

SUBMISSION TO THE COMMISSION ON POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IN NEW BRUNSWICK

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NBCC Saint John Campus at a Glance

NBCCSJ began operations in 1963 as part of a Canada-wide investment in skilled trades and technology transfer. It has stayed true to its original offerings in trade programs and in health, business, and engineering technologies to present day. Granted, the programs have evolved and we have added and subtracted programs over the years, but it is also fair to say we continue to reflect the training requirements of southern New Brunswick.

Employers have shown their interest in NBCCSJ through their support of co-operative education, contract training services, international operations, serving on Program Advisory Committees and providing employment opportunities year after year to students.

As well, the current fundraising campaign, to support students through bursaries, has been led by Mr. Jim Irving, President of J. D. Irving Ltd. His personal involvement in the campaign has led to its success as has the support of many key employers who depend on the College system for well-trained College graduates.

NBCCSJ attends to the education and training needs of 1,200 regular program students, as well as thousands of other students enrolled in contract, Continuing Education, apprenticeship, and distance-delivered programs. The faculty and staff number reaches near 300 at peak training intervals. There are few other places in the post-secondary market of New Brunswick where critical masses of faculty work together in health care, engineering technologies, skilled trades, and business and information technology programs.

This is the strength of NBCCSJ at present, one which can be enhanced if attention is paid to the recommendations which follow.

Accessibility

We are extremely pleased to note that the Commission is concerned with providing access to more high school graduates, particularly as it relates to opportunities at the college level. The number of training seats available at the NB Universities totals 21,119 compared to the near 6,800 provided at colleges. The report notes that New Brunswick provides access to one half the number of students seeking a college education as compared to elsewhere in Canada. Industry has noted that future employment positions in New Brunswick will require a college education for some 75% of these new openings. This imbalance in access for College graduates must be addressed.

The College system of New Brunswick is not seen as an attractive choice, vis a vis university, for high school graduates. College facilities, particularly in Saint John, where the last investment in classroom and laboratories occurred in 1975/76, are dated and unattractive to prospective students who have the choice of attending universities which have a far more modern appeal and resources to provide an enhanced PSE experience.

It was heartening to note the political platform of the current provincial government, which recommended the addition of 12,000 extra training seats at colleges. This increase is urgently required in Greater Saint John which is on the cusp of responding to an energy focused expansion. There should be priority consideration given by government and industry to provide resources to attend to the lack of access at NBCCSJ.

For the past number of years, the College in Saint John as received 5 applications for every training seat available. The trend continues this year. As of April 12, 2007, a total of 2,898 applications have already been processed to fill the 726 first-year seats at the campus. Saint John is expected to continue to draw considerable interest by those seeking training for employment related to the energy cluster. Many of these are from high school grads who cannot pursue post-secondary education because they cannot get into our College.

Recommendation:

Access to NBCCSJ be enhanced by the addition of 500 first-year training seats. Facilities and costs related to this expanded delivery must be provided to the local campus. Consideration should be given to co-location possibilities with UNBSJ.

Relevance & Responsiveness

NBCCSJ has focused its efforts to provide flow through credit recognition to universities for a number of its Health Care, Engineering Technology, and Business / Information Technology programming, particularly with UNBSJ.

The campus has achieved considerable success reaching the provincial Key Indicators which measure campus performance.

| <u>Key Performance Measure</u> | <u>NBCCSJ</u> |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Employment* | 92% |
| Directly Related Employment* | 88% |
| Programs with Co-Op Attachments | 9/25 |
| Graduate Enrollment* | 88% |
| Graduate Retention in NB | 91% |
| % of Seats Filled – past 5 years | 100% |
| Application / Seat Availability | 3,200 / 736 |

*Standard measurement required is: 83% for employment; 80% directly related employment; and 83% for graduation.

The Campus has targeted the attraction of women to non-traditional programs. 65 students are currently enrolled in regular programs, many with bursary support.

The NBCCSJ Campus provides 40% of the apprenticeship delivery for NB with over 900 apprentices served each year. The Campus is the primary source of Health Care training programs for Anglophone New Brunswick.

The Campus maintains direct access to industry and community so as to incorporate their training needs within the scope of the College operation.

Recommendation:

NBCCSJ must increase its ability to respond to the needs of employers. As noted in “Accessibility”, we must increase enrollment in programs relevant to employers.

We must provide upgrading to current employees so that productivity improvements can be sustained. Local campuses must retain the ability to respond to local conditions. Attracting and keeping faculty is critical to the success of the College, thus consideration must be given to providing reasons for faculty to remain committed to their College.

Quality and Accountability

The NBCC and its Campus operations have a quality management system which measures the degree to which it serves its student population against educational standards.

Based on the adoption of the ISO 9000 platform, adapted from industry to college operation, the NBCC has been measuring its performance against standard outcomes since 1997. The current quality management system ensures quality and accountability. Audits of course outcomes, curriculum, and other educational delivery standards are conducted on a regular basis. Student response is an integral part of program review.

The College provides teacher training to all of its faculty to ensure classroom instruction meets the minimum standard of program delivery. Faculty is provided with in-house opportunities to “grow” on-the-job for their benefit and that of their students.

College programs are delivered to meet network standards and regular accreditation audits are conducted to ensure national and provincial standards are maintained.

The College participates in applied research activities. For example, the NBCCSJ Campus is a partner with UNBSJ, Dalhousie University, and the Atlantic Health Sciences Corporation in a study of inter-professional collaborative health practice.

Patients at St. Joseph’s Hospital benefit greatly from this federal research program. The expectation of this research is to determine the health benefits accruing by aligning medical, nursing, and allied health professionals in establishing health care teams.

Recommendation:

NBCCSJ & UNBSJ need to continue to offer innovative educational programming, utilizing blended and distance delivery to serve New Brunswickers, including those in rural communities. Program articulations should be modeled within a “laddering” framework where advancement can be built on one-year certificates, two-year College diplomas, and then two-year degree completion programs. Young, high-school graduates, who are currently not eligible for entry to university owing to their choosing an easy pathway through school, would have a “second chance”, via enrollment in a College program.

Colleges and universities need to focus their efforts on retaining students during their first term, a time when dropouts occur. Assessment and intervention to help students to succeed will prove beneficial.

NBCCSJ collaborate with colleagues at UNBSJ to provide opportunities for sharing resources to the benefit of students, employees, and communities served.

Efficiency

The efficiency of the NBCC is held back by its direct association with government. Strategic planning is a difficult activity when time horizons are tied more closely to the 4 year mandate of government than to the long range responsibility of college programming.

Being tied to the bureaucracy of government has impacted on the ability of NBCC to evolve its relationship with the university community and with industry and business in NB. Greater collaboration with the university community is clearly an outcome – which would follow the separation of the NBCC from direct government control. Services to students, by way of prior learning recognition and credit transfer to continued education at university, would be enhanced by this separation.

In the case of NBCC Saint John, collaboration with the university community would be enhanced by efforts to co-locate college and university programming. The model for this would, of course, require each institution to ensure their mandate was preserved with the sharing of common facilities. The applied nature of skill-based training at the college level would have to be assured so that the college maintained its priority focus in serving the skill-based needs of employees and employers. Efficiency would be achieved by connecting university & college “back office” administrative functions and savings which would result.

Recommendation:

The NBCC be separated from government and a new Board reporting structure be established. That programming at NBCCSJ be co-located with UNBSJ to the benefit of students, employers, and the Greater Saint John area community. That this model of collaboration be a prototype for similar community collaborations around post secondary delivery in New Brunswick.

Collaboration and Differentiation

The collaboration and co-location of NBCCSJ and UNBSJ will provide considerable benefit to our respective students and the community served. Efforts made by each institution regarding diversity of educational opportunities, particularly as it relates to the internationalization of campus communities and increased immigration activities, will ensue.

The development of a strategic plan for the combined efforts of NB universities and colleges will be an outcome long needed by our province.

The ability of colleges and universities to address the needs of their respective communities will be assured. The decentralization of decision-making from a government perspective to a community perspective will follow in changes made with the collaboration.

A clear delineation of institutional roles should be established so that the mandates of NBCCSJ and UNBSJ are preserved. We need to be clear on the scope of our respective mandates.

Recommendations:

Strategic planning for educational deliveries for Greater Saint John and this Province should begin in a collaborative manner. Any new structure should be premised by strong local entities for decision-making.

Finance

The plight of college students to finance their education is similar to those in the universities. Often Community College students cannot afford to leave their respective communities to pursue a post-secondary education, even when it is well known that achievement of a Community College diploma will enable graduates to repay the debt owed and receive much higher income levels during their working career.

The research statistics in the discussion paper note the decline in population of New Brunswick high schools. One half of 9,500 high school graduates of 2006 will not attend either university or college this year. Often this is because colleges do not have the required budget to provide the training required.

Universities require a B average (78%) for high school graduates to attend which eliminates 70% of all high school grads. The colleges attract a mere 10% of high school grads owing to a myriad of reasons including the quality of the educational experience college students can expect when studying in less desirable facilities. When you add in the lack of training access we experience at NBCCSJ (turning away 2,500 student applicants each year), the college system is ill equipped to do the job expected of it.

Recommendation:

Increase the number of training seats in the NBCC so that high school graduates acquire the knowledge and skills required. Promote the uniqueness of a college education to dispel the negative stereotype which has stymied the growth of college programming in New Brunswick. Increase the number of distance deliveries from colleges to allow prospective students to remain in their communities and hold a permanent job.

Thank you for the consideration given to this submission.