

**Brief to the Commission on Post-Secondary Education in New Brunswick
From the University of New Brunswick
12 April 2007**

Introduction

Belief in the power of education to improve and transform lives is deeply embedded in the culture of New Brunswick. From the Loyalists' petition to Lieutenant-Governor Thomas Carleton for a Provincial Academy of Arts and Science in 1785 which led to the creation of the University of New Brunswick, to Mount Allison's awarding the first baccalaureate degree to a woman in the British Empire in 1875; from the ground-breaking recommendations of the Deutsch Commission in 1962 to strengthen St. Thomas University by relocating it to Fredericton, to establish the unique francophone institution Université de Moncton and to expand UNB to a campus in Saint John, higher education has been centrally important to the development and prosperity of this province.

The University of New Brunswick is the Province's largest and most comprehensive institution, enrolling more than 50 per cent of the Province's university students, and conducting more than 80 per cent of all university research in the Province. Its living alumni number more than 60,000, with roughly half living and working in New Brunswick and the other half forming a web of influential and supportive connections around the world. UNB is a national university—the smallest in Canada—with all the attendant expectations and standards of intellectual excellence, professional accreditation, funded research and scholarly activity, a focus on the breadth of our students' experience and high reputational quality.

As a national institution, UNB has both a mandate and a responsibility to provide leadership within the provincial post-secondary sector. We therefore applaud the Government for following through so expeditiously on its commitment to undertake a comprehensive review of post-secondary education in the Province. We regard this as an early and critically important component of the Premier's agenda for self-sufficiency and welcome it as a "once in a generation" opportunity to move our colleges and universities from very good to truly great.

In announcing the Commission in January, the Premier stated that he intended to do more than simply "tweak" the system, that transformational changes would be needed to make our post-secondary institutions successful and competitive. We embrace this approach and plan to be actively involved and engaged not only in advising the Commissioners but, most especially, in the implementation of their recommendations.

The Commission's Charge

The Commission has a mandate to be, above all, student-focused and has identified two major challenges affecting New Brunswick institutions: (1) the changing nature of the global economy and the new realities that face students as they prepare themselves for an uncertain future, and (2) the demographic reality of a declining population. In its discussion paper, the Commission has raised many important questions and has organized

its thinking around six themes: accessibility, relevance and responsiveness, quality and accountability, efficiency, collaboration with differentiation, and finance.

In responding to the Commission, we have tried to take all of these elements into consideration and to assess them in the context of both UNB specifically and the larger PSE sector. Generally, what would be beneficial to UNB is also beneficial to the sector, and vice versa, but our guiding principle has been to consider what's right for New Brunswick first.

The University of New Brunswick

UNB is the oldest English-language university in Canada and one of the oldest public universities in North America. We trace our origins to the Loyalists' petition of 1785 for the establishment of a Provincial Academy of Arts and Science. Through various incarnations—as the College of New Brunswick, King's College and ultimately the University of New Brunswick—we have served this province for more than 220 years. Arts and science, which were introduced to the woods of New Brunswick by our founders and which to this day are key to all other disciplines, are essential to the education of a civil society. Over the centuries, we have been particularly adept at balancing the humanities, pure sciences and the professions, a strength on which we continue to build. We have provided a truly dynamic, multidisciplinary learning environment in which fosters breadth of knowledge and depth of understanding.

We are a fundamentally public institution, accessible to all qualified people, with a focus on teaching and research that are directly related to the society in which we are based. We see ourselves as the Canadian equivalent of the great land-grant institutions in the United States, though our mission, "...to meet the increasing demands of a rising, prosperous and intellectual people,"¹ and the lands granted by the Crown to achieve it predate by some 33 years the Morrill Act of 1862 that created the U.S. universities.

Through our long history, we have made many contributions to the individual lives of our students and graduates, the growth of the province, the transfer of knowledge to society, the creation of wealth through innovative ideas, and the development of a learned populace capable of critical thought and appreciative of arts and culture. Our professional programs in Business, Computer Science, Education, Engineering, Forestry, Law and Nursing are nationally accredited and thousands of their graduates form the backbone of those professions in this Province. In addition to our major campuses in Fredericton and Saint John, we operate Nursing programs in Moncton and Bathurst and, through our College of Extended Learning (CEL), are exploring the expansion of our role in the north of the Province. CEL makes us accessible around New Brunswick and well beyond through its distance education and web-based courses, while a number of faculties run programs in Europe, Asia and the Caribbean.

UNB has been offering graduate degrees for more than 100 years and today enrolls a majority of the Province's graduate students—some 1,400 on our two campuses, an

¹ Sir Howard Douglas, Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick, at the opening of King's College, 1 January 1829.

increase of 41 per cent in the past five years. Research activity has burgeoned, with revenues from grants and contracts more than doubling, from \$20 million to nearly \$50 million, over the past five years. Since 2001, \$50 million of venture capital has been invested in companies commercializing technologies developed at UNB.

Like its sister institutions in the Province, UNB embarks on this review from a position of relative strength. The past four years have been a time of steady and substantial accomplishment for us. The quality of our faculty and students increased steadily. A case in point is Fredericton native, Nicole Letourneau. Now a professor in the Faculty of Nursing, Dr. Letourneau recently won the Peter Lougheed/CIHR New Investigator Award from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. This five-year, \$500,000 award is CIHR's most important career development award, given only to Canada's brightest young researchers at the beginning of their careers. At UNB Saint John, a \$1-million grant from the Community-University Research Alliance to a consortium headed by dean of Arts Robert MacKinnon, is studying the "Industrial City in Transition" to better understand the social and economic changes currently underway in Greater Saint John and is paving the way through student internships and employment for a comprehensive community service learning program. Another benchmark of excellence is our cadre of CIS Academic All-Canadians—students whose performance in the classroom matches their prowess on the Varsity Reds. This year 56 student athletes qualified for this distinction, a national record when evaluated on a per capita basis.

Ambitious land management plans were developed for our campuses in Fredericton and Saint John, and two new residences and a laboratory-classroom building for the world-class Canadian Rivers Institute were constructed. In Fredericton, commercial development began on our 3,000-acre woodlot, the proceeds from which will fund further campus improvements. The University reached out to the citizens of the Province through the *Next New Brunswick* initiative, addressing the immediate and longer-term future of New Brunswick, creating new networks and identifying 21 Young Leaders for the 21st Century. And more than \$100 million was raised through the *Forging Our Futures* Campaign, the largest-ever in Atlantic Canada.

Despite these achievements, we are facing substantial challenges, as a Province and as a higher education system. Among these are enrolment declines, which we knew from our own projections were imminent and which are now exacerbated by intensified competition for students; the impending shortage of qualified faculty; the increasingly difficult fiscal situation in the province and the region, caused by demographic trends and an alarming outmigration to the west; and high proportion of fixed costs that comprise our financial model. Furthermore, students are graduating with unprecedented levels of debt. This poses a threat both to their financial well-being at the start of their careers and to our institutions' accessibility at a time when it has never been more important to have a post-secondary education.

A Stronger, Better UNB

For the past five years, we have been working toward a three-part vision for UNB:

- Sustaining and furthering UNB's role as a national university.

- Advancing UNB's role as a learning institution.
- Promoting UNB's fundamental role in the economic, social and cultural well-being of the Province and Atlantic Canada.

We believe New Brunswick needs a national comprehensive university capable of making a significant difference to the economic, social and cultural prosperity and vitality of the province through leadership in undergraduate and graduate teaching and research. Without an institution such as UNB, it is unlikely the Province will ever attain the self-sufficiency it seeks or be able to take its rightful place in Canada.

Much progress has been made toward realizing the three pillars of our vision. However, under the current circumstances our ability to make the next quantum leap is very limited. We have aspirations to be the best, to become the top public university in Canada. We will accomplish this by transforming the lives of our students and by having a meaningful impact on our society.

A brief submitted to the Task Force on Self-Sufficiency by UNB President John McLaughlin and UNB's Director of Intellectual Property David Foord details the contributions UNB can make to human capital development, research and innovation, and the shaping of a stimulating culture attractive to talented people that encourages open thought, self-expression, new ideas and experimentation. The brief points out the need for partnerships among universities, colleges, government agencies and companies and suggests our relatively small size and geography, and strong sense of shared common history and values, give us a competitive advantage in making these happen. The brief goes on to say:

To be fully engaged with the other partners in this agenda UNB will require investments. Financial investments are, of course, critical for our effective participation. More important, however, are people. We need good people from the public and private sectors to work with us in executing our initiatives. Alone we will fail. It is only by working together that we will meet the ambitious goals we must set for ourselves.²

Before we talk about the partnerships we need to forge within the post-secondary sector, let's talk about how UNB can be strengthened by the PSE review process.

Our Students

Over the past five years, UNB has attracted some of the best undergraduate and graduate students in the country. The entering average for undergraduates has increased from 80 per cent to 83.5 per cent and the number of new students with averages over 90 per cent has doubled. Support for students, in the form of bursaries, work-study assignments, scholarships and prizes, and assistantships has risen over the same period from less than \$15 million to \$22 million annually.

² Submission to the New Brunswick Self-Sufficiency Task Force by David Foord and John McLaughlin, March 6, 2007. See <http://www.gnb.ca/2026/SubmittedBriefs-e.asp> for the complete document.

The results of the 2006 Canadian Undergraduate Survey Consortium (CUSC) survey of graduating students from the Fredericton campus scored UNBF “good” or “excellent” in contributing to the personal growth and development of their academic, analytical and learning skills and of their oral and written communications as well as their interaction in a group. On the National Survey of Student Engagement, senior students ranked UNBF the best in Canada for “active and collaborative learning.” UNBF was tied for first place among Canadian universities in the category of “student-faculty interaction” according to first-year students and ranked second in Canada when measured by seniors.³

However, UNBF ranked only “fair” to “good” on the CUSC survey when it came to measuring our contribution to life skills, such as entrepreneurship, employment readiness, handling of personal life issues, diversity of cultures, lifelong learning and interpersonal skills. We also ranked poorly in the NSSE category “enriching educational experience” which includes internships and community service.

Clearly UNB has work to do in contributing to students’ lives outside the classroom experience. Our goal is to create more opportunities for our students to study abroad (our Saint John campus is already committed to creating such experiences for at least 25 per cent of its student body), to develop community service learning programs on both campuses and expand the co-op and professional experience programs with the help of our corporate partners.

Over the past five years we have substantially increased funding to academic support services, an area in which we have lagged behind the national averages. We recognize the tremendous importance of our libraries, career and personal counseling, mentoring and tutoring programs, support for the learning and physically disabled, and financial aid. Currently we spend 18.6 per cent of our \$156-million operating budget on these activities and we recognize the need to do more.

In fact, support for disabled students is high on our priority list, especially on the Fredericton campus where the hillside terrain and age of our buildings present special challenges. Our Student Accessibility Centre at UNBF collaborates with UNB faculty, administration, and other units of Student Affairs and Services to provide the most inclusive learning environment possible for students. Along with services common to many Canadian universities, including advocacy related to classroom environment, assistive technology and exam accommodation, UNB’s Student Accessibility Centre has also implemented the Successful Transition to Employment Program (STEP), which works with students with both visible and hidden disabilities toward employability skills. The STEP program provides mentors, tutors, and links to community businesses that are essential for the effective transition from post-secondary education to life after graduation. This innovative program has caught the attention of universities, businesses and advocacy groups across Canada and beyond. At the recent conference, *STEP It Up: Racing Toward an Inclusive Society*, TD Canada Trust announced its support of the

³ The Saint John campus has not participated in these surveys, so UNB has generally used the results as a proxy for the entire University.

program through a \$25,000 grant toward STEP's mentor program in the upcoming academic year.

Despite this progress, there are trends we must address, such as the development of Universal Instructional Design in our curriculum, ensuring "barrier-free" course planning and delivery, and encouraging and supporting self-advocacy on the part of disabled students.

With undergraduate tuition levels in Atlantic Canada the highest in the country, a great many of our students are graduating with heavy debt loads. Statistics Canada shows that New Brunswick is second only to Newfoundland in the percentage of baccalaureate students graduating with more than \$25,000 of debt (24.5 per cent). Our own statistics show some interesting points: 36.5 per cent of all UNB students access federal or provincial student loans, which in 2004-05 amounted to just over \$26 million. Seventy-five per cent of these loans were taken out by students from New Brunswick.

We are addressing the financial burden of our undergraduate students in two ways: keeping tuition fee increases as low as possible and increasing scholarships and bursaries to the greatest extent possible through fund raising and through the allocation of operating funds. (In 2006-07, we awarded more than \$4 million to 2,155 students, still well behind our peer institutions.) It is extremely difficult given our own financial situation to keep an appropriate balance between affordability for our students and the maintenance of quality in our programs, facilities and faculty.

Graduate students are also affected by our constrained circumstances. Recruitment of top students is directly dependent on the support that an institution can provide. Institutions in Ontario and west are providing significant monetary awards, almost equivalent to full-time salaries, and waiving tuition fees for graduate students. With UNB's average Master's degree award at \$12,500 and our average doctoral award at \$13,500, UNB is simply not competitive in attracting those who will be the next generation of scholars and researchers. With a majority of the Province's research conducted by its universities, this is a very serious situation. The Steering Committee on Post-Secondary Research has prepared a brief for the Commission that documents the need for a province-wide graduate student award which will make us competitive with other provinces, which we support.

Our Faculty and Staff

In the 1990s, UNB conducted two proactive early retirement programs for faculty. More than 100 faculty members took advantage of the plan. The program was a mixed blessing. The uptake had an immediate and dramatic impact on UNB's teaching and research capacity, but the programs allowed UNB to get out in the market ahead of most other institutions and recruit some truly exceptional young professors. Our 17 Canada Research Chairs, for example, have played an important role in teaching and mentoring graduate students and heightening the research environment. They supervise 34 doctoral students and 45 masters students and have produced 27 book chapters, 127 journal articles and 62 books over the past two years. In combination with our longer serving

faculty, they form an impressive complement of gifted teachers and accomplished scholars on whom our national and international reputations rest.

Our staff, too, are highly professionalized and bring to our organization a range of skills and competencies that enable us to operate two complex campuses, each of which is larger than many communities in New Brunswick. UNB's administrative costs are in line with national norms and, at 14.5 per cent, have actually declined as a proportion of operating expenditures over the past three years.

As we look to the future, two key issues emerge: retention and renewal, and mobility. Competitive compensation certainly plays an important role in retention, but it's not the whole story. A vibrant and stimulating environment, good working conditions, interesting opportunities for career advancement are all part of the mix. Renewal means just enough turnover to enable us to hire faculty and staff with new ideas, new energy and new skills to keep us competitive, but not so much as to destabilize the organization. Mobility, particularly as it is envisaged in the PSE system proposed below, can contribute to renewal by enabling people, especially faculty, to move among institutions on joint appointments or as adjunct professors.

Our Finances

Last summer UNB commissioned its own financial review to determine our greatest fiscal challenges. The high level review, intended to set the context for further action internally, with the University community, and externally, with the Commission on Post-Secondary Education, was conducted by Barbara MacDonald, a member of the Board of Governors and retired senior vice-president and chief accountant at CIBC, and Norm Betts, associate professor of business administration at UNBF. Their findings were sobering and identified a number of areas that UNB must deal with if circumstances are to improve, including an unsustainable cost structure and the development of a strategic framework that drives the academic, research, financial and operational planning.⁴

The Review also concluded, "The dramatic decline in provincial funding over the past two decades has shifted the relative burden of revenue to students. With tuition reaching maximum competitive levels, the ability to continue this revenue shift is not feasible."

Though it is by no means the only answer, there is little doubt that more funding is needed for New Brunswick universities to be competitive.

The question of how to distribute available government funding to institutions, while important, is secondary to the key financial issue: inadequate funding levels. For example, the government formula does not consider either the fact that UNB has two campuses (or the infrastructure that goes with them) or the growth of those campuses in their programs and services. Were this considered in the calculation of the base grant payable to UNB, it is estimated that UNB's ongoing base grant would increase by more than \$5.5 million on an annual basis.

⁴ For the complete text of the Report of the Financial Review for the University of New Brunswick, July 21, 2006, see <http://www.unb.ca/vpfin/financialreview.html>

More than 75 per cent of the formula is fixed and there has been little change to the base level of funding at either campus despite how each campus has evolved in the last 15 years. In addition, the remaining 25 per cent of government funding is variable (depending upon enrolment) but does not provide funding for international students, despite immigration being a stated priority of the Province and a major source of population and economic growth in the future. Were incremental funding attributed to international undergraduate students by the Province, it is estimated that UNB's variable grant would increase by more than \$2.3 million on an annual basis while this would translate into a total increase to the NB university system of more than \$3 million on an annual basis.

Even though the majority of funds received by New Brunswick universities are not variable (on enrolment), the implementation of a variable portion introduced significant competition and uncertainty into the funding formula. This uncertainty is further pronounced because the pool of these competitive funds does not grow or shrink proportionately to the total growth in the enrolment (i.e. change in enrolment x average per student payment).

What is the "right" answer? Provincial funding to universities must reflect the values of the system:

- The Province wants University-level programs to be relevant and responsive to its provincial strategies;
- The Province wants high quality programs; and
- The Province wants university-level programs to be accessible by our citizens (and the citizens of other provinces/countries for the sake of our provincial sustainability).

The most expedient solution would be for institutions collectively to identify strategic university-level programs within their respective mandates. The Province must then ensure adequate ongoing funding, including reasonable annual inflation is received to maintain the quality of those strategic programs.

Within a reasonable planning horizon, the Province must ensure that ongoing funding is not subject to undue fluctuation/competition within the public university system so that funded programs are stable and accessible by citizens in spite of fluctuating enrolment. To accomplish this, any enrolment-based funding must be paid from a Provincial funding envelope which grows or shrinks with the enrolment of the university system. Further, any enrolment-based funding should be held stable during a reasonable planning horizon, say, three years, and updated every three years thereafter to soften the impact of major growth or shrinkage over time. The Province must ensure that base grant calculations appropriately reflect the value of a multi-campus system in support of both accessibility and the sustainability of strategic areas of the Province.

Finally, the Province must ensure international undergraduate students enrolled in New Brunswick universities are funded in a manner similar to domestic students so as to recognize this major source of population and economic growth as well as the impact on sustainability in the Province of New Brunswick. While all universities would be impacted, this measure alone would allow UNB to take the next step in the evolution of the Saint John campus.

As Bob Rae said in his PSE review, *Ontario: A Leader in Learning*, “Unfortunately, governments in the past have often taken the position that funding is a matter entirely of what government in any given year thinks it can afford, rather than what the revenue needs of the institution actually are. Hence, tuition levels are set to respond to a political barometer. The consequence is that the ongoing needs of the sector are undermined: there has to be a longer view taken. Low revenues for colleges and universities translate into reduced access for some and lower quality for all.”⁵

Our Infrastructure Renewal

UNB has some of the oldest university buildings in Canada. The average age of UNB Fredericton's buildings is 47 years, while the average age of Canadian university buildings is 38 years. Though UNB Saint John's buildings are, on average, 25 years old, they were built to accommodate a much smaller population of students, faculty and staff, and bear the consequences of overuse and constant reconfiguration of space. Conclusion? We have more buildings requiring infrastructure investment than universities in other jurisdictions. The Betts-Macdonald Financial Review noted, "UNB's accumulated deferred maintenance is in excess of \$108 million. This figure was established recently through an external independent audit of buildings on both campuses conducted by Jacques Whitford Environmental Ltd. and was internally verified. To gauge the severity of deferred maintenance, the Canadian Association of University Business Officers uses a facilities condition index (FCI). The FCI is the ratio of deferred maintenance over the current replacement value and, as a general rule, should not exceed 10 per cent. The index at UNB is about 20 per cent, the Atlantic average is 17.3 per cent, and the Canadian average is 11.2 per cent."

To rectify this situation, UNB would need to obtain \$108 million of one-time funding to address deferred maintenance as well as at least \$7.4 million per year (ongoing funding) for ongoing maintenance to ensure we adequately maintain our infrastructure. UNB is forecast to allocate \$5.4 million of ongoing funding per year in each of the next three years to buildings and spaces. This ongoing funding still represents a shortfall of \$2 million per year on the maintenance of buildings and spaces.

This capital renewal “deficit” has a major impact on UNB's ability to provide top-tier experiences to our students, to guard their health and safety, to ensure accessibility for the physically disabled, and to attract students and faculty who have the option, in an increasingly competitive marketplace, to attend or be employed at institutions with state-

⁵ *Ontario: A Leader in Learning* Report and Recommendations by The Honourable Bob Rae, Advisor to the Premier and the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, February 2005, page 24.

of-the-art facilities and amenities. (We are therefore concerned that the Province's Self-Sufficiency Task Force has not identified university campuses as strategic infrastructure.)

We do appreciate the Province's efforts in recent years to assist through the Universities Infrastructure Trust Fund and its commitment to passing on infrastructure monies provided this year by the federal government. However, the need remains largely unaddressed and is growing.

Our Advancement Efforts

Recognizing as we do the importance of self-sufficiency, we have embarked on an ambitious program to further strengthen our fund raising, alumni relations, communications and marketing activities. A Chief Advancement Officer has been appointed recently with a mandate to develop and implement a University-wide plan that is projected to generate revenues from external sources of \$20 million per year within five years. Building on the success of our \$100-million *Forging Our Futures* Campaign and our award-winning student recruitment and advocacy materials, we regard advancement as one of the most important activities we can undertake in the support of our mission.

We are particularly interested in developing new models for matching gift programs, such as the New Brunswick University Opportunities Fund, in partnership with government--programs that focus on areas of mutual interest that have the potential to create transformational change inside and outside UNB's campuses. In addition to support for student participation, a more ambitious provincial matching gift program could reflect strategic goals and support the shared transformative agenda of the Province and the University.

This approach could also provide an incentive for financial participation by constituencies who have a direct interest in the strategic outcomes supported by a matching gift program. Great engagement of private industry, foundations and public corporations with government and universities would serve to balance the burden of costs related to transformational change in New Brunswick.

UNB Saint John and Bi-campus Relations

One of UNB's greatest strengths and its greatest distinctions is its one-university, two-campus structure. The creation of UNB Saint John in 1964, an outcome of the Deutsch Commission, was a breakthrough for both UNB and for the Province. It made UNB accessible to a new constituency of students, students who likely would not otherwise have attended university. A recent Statistics Canada study confirmed that "a local degree granting institution is associated with a 28.1 per cent increase in university attendance among youth who grew up in that area. In addition, students from lower income families have significantly increased participation rates, because pursuing a university degree is more affordable when a local option is available."⁶ And it ensured that the renewal of New Brunswick's largest city would be catalyzed and supported, for the first time, by post-secondary education.

⁶ *Do Universities Benefit Local Youth?*, Marc Frenette, Statistics Canada, January 2007.

From its beginnings as a “feeder” campus for UNB Fredericton to the stature it enjoys today as a full partner in UNB, the Saint John campus has contributed significantly to southern New Brunswick and beyond. During the past decade, UNB Saint John has been the fastest growing campus in Atlantic Canada, currently enrolling about 2,700 full- and part-time students, many of them first-generation students and, increasingly, students from outside Canada. UNB Saint John has been remarkably successful in attracting international students, which represent between 20 and 25 per cent of its total enrolment. It is fair to say that UNB Saint John has internationalized the City and is encouraging to note that a number of international graduates have chosen to remain in New Brunswick, starting businesses and applying for permanent residency.

UNB’s Saint John campus has had a close relationship with its community and a legacy of collaboration. Building on a solid foundation of Business, Science and Arts, UNB Saint John is an active partner in the City’s *True Growth Strategy* and in the Vision 2015 development strategy. In a recent “State of the City” address, Mayor Norm MacFarlane noted, “We are in the process of reinventing our community...and I believe that the university and community college are central to the future growth of Saint John.” Renewal of the system of post-secondary education in New Brunswick is an opportunity to reposition and reinvest in a way that can enhance UNB Saint John’s academic core and produce a positive future for UNB and for the Province as a whole. In the context of the current climate of investment and social and economic change in Greater Saint John, UNB Saint John’s role in the community and beyond is more important than ever before.

Despite its many successes, it has become increasingly difficult for UNB Saint John to sustain this growth and innovation. In the four decades since the campus was founded, it has outgrown the existing funding formula, its infrastructure for supporting academic programs is in need of renewal, and its administrative structures and relationships with UNB in Fredericton and with other post-secondary institutions within the region need to be re-assessed for improvements and efficiencies.

We acknowledge that relations between our two campuses have not been as productive as they could or should have in the past nor have we fully realized the synergies and complementarity inherent in a multi-campus organization. UNB Saint John has matured over the past 43 years and the structures of its original conception, though constantly evolving, tend to chafe—on both Saint John and Fredericton.

In proposing an Anglophone post-secondary system, as we do below, we recognize that we have some ways to go in achieving a working model within our own institution. Both our campuses face substantial though somewhat different challenges, mirrored in New Brunswick at large, which calls for mutual respect, openness and understanding, intelligent and dispassionate dialogue and a willingness to compromise for the good of the whole. We are committed to addressing the bi-campus irritants, which include funding, shared administrative responsibilities and academic planning. Our Bi-Campus Ad Hoc Committee on University-Wide Academic Regulations, which will examine cooperation between our two senates, is one small example of the steps we are taking.

Internationalization

In support of the government's Population Growth Secretariat and in keeping with the immigration goals set by the Self-Sufficiency Task Force, UNB plays a pivotal role in attracting people to New Brunswick from beyond its borders. We are, and have been for many years, a magnet for bright, high-achieving people: faculty, staff and students who add immensely to our productivity and our cultural diversity.

UNB has long been the most internationally-oriented institution in the province, bringing some 1,500 to 1,800 international students to New Brunswick annually and, through a variety of study abroad programs on both campuses, providing our own students with experiences of other cultures and educational approaches. We are now taking a more coordinated and integrated approach to managing its internationalization efforts in order to better achieve its mission and reap greater benefits for the communities it serves.

In order to fulfill its mandate as a provincial university, UNB has increased its efforts to:

- promote internationalization of the curricula and the teaching faculty, and increase global awareness in the student body;
- support enrollment management and quality of programs by increasing UNB's stature as a national and international institution;
- increase and diversify international enrollment of both undergraduate and graduate students;
- increase effective participation in rewarding international initiatives (research, development, articulated and joint academic programs, multi-lateral student mobility programs);
- increase UNB's participation in initiatives of the community, province and region aimed at increasing immigration readiness, immigration and global awareness of citizens.

There are initiatives well underway in all of these areas and continued internationalization of UNB is considered one of the strategic priorities of the university.

In his brief to the Self-Sufficiency Task Force, Ted Robak, Director of the International Relations Office, outlined a vision for a university-government partnership in internationalization that would see exponential gains in immigration.⁷ The government of New Brunswick should capitalize on UNB's revitalized internationalization efforts since these would directly bolster the province's socioeconomic goals: to increase the global awareness of its citizens, to attract highly-skilled immigrants, to increase innovation and to enhance New Brunswick's international recognition and reputation. UNB regards internationalization as one of the most significant contributions it can make to the Province.

⁷ See University of New Brunswick International at <http://www.gnb.ca/2026/SubmittedBriefs-e.asp> for the complete brief.

Research

As mentioned above, UNB conducts 80 per cent of all the university research and more than half of all R&D in the Province. The quality and quantity of this work is what distinguishes UNB as a comprehensive national university. In 2002, President John McLaughlin set an audacious goal to double research revenues, then at \$20 million, within five years. To 2005-06, UNB had achieved \$47.7 million of research revenue: \$29.5 million in grants, \$14.2 million in contracts and \$4 million of "other" revenues. More than \$2.2 million of that research revenue is attributable directly to our Saint John campus. UNB was in the enviable position of increasing its research revenue by 100 per cent over five years (since 2001-02). This growth was largely attributable to a \$5.9 million, 84 per cent, growth in contract revenue, innovative centres like the Canadian Research Institute for Social Policy and the Canadian Rivers Institute, and the federal Indirect Costs of Research program.

This growth occurred despite significant environmental challenges. According to the Betts-MacDonald Financial Review, "In most areas of Canada, notably Ontario and Quebec, R&D is driven by business enterprises. Atlantic Canada's R&D is driven by the higher education sector. Higher education in New Brunswick invests more than twice the national level as a percentage of total spending, while the province's business enterprises spend only half the national level."

As the powerhouse for research in New Brunswick, UNB makes a special contribution to the Province. Research fosters innovation, attracts top quality students and faculty, and creates jobs for full-time employees and for students. In fact, 21 per cent of the research revenues in 2005-06 went to support student salaries. As the Steering Committee on Post-Secondary Research recommends, we strongly support the government increase the amount of dedicated funds to enable colleges and universities to leverage federal money at all levels and to match the federal government's Indirect Costs of Research grants.

Accountability

UNB takes its responsibility for accountability very seriously. The support of the public is a trust, a tangible indication of the importance of education to the well-being of the Province. All of our financial information is made available on our website, as are our academic policies and procedures, human resources information, planning documents, organizational charts, minutes of the meetings of our senates and Board of Governors, and annual reports.

A focus on quality and accountability has long been a part of UNB culture. Hiring and tenure processes for faculty, librarians and instructors have always required rigorous internal and external performance reviews. Since 1998, UNB's collective agreement with its faculty association has included a memorandum of understanding on professional accountability. The Joint Performance Indicators Committee, established in 1998 and now known as the Performance Analysis Advisory Group (PAAG), has developed performance measures and provided advice to University management on their implementation. Our Quality Assurance Policy⁸, which requires a review of every

⁸ See <http://www.unbf.ca/vp/quality.html> for a full description of UNB's Quality Assurance Policy.

academic department on a seven-year cycle, was recently reviewed and approved by the MPHEC Quality Assurance Monitoring Programme, which noted, “Indeed, the Monitoring Committee was impressed by the University’s policy as well as the President and Vice President Academic’s commitment to quality assurance.”

Nonetheless, we recognize there is always room for improvement, especially when it comes to providing an exceptional learning environment for our students. We would welcome recommendations from the Commission about ways in which we can be more accountable and have always stated our willingness to appear before the Public Accounts Committee or other appropriate body to explain how our government funding is used.

A National Comprehensive University and the New Brunswick Community

New Brunswick citizens have the right to expect that their opportunities for higher education are as good as those available in other provinces. A national comprehensive university providing a broad range of high quality programs is an essential long term investment in building a prosperous and fulfilling society that is attractive to the best and brightest of our current citizens, migrants from other provinces, and immigrants. As the past has shown, over time this can result in population growth and added economic prosperity.

A modern national comprehensive university with a substantial research and graduate studies mandate is a prerequisite to addressing current New Brunswick realities and is essential to the innovation that can drive new economic development. As such a university, UNB is prepared, and uniquely positioned, to provide leadership, as part of a high quality and well coordinated post-secondary education system in Anglophone New Brunswick.

A Public Post-Secondary Education System for the 21st Century

New Brunswick is an extremely small jurisdiction to support seven university and eleven community college campuses, especially if they are operating in competition with each other and, to any significant extent, duplicating each other’s programs.

The English and French linguistic communities have the constitutional right to distinct educational institutions. We strongly believe in the merits of a PSE **system** for the Province’s three Anglophone universities and the six NBCC campuses. The system we envisage would maintain the distinct identities of each institution while drawing them more closely together through the integration of programs, shared services and infrastructure, joint and adjunct appointments of faculty and greater collaboration in teaching and research. A key component of the Anglophone system would be strengthened links to francophone institutions, particularly the Université de Moncton, to maximize the deployment of the Province’s intellectual capital regardless of language.

A Model for the Anglophone PSE System

There are a number of models that might be adopted to create a system of post-secondary education. The new institutional and financial arrangements needed for a system will be complex, and we look forward to examining them with the Commissioners. Strategic

resource allocations, which might be overseen by a newly constituted New Brunswick Higher Education Commission, are likely to be key to achieving a robust and responsive system.

The Anglophone PSE system in New Brunswick should be a publicly funded model based on a greater degree of collaboration and bridging between the current public institutions. Private institutions should operate outside the system and receive no direct public funding. The system must be structured and funded in such a way as to encourage cooperation and resource sharing among institutions, replacing the highly competitive model currently used. We need to eliminate the “race to the bottom” of price competition for students by establishing transparent funding models.

Specific arrangements which could be made for greater collaboration include:

- A New Brunswick Digital Library networked among all post-secondary institutions and accessible to all residents of NB.
- A PSE Services Agency for “back-office” services such as transcript and registration records, purchasing, student billing, and electronic infrastructure and communications. This could include a Student Service Agency similar to Service New Brunswick which would allow students to efficiently access their records, manage their registration, pay fees, and obtain required information.
- Electronic infra-structure sufficient to allow students to take courses that are offered by other institutions, so as to enrich the options available to students and increase efficiency of resource allocation and use.
- Co-location of Community Colleges and university facilities, as appropriate and as opportunities arise. Specifically the proposed Fredericton Community College should be co-located with UNB and STU in order to share libraries, student services, recreation facilities, physical plant, and security. Discussions currently underway in Saint John about co-locating a new Saint John Community College at UNB Saint John provide a model for this approach.
- Creation of a virtual New Brunswick Graduate School by accreditation of appropriately qualified faculty to the (primarily) UNB Graduate School so that all qualified faculty in NB could supervise graduate students. This would allow greater capacity for graduate studies and a broader array of research options and supervisor specialties from which students could choose.
- Bridges to the Université of Moncton would add additional richness and strength. Such bridges already exist in some areas, for example, in the Community-University Research Alliance on Labour History and in CRYSTAL, a study of science and mathematics instruction in elementary and secondary schools. There is a great deal more opportunity for collaboration in research; shared programs, such as that between UNB’s and U de M’s forestry programs where students from both institutions spend two years on each other’s campuses; and faculty exchanges.
- Although UNB and STU would maintain their separate identities, there should be highly cooperative arrangements between UNB and STU to provide a greater choice for students by making use of all faculty at both institutions, with course credit and cost arrangements that are transparent to the student. For example, a

history student could take courses offered by faculty employed by either UNB or STU without being concerned about academic credit, costs, or who employs the professor. It would be preferable if departments operated as if they were a single unit with cooperative determination of curriculum, course offerings and hirings at both institutions. These arrangements would be covered by formal written agreements between the universities. Such a single department model already exists for Physics and Chemistry departments in Fredericton and Saint John and could be extended.

Community Colleges within the Anglophone PSE System

We support the NB Community College becoming an independent institution, continuing to be publicly funded by the provincial government. Within the Anglophone PSE system,

- NBCC would continue to offer an array of occupation specific skills and training in:
 - skilled trades
 - technologist programs
 - health support related programs
 - other specific skills such as art and design, craft, forest rangers, tourism management.
- NBCC should play a major role in increasing the participation rate of currently under-represented populations by providing:
 - Transition programs for groups that are underrepresented in post-secondary education, aimed at removing or alleviating systemic barriers to participation.
 - High school upgrades for adults who have not completed high school.
 - College preparatory courses for those who need additional preparation to meet entrance criteria for other community college programs and/or apprenticeships and/or the armed forces.
 - University preparatory courses for those who need additional preparation to meet university entrance requirements.
 - General studies programs for those who are undecided about their path or require additional workplace skills,
 - Core communication and literacy skills.
 - Core mathematical and numeracy skills.
 - English language training for immigrant families and support programs for parents of first generation students, in cooperation with community groups such as multi-cultural associations who assist them in their transition to Canadian society.
 - In cooperation with the French system, French language training for students who wish to improve their skills in the second language.
- The number and scope of articulated programs should be increased to include:
 - Clear paths for moving from community college credentials to university degrees in appropriate areas (practical nursing to BN, engineering technology to BScE and the like)

- Opportunities for students who are in, or have completed, a community college program to obtain the broader education available in universities.
- Opportunities for university students to obtain training in occupation specific skills as part of, or after completion of, their university programs.
- It should not have degree granting status, but should work with universities to provide parts of articulated programs that lead to degrees.

Universities within the Anglophone PSE System

- The current system of independent university governance should be maintained to encourage distinctive strengths and to provide students with a choice of learning environments.
- The three public universities (STU, MtA and UNB) would continue to have their distinctive characters, focusing even more intensively on niche programs that complement each other and address New Brunswick's economic agenda, such as the energy sector in Saint John. UNB would "anchor" the system as New Brunswick's comprehensive national university, offering a solid core of Arts and Science, professional programs, a range of graduate studies and deep capacity for research.
- Collegial decision making and academic freedom would continue to be promoted and respected.
- The public institutions would continue to offer degrees as they do now.
- Private universities would maintain their status as private institutions with no grants of public funds.
- New structural arrangements would identify mutual expectations and the means of achieving a seamless system for students and the most appropriate use of resources for the overall NB Anglophone PSE System.
- A New Brunswick Higher Education Commission would serve as mediator and referee to facilitate the cooperation among institutions, but would not have direct regulatory powers.

What would be expected from such a system?

The Anglophone PSE system should function on the basis of a commitment to life long learning and a long term investment in producing the best educated workforce in Canada. To achieve the flexible, creative, adaptable, life long learner who will be strongly engaged in the workforce and as a citizen in civil society, we need to set specific goals for higher education including the ability to:

- communicate effectively using all media (including electronic), and the capacity to use other languages as required;
- think critically and creatively, including problem solving, numerical fluency and information literacy;
- understand and practice moral and ethical reasoning in making choices;
- positively engage in the community as an effective world citizen;
- live with, and adopt to, diversity, uncertainty, and change;
- live within a global society, and understand our relationships to other people;

- establish and practice a breadth of personal interests, enhancing personal well being;
- make a living, and adjust by learning new skills as required when circumstances change.

All parts of the system would make contributions to achieving one or more of these objectives, and the concept of life long learning would be emphasized throughout the education system starting in elementary school and extending through post-secondary education and beyond. Students would be advised that various career paths, including the workforce, the armed forces, apprenticeships, community colleges, universities and private training may each be appropriate and offer opportunities at various times in their career.

Students should be able to access one or more parts of the PSE system in a seamless and transparent way. In particular, students should be able to engage in university education providing a range of lifelong learning skills at the same time as they prepare for the workforce by learning skills that are job specific through a community college, apprenticeship, or private training.

At university, the student's education should be integrated across specific skills and broad lifelong learning skills, with specific programs to assist the student in drawing on all aspects of their student experience and learning, and to make connections among those experiences. University students should have the ability to participate in active scholarship and experiential learning, including active engagement in the work of NGOs, government and private sector organizations.

Learning should be integrated into a student's life, including making it possible to take courses at times and places that fit within the other life parameters such as work, child care, and volunteer activities. This will require a much more highly developed e-learning agenda for the Province's PSE institutions.

New Brunswick would benefit from increased collaboration between public school teachers and PSE institutions, including improved ongoing professional development and programs such as the current Teaching Associates where teachers participate actively in university courses and programs, to the mutual benefit of the teachers and the universities.

We could start with a focus on making New Brunswick a preferred place to study, learn and do research. Attracting young people to the province to study, and top faculty to do research, provides an opportunity for long term population growth if it is coupled with creation of jobs that require the skills learned by the students. One of the potential results of research and graduate studies is to provide spin off jobs, particularly in the knowledge sector of the economy.

The entire system should be "co-branded" together with the Province for purposes of recruiting students and faculty from other parts of Canada and internationally, as a component of the government's plan to attract additional people to New Brunswick. New

Brunswick should attempt to become a “learning destination” based on its high quality post-secondary system, its bilingual character, and its attractive cultural and natural environment and way of life.

This does not mean that all programs must be provided by New Brunswick institutions. Mutually beneficial arrangements can be negotiated with other universities to offer some programs partly in New Brunswick when high cost or the requirement for a large population base are factors. An example is cooperation with Dalhousie and Sherbrooke to offer clinical experience components of their medical programs in New Brunswick.

Within a PSE system, the entire Province becomes the learning environment for its citizens.

What Would It Cost to be the Best?

Premier Shawn Graham and his government have committed to making the Province’s educational system the best. No matter how creative, innovative and ingenious we are, investments will be needed to make this happen. These investments are significant, but they are relatively modest when considered in light of the Province’s \$6.64-billion budget. And the return on investment would be truly transformational.

Our Integrated Planning & Budget group studied two questions, assuming in every instance a plan for deferred infrastructure renewal (\$108 million for UNB, an estimated \$236 million for all New Brunswick universities⁹) would be in place:

(1) What would it cost the Provincial Government to support student-focused items like infrastructure renewal, tuition equalization, library acquisitions, scholarships, bursaries, prizes and other student services at UNB to put us on par with (a) New Brunswick standards, (b) Maritime provinces’ standards, and (c) Maclean’s Comprehensive standards?

For UNB to achieve "**average in class**" status (a) among New Brunswick universities, \$12 million of incremental ongoing funding; (b) among Maritime universities, \$14.5 million of incremental ongoing funds; and (c) in the *Maclean’s* Comprehensive category of universities, \$18 million of incremental ongoing funds would be required. For UNB to achieve "**best in class**" status (a) among New Brunswick universities, \$15 million of incremental ongoing funding; (b) among Maritime universities, \$23 million of incremental ongoing funds; (c) in the *Maclean’s* Comprehensive category of universities, \$32 million of incremental ongoing funding would be needed.

*(2) What would it cost the Provincial Government to support those same student-focused items for **all universities** in the Province?*

For all New Brunswick universities to compete at “**average in class**” in the *Maclean’s* Comprehensive category, incremental ongoing funding of \$28 million per year would be

⁹ Submission by the New Brunswick Universities Presidents’ Group to the Commission on Post-Secondary Education, April 2007, page 2.

required. "Best in class" status in the *Maclean's* Comprehensive category for all universities would require incremental ongoing funding of \$52 million per year.

Conclusion and Acknowledgements

Twenty pages is a very limited space within which to document and discuss the state of post-secondary education in New Brunswick generally and UNB in particular. There is a great deal we have had to leave unsaid, a whole cauldron of aspirations and achievements, dissatisfactions and needs. We have chosen to focus on a few major areas where, we believe, we stand to make the most gain. Even those have not been explained as fully as we would have liked. Our Academic Study Group¹⁰, convened to assist in the University's response to the Commission, summarized our thinking very well:

- New Brunswick should have a distinct set of universities, including as the centrepiece a national, comprehensive university engaged in undergraduate teaching, graduate teaching, and research.
- New Brunswick's universities should attain a level of excellence that attracts the best students and the best faculty from across Canada and around the world. This will require increased funding and doing things differently.
- New Brunswick's universities should engage lifelong learners with a full range of programs, both traditional degree programs that remain central to the university experience, and innovative offerings using new media and structures to reach new audiences.
- New Brunswick's universities should meet the need for a broadly educated citizenry able to adapt to a rapidly changing world, as well as meeting the need for specific disciplines in the workforce.
- Graduates of a New Brunswick university should all receive a quality general education, so that they can communicate effectively; think critically; understand ethical reasoning; engage their local community and their global society; embrace diversity and change; and establish a breadth of personal interests.
- New Brunswick's universities should be renowned for their contributions to human knowledge. This research mission should include applied work to drive economic growth in the short term, but should also include the fundamental research critical to long-term improvement in the human condition.
- The government should find ways to promote more broadly the proven values of higher education for the entire province.

¹⁰ The Academic Study Group is co-chaired by UNBF Dean of Science, Allan Sharp, and UNBSJ Dean of Arts, Robert MacKinnon. Its membership is drawn from the faculty and librarians of both campuses: Dan Downes, Social Science; Joanna Everitt, History and Politics; Greg Fleet, Business; Steve Heard, Biology; Fran Holyoke, Science Librarian; John Johnson, Science; Terry Nikkel, Information Services and Systems; Luc Theriault, Sociology; Janice Thompson, Dean of Nursing; Barbara Trenholm, Business Administration; Gary Waite, History; Lloyd Waugh, Civil Engineering; Weiqiu Yu, Economics, Associate Dean of Arts. We wish to acknowledge their many contributions to this document, along with those of the Financial Study Group co-chaired by Tim Walker, Manager, Integrated Planning & Budgeting, UNBF, and Chris Callbeck, Assistant Vice-President Finance and Administrative Services, UNBSJ; Director of Government Relations, David Emerson; Special Advisor to the Vice-President Fredericton, Mike Ircha; and Senior Advisor for Advancement, Susan Montague.

Our vision for post-secondary education is lofty, far-reaching and ambitious, but, as the Study Group so aptly put it, we must not—nay, cannot--let our small size limit us to small goals.