

Maritime Provinces Higher Education
Commission

Submission to the Commission
on Post-Secondary Education in
New Brunswick

April 2007

MPHEC MISSION

As an Agency of the Council of Maritime Premiers that provides advice to Ministers responsible for Post-Secondary Education in the Maritimes, the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission:

**Assists institutions and governments in enhancing
a post-secondary learning environment
that reflects the following values:**

Quality: continuous improvement in the quality of programmes, institutional practices, and teaching

Accessibility: programme, delivery, and support services that optimize PSE availability

Mobility: portability of learning and credits throughout the Post-Secondary Education system in the Maritimes

Relevance: effective and responsive interaction among learners, the work force, and the community

Accountability: evidence of value, sustainability, and cost-effectiveness of public and learner investment

Scholarship and Research: commitment to the pursuit of knowledge

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Introduction

The Commission on Post-Secondary Education in New Brunswick (CPSENB), in its Discussion Paper, states “At the moment, the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) has a mandate to monitor and report on the quality assurance mechanisms in place in each university under its purview (which includes all of the universities plus the Maritime College of Forest Technology). It is important and timely that we examine the effectiveness of this mandate. In doing so, we need to ask whether the community colleges should be included, and whether a specifically New Brunswick agency, one that did include the colleges, would be more effective.”

The purpose of this submission is to briefly present the role of the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) to assist the CPSENB in its consideration of the above. This submission highlights some of the recent achievements of the MPHEC which support the key concepts of accessibility, relevance and responsiveness, quality and accountability, efficiency, collaboration and differentiation and finance, outlined in the Discussion Paper. It also documents how quality assurance is one of several key functions of the MPHEC. Furthermore, this document will also highlight how the Ministers designed the MPHEC’s mandate with sufficient flexibility to adapt to new and changing circumstances.

The Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC)

The Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission was established in 1974 as an agency of the Council of Maritime Premiers. In June 1997, the Ministers of Education in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island agreed, after extensive review, to renew and refocus the Commission’s mandate through an Agreement Respecting the Renewal of Arrangements for Regional Cooperation Concerning Post-Secondary Education. This renewed mandate was ratified by the Council of Maritime Premiers. In January 2005, the new Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission Act was proclaimed, giving full force to the MPHEC’s renewed mandate.

Under the 2005 legislation, the MPHEC’s primary orientation has been re-directed toward “improving and maintaining the best possible service to students as life-long learners”, primarily within the university sector. The MPHEC has agreed that, because it does not have direct contact with learners, the best way it could achieve its primary orientation was by providing assistance to institutions and governments in enhancing the post-secondary learning environment. This is to be achieved through the following (legislated) duties: quality assurance, data and information, cooperative action and regional programs, as well as other duties as the Ministers may assign.

The MPHEC is also given the authority to provide specific services to one or more provinces or institutions, within its scope of activity and with regards to funding policy, as agreed to by the Ministers responsible for post-secondary education, to which the MPHEC is accountable. The MPHEC's resource base (total of 12 FTE) was also confirmed in 2005.

The MPHEC is made up of a collective of 20 members and the Chief Executive Officer (as an ex-officio non-voting member) appointed by the Ministers responsible for post-secondary education in the Maritime provinces, as well as the committee's established by the MPHEC, and staff. The 2005 Act defines the membership of the MPHEC. Representation covers the three Maritime provinces and all major stakeholders from each of these provinces, including governments, post-secondary institutions and the public-at-large. Each of these members brings a unique perspective to the MPHEC. At least two members are students (within the public-at-large category).

The MPHEC's membership is one of its greatest assets, especially in dealing with stakeholder groups' expectations. The balance of membership supports a decision-making process that takes into account a regional and collective perspective. The MPHEC's operational framework also depends on this collaborative input. For example, three of the MPHEC's key committees are joint committees with the Association of Atlantic Universities (AAU), while one (NB/PEI Educational Computer Network) depends nearly entirely on the institutions for its membership (one seat being assigned to MPHEC staff). Another example of collaboration is found in the MPHEC's program review process where all program proposals submitted for review are circulated for comments to all institutions that are within the scope of the MPHEC's mandate. Appendix 1 lists all the individuals currently formally associated with the organization through membership on the MPHEC or its Committees. The MPHEC's composition and operational framework create a unique forum for postsecondary education in the region.

The scope of the MPHEC is defined by the institutions identified by governments through regulation. There are currently eighteen post-secondary institutions within the scope of the MPHEC, sixteen of which are publicly-funded universities with total enrolment, in 2005-2006 (final audited data), of 72,332 students (24,733 in New Brunswick, 43,721 in Nova Scotia and 3,878 in Prince Edward Island). Of these sixteen, two (Cape Breton University and Nova Scotia Agricultural College) also offer college-level or technology based certificate and diploma programs in addition to degree programs. The remaining two institutions (Holland College in Prince Edward Island and the Maritime College of Forest Technology in New Brunswick) offer non-university programs. The institutions within the MPHEC's scope are therefore quite diverse, reflecting both the adaptability of the organization and the varying needs of the Provinces.

The Mandate of the MPHEC

The MPHEC is charged with providing decision-makers both with accountability measures pertaining to the institutions on the MPHEC's schedule and with value-added information to assist in policy decisions related to the post-secondary sector. Its activities are mandated and vetted by the Ministers responsible for post-secondary education. Its mandate is flexible and adaptable, which allows for modifications to the MPHEC's scope in terms of activities and institutions to better meet the needs of the Provinces.

Quality Assurance

Quality assurance is one of the five legislated duties of the MPHEC. This duty at present is carried out primarily through two major instruments:

1. the review of academic programs prior to implementation;
2. the monitoring of institutional quality assurance policies and procedures.

The full text of our Policy can be found under Publications on our website (www.mphec.ca). The commission approach is based on an iterative process which is meant to be formative as well as summative. The Commission therefore provides guidance and support to the institutions in this area.

The objective of the program review process is to ascertain the suitability of the programme proposal given its objectives, structure, institutional appropriateness, resources, stated student outcomes and their relevance in the context of the MPHEC's policy framework through an iterative process. Every program proposal submitted to the MPHEC is forwarded to every university within its scope for information and comment, to which the submitting institution responds. The proposals are also distributed to the government departments responsible for university education for comment and the identification of policy issues. The distribution process is the first step in our assessment process. A majority of program proposals undergo a cursory review; that is, they are reviewed by staff and granted approval if they meet agreed-upon criteria and no issue has been identified. If a proposal does not meet the criteria for approval and/or major issues have been identified, the proposal is forwarded to the AAU-MPHEC Academic Advisory Committee and the MPHEC, for an in-depth assessment. On average, 70 program proposals are considered annually from the publicly-funded universities in the region. The program approval process also allows the MPHEC to seamlessly identify regional programs (see this section, below), and to weigh enrolments according to the different criteria used by Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in their respective funding formula.

Over the last two years, the MPHEC also advised the Minister in New Brunswick, at his request, with regards to three program proposals submitted under the New Brunswick Degree Granting Act. The MPHEC is also undertaking an institutional assessment of one such applicant, while the Department has just recently requested that an institutional assessment of a second applicant be undertaken shortly. The above demonstrates the adaptability of the MPHEC's mandate to new circumstances.

The specific objective of the monitoring of, and reporting on, institutional quality assurance policies and programs is to ascertain that the procedures used by institutions to assess the quality of existing programmes, and other functions as appropriate, are performing adequately as quality control and quality improvement mechanisms. The process is different than in other jurisdictions as it aims to account for the legitimate differentiation that exists among the institutions in the region. Furthermore, as the process evolves, the Committee is building upon the emergence of best practices in the field and is able to impress these on the institutions, particularly during the site visit and follow-up meetings. Appendix 2 provides an overview of the status of the implementation of the monitoring function.

When combined, both instruments ensure a continuum of quality: the program assessment process provides assurances to government, students, employers and the public-at-large that programs designed by publicly funded institutions in the Maritimes meet established standards of quality prior to implementation; and the monitoring process provides assurances that Maritime institutions have effective quality assurance policies and procedures in place to ensure that programs, once implemented, are reviewed internally and externally to provide continuous quality improvements. It should be noted that as a result of the direction provided by the Ministers, the MPHEC's work in quality assurance only applies to publicly funded universities within its scope (Holland College and the Maritime College of Forest Technology are excluded).

The Office of the Auditor General of New Brunswick has highlighted the value of MPHEC's Policy on Quality Assurance, stating:

"We have noted with great interest ... the policy and process the MPHEC has set up around quality assurance. We reviewed both the February 1999 and May 2005 Policies on quality assurance. We also reviewed the MPHEC's assessment of quality assurance policy and procedures for both Dalhousie University and St. Thomas University. We find this assessment initiative of great interest from an effectiveness point of view. ... In much of our work we find that procedures for reporting on effectiveness are inadequate. But this assessment, and the public reporting of the results of the assessments, has promise in terms of addressing questions of effectiveness. ... Given our mission to promote accountability, we are pleased to see this initiative."

In the briefs submitted to the CPSENB that were posted on its website at the time of writing, one (Mount Allison University) highlights the importance it attaches to such processes, another one (St. Thomas

University) deplores the absence of external quality assurance mechanisms for the colleges, while the NBCC states that it would see a benefit in such a process. A third institution (University of New Brunswick) used a quote from the MPHEC's assessment of its approach to Quality Assurance to convey its quality to the CPSENB. While at the outset, several institutions expressed significant reservations towards the notion of an arm's length process in the area of quality assurance, over time, the MPHEC's approach and guidelines have won broad acceptance in most, if not all institutions. This acceptance is reaching beyond the university environment as it is our understanding that the private career colleges in the province are developing their own quality assurance program, modeled to some extent on the MPHEC's. The MPHEC has provided assistance in this process.

Through its work in the area of quality assurance, the MPHEC also devises policies aimed at improving the educational process. For example, after extensive consultation with the institutions in the region, the MPHEC released the Maritime Degree Level Qualifications Framework, a region-specific framework that is modelled after, and expands upon, the Pan Canadian Degree Level Qualifications Framework. It should be noted that the MPHEC was able to move this initiative forward, with the support of the institutions in the region, in a timely way (the first round of consultation was held in early 2005, and the MPHEC adopted the final version in April 2006, one year earlier than the Pan-Canadian Framework, from which it originated). On another front, as a result of a policy direction given by the Province of New Brunswick, the MPHEC was instrumental in introducing a new degree structure in the region linking components of a university program with components of educational programs offered by other providers, most often colleges, which it describes as an articulated program. The MPHEC has already conducted a preliminary assessment of this new degree structure and will undertake, in the current fiscal year, a more comprehensive assessment to determine whether students are well served by this type of degree.

Data and Information

The MPHEC's data and information function, which crosses all its mandated functions, provides decision-makers with both accountability measures pertaining to the institutions within its scope and better information to assist in decision-making. The initiatives taken under this function also increase awareness of, and dialogue on, Maritime post-secondary education issues and opportunities, both in the Maritimes and nationally.

One of the main activities undertaken by the MPHEC in this area is the collection of PSIS (Postsecondary Student Information System, formerly known as ESIS) data. The Maritimes, under the leadership of the MPHEC, piloted the development and implementation of this database significant in both size - some tables have over six million records – and importance. As a result of this cooperative effort, stakeholders are now in a position to use these data much more extensively. To date, a number of standardized and audited (at the student and program levels) outputs, including full-time equivalents, weighted full-time equivalents,

standardized registration status (full-time, part-time), permanent province of residence, citizenship, gender, age, level of study and major field of study are available, and accurate. These figures are used in the provision of statistics to various stakeholders and the application of the New Brunswick Funding Formula and for the calculation of the Regional Transfer Arrangement, in addition to playing an important role in policy analysis and development. Work is underway to provide Nova Scotia with weighted enrolments (which are very different from those used in New Brunswick, as they rely mostly on full course equivalent (FCE) and a different weighting scheme.) that the province requires to update the application of its funding formula. All of this is achieved with *one* annual data collection cycle.

The next stage will be to produce truly longitudinal analyses, where one can follow the individual student from year to year, institution to institution. This work has just begun. It will provide several measures of quality and system responsiveness as determined by student persistence, and success, as well as inter-program and inter-institutional mobility patterns. However, in pursuing this next step we encounter two significant challenges. First, the absence of a single student identifier limits our ability to track students as they move from institution to institution; this issue will be considered in more detail by the MPHEC in the proximate future. Second, the scope of PSIS, as collected by the MPHEC, is essentially limited to the universities. For example, in the enrolment trend project described below, we had to contact each individual Maritime college to obtain data to feed into the analysis. We also had to contact individual Canadian universities to obtain national-level data, as Statistics Canada is not yet in a position to provide comparable detailed outputs out of PSIS, either for universities or for colleges (when it does, it would likely be at cost). It should be noted that PSIS was designed to collect enrolment data from all post-secondary education providers, but that only the MPHEC has collected and validated PSIS data to this extent, and these validated data are from the publicly funded universities.

The flagship in the MPHEC's research program is certainly the Graduate Follow-Up Survey program. These surveys are always dependant on external funding. University accountability measures relating to graduate outcomes, and evaluation of the university experience, including facilities and services, are generated through the MPHEC's graduate follow-up surveys. These surveys provide a measure of quality and relevance of the education provided in the region, as assessed by the graduates themselves and as demonstrated by their transition into the labour force or in pursuing their education further. Governments and institutions, through receipt of customized graduate follow-up survey data sets, have an opportunity to carry out analyses on their own group of graduates, although most often these custom analyses are performed by MPHEC staff as institutions and provincial governments have limited resources in this regard, which the MPHEC's renewed mandate was designed to supplement.

The MPHEC's research expertise is well established; the organization is called upon to manage large complex data collection projects and to assist and support other organizations in this regard. For example, over the last few months a tremendous interest in a common university data set has emerged among

institutions across Canada, sparked both by the widespread increasing demand for comparable statistics as well as by Ontario's existing model. This interest is strongly held by institutions in this region and in New Brunswick in particular. The MPHEC was invited to participate in the first official national discussion of this topic, both by the organizers and by institutions in the region. Another example of this type of work resides in how the MPHEC has most recently helped the CPSENB itself in its search for post-secondary education statistics. In addition to supplying standard data and statistics, the MPHEC was also able to provide a new measure at the request of the CPSENB: persistence statistics. To do this, MPHEC staff collaborated with the four New Brunswick institutions to develop a statistically sound definition and then generated the requested statistics.

We would be remiss if we did not note the growing need for data, expressed by institutions and governments alike. The MPHEC, over the last decade, has played a significant leadership role with the institutions in this area, whether through its work on PSIS or other projects (data collection and research/publication), as well as through the provision of forums allowing key stakeholders to come together on a number of issues in various settings. We are currently actively engaged in a dialogue with institutional researchers about current and future projects.

Further detail about recent activities of the MPHEC in the area of data and information is readily available on our website (www.mphec.ca). Appendix 3 describes the projects currently underway and with a planned release by the end of the calendar year. This Appendix illustrates the significant activity underway at the MPHEC, activity which will result in better informed decision-making and better accountability measures.

For example, preliminary analyses resulting from the MPHEC's examination of recent enrolment trends have revealed some very interesting facts, such as enrolment of direct-from-high-school students has been decreasing faster than overall enrolments. Demographic trends are only one explanation, as several other factors are at play (the state of the economy and the related appeal of the workforce, the increased availability of other types of education and training, and tuition among others). In addition, while university participation rates have increased in New Brunswick, our preliminary findings suggest that this increase is largely fuelled by increased participation by francophones, and the trend may actually have recently reversed when considering only the anglophone population. The MPHEC expects to release preliminary findings by summer 2007, and has yet to determine whether it will host a symposium on the issue in Fall 2007.

Our most recent graduate follow-up survey, of the Class of 2003, which will be released later this spring, also provides useful information. For example, half of direct-from-high-school students who completed a Bachelor's degree in the Maritimes, returned for further study within two years of graduating. The majority of these graduates enrolled in either a Bachelor of Education or a graduate-level degree and the odds of

returning to study increased substantially if she or he had completed a Liberal Arts and Sciences degree. This probably explains at least partially that while enrolments at the undergraduate level have stagnated or declined in the very recent past, the opposite occurred at the graduate level.

Cooperative Action

The MPHEC is charged with promoting and facilitating cooperation within the Maritimes and with other provinces and external partners to, among other things, facilitate, among institutions and among governments for example, the development of cost-effective and collaborative approaches to post-secondary education administration, programmes and policies. This requires ongoing consultation in order to understand multiple (and sometimes conflicting) stakeholder needs and perspectives.

The MPHEC coordinates requests by universities for broadcast time to deliver courses by television through the Atlantic Satellite Network (ASN).

The NB/PEI Educational Computer Network (NB/PEI ECN), a standing committee of the MPHEC, provides connectivity among its members and to the wider world. Additional benefits include joint purchasing and licensing, shared support services, the delivery of network-based services and information exchange. The NB/PEI ECN is overseen by a Board of Directors, and administered by the Network Technical Committee. The MPHEC provides support to, and participates in, NB/PEI ECN meetings of both the Network Technical Committee and the Board. The MPHEC also administers the NB/PEI ECN budget. The NB/PEI ECN is a first-rate example of *collaboration with differentiation* which will be detailed in the NB/PEI ECN's submission to the CPSENB.

Most of the work undertaken by the MPHEC is achieved through collaboration with and among the institutions, and governments. All of the MPHEC's data collection activity, as well as most of its research program, depends on it. Whether it be developing a region-specific Degree Level Qualifications Framework, obtaining graduate contact information to conduct follow-up surveys or devising a measure of persistence using collected PSIS data, institutions and governments are key partners. The MPHEC's operational framework also depends on this collaborative input, as described earlier.

Regional Programs

The MPHEC administers a number of agreements with other provinces to provide places for Maritime students in programs of study that are not available in their home province. These include the Regional Transfer Arrangement¹ (RTA) and several other agreements with provinces outside the Maritimes for programs not available in the region. These instruments provide Maritime students with a greater range of educational programs at a reasonable cost to the Provinces. As a result, an average of approximately 1200 students (approximately 630 from New Brunswick) benefit annually from the Regional Transfer Arrangement, by studying in the program of their choice, while 610 students (353 from New Brunswick) benefitted in 2006-2007 from other interprovincial agreements administered by the MPHEC. The total cost to the Province of New Brunswick for these various agreements which facilitate access for students was \$15,558,679 in 2006-07 (as per Main Estimates; this figure excludes program expansion).

These figures are significant and generally overlooked when analyzing university funding levels in the province of New Brunswick; these various arrangements must be taken into account, as many (often high cost) programs are offered beyond the Province's boundaries and the funding provided for those programs is not included in funding provided to universities in New Brunswick as they are not providing those programs.

Province-Specific Services

The 2005 Act specifies that the "Commission may provide other services or functions to one or more institutions or provinces as set out in its business plan." It adds that "the Commission may be asked by provinces to provide advice or services to them for determining funding policy or for providing funding in support of post-secondary education." The MPHEC provides analysis and advice, as well as administrative services, to the Province of New Brunswick regarding university funding and funding to the Maritime College of Forest Technology. This involves developing funding scenarios based on provincial policies, the allocation of funds for various funding envelopes (unrestricted and restricted funding which are formula derived; capital projects, special projects, program expansion which are administered through distinct policies all developed by the MPHEC). It also provides administrative services to the Province of Prince Edward Island with respect to both university and college funding. Since 2003, it has been providing

¹ The Regional Transfer Arrangement is an arrangement whereby each of the three Maritime Provinces provides funding in respect to any of its university students enrolled in programs in either of the other two provinces that are not offered in the student's home province. The purpose of the Regional Transfer Arrangement is to ensure accessibility of university programs for Maritime residents and to assist the provinces in attaining a more effective utilization and allocation of resources. The transfer of funds in any given fiscal year is based on the enrollments of Maritime residents in these regional programs two years earlier, the latest year for which complete enrolment data are available at the time budgets are prepared. It should be noted that the transfers between the provinces are made on a net basis, and do not represent transfers of funds to the institutions themselves.

quality assurance related services to the Province of New Brunswick with regards to new degree providers. At present, the MPHEC does not provide institution-specific services, although the Act does provide for this possibility.

Conclusion

This brief has been prepared primarily to assist the CPSENB in understanding the current activities of the MPHEC and, in particular, in its examination of the effectiveness of the MPHEC in monitoring and reporting on the quality assurance mechanisms in place in the universities. We have described the MPHEC, its mandate and functions, and its recent and current achievements. Finally, we have drawn attention at various points to the significant flexibility that the Ministers built into the renewed mandate of the MPHEC.

In closing, we note the evolution and, indeed, the maturation that has occurred over the last decade or so. In the 1990s, when the Ministers were considering whether and how to renew the mandate of the MPHEC, many institutions expressed reservations about the notion of an arm's-length body charged with, among other things, monitoring quality assurance and managing and disseminating data and information. Over time, however, the Commission's work and approaches have won very broad acceptance and recognition in the institutions, and have brought about significant change and development in the post-secondary system in the Maritimes. More can be done, and the MPHEC is in a strong position to assist governments and institutions in that work.

Membership (as of April 20, 2007)

Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission

Category a (University)

Nassir El-Jabi, Vice recteur à l'administration et aux ressources humaines – UdeM (NB)
David Stewart, Vice-President (Administration) – MTA (NB)
Gordon MacInnis, Vice-President (Finance and Administration) – CBU (NS)
Samuel Scully, Vice-President (Academic) retired - DAL (NS)
Donna Woolcott, Vice-President (Academic) – MSVU (NS)
Vianne Timmons, Vice-President (Academic Support) – UPEI (PE), **Chair**

Category b (Government)

Louise Boudreau, Executive Director – Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour (NB)
Wayne Doggett, Senior Executive Director, Higher Education – Department of Education (NS)
Gregg Ells, Director, Higher Education, Universities and Colleges – Department of Education (NS)
Alastair Saunders, Acting Deputy Minister – Intergovernmental Affairs (NS)
Mike Clow, Director of Continuing Education and Training – Department of Education (PE)
Kenneth MacRae, Senior Director, Higher Education – Department of Education (PE)

Category c (Public-at-large)

Brian Gallant (NB)
Colette Landry-Martin (NB)
Karla O'Regan (NB)
Peter Butler (NS)
Chris Jordan (NS)
Bill MacLeod (NS)
Don Gillis (PE)

Ex-officio Member

Mireille Duguay, Chief Executive Officer, MPHEC

AAU-MPHEC Academic Advisory Committee

Appointed by the AAU

Angelo Belcastro, Vice-President (Academic) – UNB (NB)
Stephen McClatchie, Vice-President (Academic and Research) – MTA (NB)
Anthony Secco, Vice-President (Academic) – CBU (NS)

Appointed by the MPHEC

Peter Butler (NS)
Nassir El-Jabi, Vice recteur à l'administration et aux ressources humaines – UdeM (NB)
Donna Woolcott, Vice-President (Academic) – MSVU (NS), **Chair**

AAU-MPHEC Advisory Committee on Information and Analysis

Appointed by the AAU

George Iwama, Acting Vice-President (Academic) – Acadia (NS)

Clive Keen, Director of Life Long Learning – UPEI (PE)

Jean-Guy Ouellette, Vice recteur adjoint à l'enseignement et à la recherche – UdeM (NB)

Appointed by the MPHEC

Louise Boudreau, Executive Director – Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour (NB)

Gregg Ells, Director, Higher Education, Universities and Colleges – Department of Education (NS)

Gordon MacInnis (NS), **Chair**

AAU-MPHEC Quality Assurance Monitoring Committee

Appointed by the AAU

Henry Cowan (NB)

Ivan Dowling (PE)

Bernard Nadeau (NB)

Don Wells (NS)

Appointed by the MPHEC

Léandre Desjardins (NB)

Samuel Scully (NS), **Chair**

NB/PEI ECN Board of Directors Membership

Robert Campbell, President, Mount Allison University

Yvon Fontaine, Recteur, Université de Moncton

Michael Higgins, President and Vice-Chancellor, St. Thomas University

Wade MacLauchlan, President, University of Prince Edward Island

Patrick McCarthy, Director, Maritime College of Forest Technology

John McLaughlin, President, University of New Brunswick

Brian McMillan, President, Holland College

Mireille Duguay, Chief Executive Officer, MPHEC

NB/PEI ECN Network Committee Membership

Helmut Becker, Director of Computing Services, Mount Allison University

Jim Bowen, Instructor, Maritime College of Forest Technology

David Cairns, Director, Computer Services, University of Prince Edward Island

Rob Doley, Director of IT, St. Thomas University

André Lee, Directeur des technologies de l'information et des communications, Université de Moncton

Richard MacDonald, Manager, Computer Services, Holland College

Lori MacMullen, Associate Vice-President, ITS, University of New Brunswick

Jocelyn Nadeau, Service d'informatique, Université de Moncton (Campus d'Edmundston)

Steven Osborne, Director, Integrated Technology Services, University of New Brunswick (Saint-John Campus)

Rina Robichaud, Université de Moncton (Campus de Shippagan)

Lisa Robichaud, Director of Finance and Information Technology, MPHEC

Status of the Quality Assurance Monitoring Process (as of April 2007)

Completed

	Report Released
Dalhousie University	September 2003
Saint Thomas University	September 2003
Université de Moncton	August 2006
Mount Allison University	August 2006
University of New Brunswick	November 2006

Underway**Percentage complete****Anticipated Release**

Université Sainte-Anne	90%	June 2007
Acadia University	90%	June 2007
Nova Scotia College of Arts and Design	25%	TBD
Cape Breton University	25%	Spring 2008
Saint Francis Xavier University	10%	TBD
Nova Scotia Agricultural College	10%	TBD
Saint Mary's University	launched April 10, 2007	TBD
University of Prince Edward Island	to be launched in May/June 2007	TBD

Remaining Institutions

- Atlantic School of Theology
- Mount Saint Vincent University
- University of King's College

Monitoring process to be launched by end of calendar year

MPHEC Research Projects due for release by January 2008

Title	Two Years On: A Survey of Class of 2003 Maritime University Graduates
Description	<p>The purpose of this graduate follow-up survey is to gain an understanding of what the Class of 2003 graduates do after completing their degree, and the factors that influence these educational and career paths. The survey also provides valuable information on who the Class of 2003 graduates are and on their university experience, as well as on their financial status two years after graduation taking into consideration their employment earnings and student loan repayments.</p> <p>The data gathered from this survey provides important information for: students, to help in their decision-making processes concerning the many choices to be made regarding post-secondary education; universities, to understand students' experiences during and following their university degree to inform program and institutional developments; and governments, to assist in the evaluation and design of policies pertaining to universities and their students.</p> <p>In 2008, the MPHEC plans to again, pending funding, interview the graduates of the Class of 2003 to determine the nature of their transition from "the learning force" to the workforce by the five-year mark and to also assess whether trends found two years after graduation continue over time.</p>
Current Status	The report has been finalized and is being prepared for printing and distribution.
Key deliverables	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Custom data files for each participating university (16) and province (April 2007) 2. Presentations to stakeholders (June 5-7 2007; three provincially-based presentations) 3. Report (public release: June 2007)
Partners	Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission; Governments of New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia; 16 Maritime universities
Note to Commissioners	Government representatives will be invited to an advance presentation of the report findings in mid-May 2007. This survey is the sixth in the Commission's graduate follow-up survey program. Surveys completed to date are: the Class of 1995 in 1996 (pilot), the Class of 1996 in 1997 and 2000; the Class of 1999 in 2001 and 2004; and the current survey, the Class of 2003 in 2005.

Title	Surveying the Enrolment Landscape: Factors and Trends in Maritime Postsecondary Enrolment (2000-2007)
Description	<p>The purpose of the project is to investigate very recent, unexpected, and widespread declines in undergraduate university enrolment in this region. The issue was raised by the Commission's stakeholders at their annual meeting in October, 2006. The study explores many trends and factors that may have an impact on Maritime university enrolment trends, such as enrolments in community colleges, universities outside the Maritimes, labour force trends, etc.</p> <p>This study will help stakeholders gain a better understanding of the factors behind the observed enrolment trends. The proposed workshop, to be hosted by the MPHEC, will provide a forum to discuss the issues, share best practices and promote collaboration.</p>
Current Status	The data collection and analysis has been completed; a report is now being prepared for review by the MPHEC at its May 7, 2007 meeting.
Key deliverables	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report (release June 2007 – tentative) 2. Presentation to stakeholders (June 2007 – tentative); 3. Workshop to discuss the issue (October/November 2007 - tentative)
Partners	Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission Maritime universities
Note to Commissioners	A confidential draft report will be available to Commissioners (date to be confirmed in mid-May 2007).

Title	Faculty Recruitment and Retention (Updated Tables) Research and Development Funding (Updated Tables)
Description	<p>The Commission will be posting statistical tables containing updated information found in the previously released research reports <i>Faculty Recruitment and Retention in the Maritimes</i> and <i>R&D Funding in Atlantic Universities</i>.</p> <p>These updated statistics can be used by universities, governments and other researchers to gain a current understanding of, for example: Maritime universities' faculty-to-student ratios, the proportion of Maritime faculty who are 55 years of age and older, granting council funding received by Maritime universities and the proportion of R&D expenditure in both the higher education and business sectors in the region.</p>
Current Status	Tables in the process of finalization; to be posted May 2007.

Title	Intentions of Maritime University Students Following Graduation: A Survey of the Class of 2007
Description	<p>The purpose of the survey is to establish students' intentions and preparedness for pursuing further study and to gather information on trends and attitudes toward lifelong learning among these students. The group being studied is Maritime university students eligible to graduate (with a bachelor's degree) in 2007. The study is being carried out via a web-based survey.</p> <p>The information gathered through this proposed project will help governments in labour force assessment and forecasting and in identifying gaps in educational opportunity in the region. Information about the relationship between debt and the likelihood of returning will also inform student aid policy decisions. Universities will be able to use the information to enhance counselling services, in curriculum planning and in recruitment. Students and the general public will find this information useful in planning education and career paths.</p> <p>There is a potential to include a subsample of respondents from this survey in the MPHEC's planned survey of Class of 2007 Maritime university graduates, two years (and even five years) after graduation. Such a linkage would be valuable in that it would connect students' intentions with actual outcomes, thus further enriching the findings from the proposed project.</p>
Current Status	The online survey was completed March 31 st , and analysis is now underway.
Key deliverables	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presentation of draft report to CAMET subcommittee (June -July 2007); 2. Report (release late Fall 2007); 3. Custom data files for each participating university and province (to be released with final report).
Partners	<p>Managing Partner: Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission</p> <p>Funding partners: Canada Council on Learning; Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (NB, NS, PEI)</p>
Note to Commissioners	Selected preliminary frequencies from this project will be available to the New Brunswick Commission (under embargo) by late May.

Title	Atlantic Mobility and Retention Study
Description	The purpose of the project is to track students within public Atlantic postsecondary institutions to determine which students continued in the same institution, moved to a different institution or did not continue in the Atlantic post-secondary system. This will be done using the PSIS (used to be ESIS) longitudinal data base. The analysis will include patterns by sex, type of program, and year of program. A further investigation of breakdowns between part-time and full-time study, across levels of programs (universities, colleges), and other student related characteristics will be dependent on data availability and quality.
Current Status	Analytical phase is underway
Key deliverables	Atlantic report (Jan 2008)
Partners	CAMET (lead) Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation (funding partner) Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (support - technical advising on PSIS database; fostering collaboration)

Title	The Impact of Urban/Rural Residency on Graduate Outcomes
Description	The purpose of this project is to evaluate differences in the outcomes of Maritime university graduates based on urban vs rural residency at the time of high school graduation and to situate these results in the current knowledge of the field. It is well-known that youth from rural areas are less likely to participate in university education than their urban counterparts. This analysis will add to the body of literature on the impact urban/rural residency has on post-secondary education by providing information on whether, for those who pursue a university education and complete their degree, there are differences in returns for their education.
Current Status	Analytical phase is underway
Key deliverables	Report (release late 2007)
Partners	Dr. Dianne Looker (external contractor hired to conduct the analysis) Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (managing partner) Governments of New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia* Maritime universities*
Note to Commissioners	* This project builds on information obtained through the Survey of Class of 2003 Maritime University Graduates. Using data procured through that project, the Commission is able to conduct in-depth analyses of other issues (such as gender differences in graduate outcomes; the impact of parental educational attainment on graduate outcomes; and mobility patterns of Maritime university graduates) of importance to Commission stakeholders.