the CCNB and UdeM campuses in Edmundston.

Organizing the System

10. The College of Craft and Design, the Maritime College of Forest Technology and the NBCC campus in Woodstock should be consolidated and, along with the other colleges (Dieppe, Moncton, Miramichi) separated from government, formed into an integral unit with one central administration.
11. The four remaining community colleges (Dieppe, Fredericton, Moncton and Miramichi) should operate as an integral unit with one central administration.
12. Dieppe should be assigned special responsibility for instruction in French in anglophone regions, and Moncton should be assigned special responsibility for instruction in English in francophone regions.
13. To improve access, Woodstock, Miramichi and Moncton should offer the first year of a general university program and, where possible and justified, the second year as well.
14. All public institutions will be required to submit strategic plans for review by the New Brunswick Post-Secondary Education Commission.
15. The *University of New Brunswick Act* and the composition of its board will need to be modified to take account of the establishment of the Saint John Polytechnic. Its administrative structure and processes should be streamlined.
16. The *Université de Moncton Act* and the composition of its board will need to be modified to take account of the establishment of the Northeastern New Brunswick Polytechnic and the Northwestern New Brunswick Polytechnic. In revising the act, special attention should be paid to a clarification of the university's mission and streamlining its administrative structure and processes.
17. New Brunswick must expand its capacity for graduate study and research, especially in areas of particular importance to the province. These efforts should be focused on UNB and UdeM.
18. New Brunswick should develop a research strategy which identifies and supports areas of current and potential importance to the province.
19. The province should adopt a policy of "matching" research grants in areas of high priority for the province and provide indirect support.
20. Apprenticeship training should be removed from day-to-day administration by the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour.
21. Apprenticeship programs should be considered a fully functioning component of the New Brunswick post-secondary education system, including credit transfer.
22. Distance education needs to be expanded, with efforts concentrated at UNB and UdeM.
23. A rigorous and independent accreditation regime needs to be developed by the Association of Career Colleges and become a condition for receiving student aid.
24. Any private institution offering degree programs under provincial legislation should be required to submit to the quality assurance process administered by, or under the authority of the New Brunswick Post-Secondary Education Commission.
25. The provincial government should consider developing a more comprehensive international student recruitment strategy within the context of a provincial immigration policy.
26. All public post-secondary institutions should be encouraged and supported through performance contracts to make special efforts to increase the number of under-represented groups (First Nations students, students with disabilities, and programs with significant gender imbalances, etc.).

Reaching Out

25. The provincial government should consider developing a more comprehensive international student recruitment strategy within the context of a provincial immigration policy.
26. All public post-secondary institutions should be encouraged and supported through performance contracts to make special efforts to increase the number of under-represented groups (First Nations students, students with disabilities, and programs with significant gender imbalances, etc.).

Paying for Post-Secondary Education

27. Post-Secondary institutions should be free to set their own tuition fees, but a portion of any increase should be allocated in the form of student aid.
28. Tuition fees for university transfer programs charged by colleges or polytechnics should not be lower than the lowest fee charged by a university.
29. New Brunswick should adopt a three-pronged student aid program consisting of (a) a loan reduction component by which no student would acquire an annual student debt in excess of \$7,000; (b) a supplement to the Canada Access Grant which would reduce tuition for low income students by providing relief beyond the first year of study; and (c) a program which assists students who encounter difficulty managing their student debt obligations.
30. The tuition tax back credit and the \$2,000 grant for first year university students should be transitioned, with the funds re-allocated to the three-pronged student aid program described above.
31. New Brunswick should seek to improve co-ordination of the provincial and federal student aid programs.
32. New Brunswick should increase spending on post-secondary education by \$50 million over the next three years. \$20 million of this should go to increase institutional operating budgets and \$30 million should be allocated for a special purpose fund.
33. The MPHEC formula for allocating grants to universities should be modernized and replaced by a new approach that applies to universities, colleges and polytechnics.
34. A government commitment to an ongoing three-year (multi-year) funding plan should be reciprocated by the public institutions providing multi-year tuition commitments.

Appendix A

Proposed Membership of the New Brunswick Post-Secondary Education Commission:

Commission President
Government appointees (11, staggered terms after
initial appointment)
University of New Brunswick President
Université de Moncton President
Representative of other public university presidents (1,
by rotation)
Representative of francophone polytechnics (1, by
rotation)
President of Saint John Polytechnic
Director of the Community College System
CEO of the Apprenticeship Program
Representative of private career colleges (1, by
election)
Representative of private universities (1, by election)

Appendix B

Proposed Board Membership of the Presidents' Council:

University of New Brunswick President

Université de Moncton President

Mount Allison University President

St. Thomas University President

Polytechnic Presidents (3)

College Directors
(System director plus one other, by rotation)

CEO of the Apprenticeship Program (1)

Private for-profit university president (1, by rotation)

Private not-for-profit university president (1, by rotation)

Private career college presidents (2, by appointment)

High School Principals (2, by appointment)

President of the NB Commission
on Post-Secondary Education

Appendix C

Proposed Board Membership of Polytechnics

Polytechnic President

Faculty members (2)

Students (2)

Staff member (1)

Administrator (1)

Governors appointed by the Government (14)

Appendix D

Those who made presentations to the Commission on Post-Secondary Education in New Brunswick.

We want to express our sincere gratitude to all those who shared their thoughts and dreams with us. Because of you, we were able to get a better understanding of the specific needs and opportunities of New Brunswick. Thanks to all those who took some of their valuable time to prepare briefs, meet with us, attend public meetings and share their comments. Your contribution is very much appreciated.

Briefs

The following briefs are available on the commission's website at www.gnb.ca/cpse-ceps.

Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat

Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification Board

Association des anciens, anciennes, ami-e-s de l'Université de Moncton, campus de Shippagan (AAUMCS)

Association des Anciens et Anciennes de Saint-Louis Maillet Inc.

Association des bibliothécaires, des professeures et des professeurs de l'Université de Moncton (ABPPUM)

Association des bibliothécaires, professeures et professeurs de l'Université de Moncton, campus d'Edmundston (ABPPUMCE)

Association des professeures et professeurs de l'Université de Moncton, campus de Shippagan (APPUMCS)

Association étudiante du Collège communautaire de Bathurst

Association francophone des conseillères et des conseillers en orientation du Nouveau-Brunswick (AFCONB)

Association francophone des parents du Nouveau-Brunswick

Association générale des étudiantes et étudiants de l'Université de Moncton, campus d'Edmundston

Association of University of New Brunswick Teachers

Associations étudiantes du Collège communautaire francophone du Nouveau-Brunswick

Atlantic Baptist University

Bourque, Jimmy, Benimmas, Aicha and Aucoin, Angèle

Bourque, Jules P.

Bradley, Michael T.

Business New Brunswick

Canadian Association of University Teachers

Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)

Canadian Scholarship Trust Foundation

Centre de formation médicale du Nouveau-Brunswick

Clark, Roberta

Coastal Zones Research Institute Inc.

Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick - Bathurst

Conférence des maires du Nord-Ouest et des Chambres de commerce de la région du Madawaska

Construction Association of New Brunswick

Darrah, Patrick D. and Somerville, Malcolm M.

District scolaire 3

Entreprise Chaleur

Entreprise Greater Moncton

Faculté des arts et des sciences sociales de l'Université de Moncton

Faculté des Sciences de l'Éducation de l'Université de Moncton

Faculty Association of the University of St. Thomas (FAUST)

Faculty of Arts of the University of New Brunswick (Fredericton)

Faculty of Computer Science of the University of New Brunswick (Fredericton)

Faculty of Engineering of the University of New Brunswick (Fredericton)

Fédération des étudiantes et étudiants du Centre universitaire de Moncton (FÉÉCUM)

Fédération des jeunes francophones du Nouveau-Brunswick

Federation of New Brunswick Faculty Associations

Fondation du Collège de Bathurst Inc.

Fondation Saint-Louis-Maillet

Forum des maires de la Péninsule acadienne

Germain, Sandra

Groupe d'éducateurs professionnels du Nouveau-Brunswick

Henrie, Marc

Johnston, Frank P.

Lansbridge University

Learning Disabilities Association of New Brunswick

Leathley, Robert

Lindsay, Debra

L'Italien, Jean Paul

Maritime College of Forest Technology

Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission

Martin, Philippe M.

Morency, Jean

Mount Allison Faculty Association

Mount Allison Students' Administrative Council

Mount Allison University

New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women

New Brunswick Advisory Council on Youth

New Brunswick Association for Community Living

New Brunswick Association of Career Colleges

New Brunswick Association of Social Workers

New Brunswick Community College/Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick

NBCC/CCNB (central)

NBCC (anglophone)

CCNB (francophone)

New Brunswick Community College – Council of Student Executives

New Brunswick Community College – Miramichi

New Brunswick Community College – Saint John

New Brunswick Community College – St. Andrews

New Brunswick Community College – Woodstock

New Brunswick Digital Library

New Brunswick Forest Products Association

New Brunswick/Prince Edward Island Educational Computer Network

New Brunswick Student Alliance

New Brunswick Union of Public and Private Employees (NBU)

New Brunswick Universities Presidents' Group

Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons

Richard, Arsène

Robertson, Cheryl M.G.

Ryan, Marie-Noëlle

Saint John True Growth Post-Secondary Education Task Force

Snow, Claude

Société des Acadiens et Acadiennes du Nouveau-Brunswick

Steering Committee on Post-Secondary Research (SCPSR)

St. Stephen's University

St. Thomas University

St. Thomas University Students' Union

Table de concertation régionale sur l'éducation postsecondaire au nord-ouest du Nouveau-Brunswick

Team Fredericton

Tracy, Dr. Nicholas

UNBSJ Political Science Society and James A. Tibbetts

Université de Moncton

University of New Brunswick

University of New Brunswick College of Extended Learning

University of New Brunswick Graduate Student Association

University of New Brunswick Student Union

University of New Brunswick – Saint John

University Programs on the Miramichi Inc. and The Miramichi Community

Vibrant Communities Saint John

Village of Rexton
Ville d'Edmundston
Ville de Shippagan
Vo-Van, Truong
Yorkville University

Presentations

The following groups and individuals registered with the commission to make presentations during the public consultation meetings. Summaries are available on the commission's website at www.gnb.ca/cpse-ceps.

Albert, Ghoslain
Association des anciennes et anciens de Saint-Louis-Maillet
Association des anciens et amis de l'Université de Moncton, campus de Shippagan
Association des étudiants du Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick – Edmundston
Association des étudiants et étudiants de l'Université de Moncton, campus d'Edmundston
Association des professeures et professeurs de l'Université de Moncton, campus de Shippagan
Association francophone des conseillères et conseillers en orientation au Nouveau-Brunswick
Bourque, Jules
Bradley, Michael T.
Canadian Association of University Teachers
City of Bathurst
Construction Association of New Brunswick
Darrah, Patrick D. and Somerville, Malcolm M.
District scolaire 3
Entreprise Saint John
Entreprise Chaleur
Entreprise Restigouche
Fondation du collège de Bathurst Inc.
Fondation Saint-Louis Maillet
Forum des maires de la péninsule acadienne

Forum des maires du nord-ouest
Germain, Sandra
Johnston, Frank
Lindsay, Debra
Martin, Phillippe
Michaud, Christian
Morency, Jean
Municipality of Edmundston
New Brunswick Association for Community Living
New Brunswick Association of Social Workers
Robertson, Cheryl
Snow, Claude
Table de concertation régionale sur l'éducation postsecondaire au nord-ouest du Nouveau-Brunswick
Team Fredericton
University Programmes of the Miramichi Inc.
Village of Rexton
Ville de Shippagan

Many other groups and individuals addressed the Commission during the public consultation meetings. Some came with a prepared statement, others commented and finally some individuals simply chose to ask questions.

The commission also met with the following groups and individuals:

Apprenticeship and Certification Branch, Department of Post-secondary Education, Training and Labour
Association des étudiantes et étudiants de l'Université de Moncton, Campus d'Edmundston
Association des étudiants du Collège Communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick - Bathurst
Association des professeures et professeurs de l'Université de Moncton
Association des professeures et professeurs de l'Université de Moncton, campus de Shippagan
Association of University of New Brunswick Teachers
Associations étudiantes du Collège communautaire francophone du Nouveau-Brunswick

Atlantic Baptist University
 Bethany Bible College
 Coastal Zones Research Institute inc.
 Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick
 – Bathurst
 Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick
 – Dieppe
 Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick
 – Edmundston
 Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick
 – Péninsule Acadienne
 Entreprise Greater Moncton
 Faculty Association of St. Thomas University (FAUST)
 Fédération des étudiantes et étudiants du Centre
 universitaire de Moncton (FÉÉCUM)
 Fédération des jeunes francophones du Nouveau-
 Brunswick
 Federation of New Brunswick Faculty Associations
 Finn, Jean-Guy
 Huntsman Marine Science Centre
 Lansbridge University
 Maritime College of Forest Technology
 Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission
 Mount Allison University
 Mount Allison University Faculty Association
 Mount Allison University Student Association
 New Brunswick Advisory Council on Youth
 New Brunswick College of Craft and Design
 New Brunswick Community College/Collège
 Communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick
 NBCC/CCNB (central)
 NBCC (anglophone)
 CCNB (francophone)
 New Brunswick Community College – Miramichi
 New Brunswick Community College – Moncton
 New Brunswick Community College – Saint John
 New Brunswick Community College – St. Andrews
 New Brunswick Community College – Woodstock
 New Brunswick Community College Student
 Associations
 New Brunswick Student Alliance
 St. Thomas University
 St. Thomas University Student Union
 Université de Moncton
 Université de Moncton, campus de Shippagan
 Université de Moncton, campus d’Edmundston
 University of New Brunswick
 University of New Brunswick Faculty of Arts
 University of New Brunswick Faculty of Computer
 Science
 University of New Brunswick Graduate Student Society
 University of New Brunswick Libraries
 University of New Brunswick Student Association
 University of New Brunswick – Saint John
 Yorkville University