

MOUNT ALLISON UNIVERSITY  
SUBMISSION TO  
COMMISSION ON POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION  
Thursday 12 April 2007

PREAMBLE

Mount Allison University is strongly supportive of the Premier's agenda to create a self-sufficient New Brunswick that comprises a world-class post-secondary education system. Indeed, Mount Allison has been relentlessly committed to providing academic excellence and an exceptional experience for its students and we are resolved to deepen this commitment in the coming decades.

We believe that the wider community – both in New Brunswick and across the country as well – supports our agenda of excellence. This has been demonstrated in our recent capacity to have generated a \$100 million endowment. This endowment contributes about 8% of our operating budget, which helps us to maintain academic and programme excellence. But it also suggests the ways in which universities themselves can act as an autonomous economic sector, which attracts economic and social resources into the province in a partnership with the wider Canadian and international communities. Mount Allison University's total business operation comprises over \$50 million expenditure a year, triple the size of the government grant that we gratefully receive. Much of our revenue flows into New Brunswick from outside of the province – both in the form of tuition revenue and student expenditures but also in terms of research grants and private donations.

We understand and appreciate that the context of post-secondary education in New Brunswick has changed – both in terms of regional demographic realities but also in terms of the wider complex of international and technological developments that have impacted on universities everywhere. We will offer suggestions to address the demographic situation later in this submission. As an introductory observation on the latter issue, allow us to make two preliminary observations. On the one hand, we believe that the present international and technological context cries out more than ever for the kind of education that we have been providing for generations. This is an education that creates literate, articulate, competent, intelligent, adaptable, creative, internationally and culturally sensitive, and publicly-oriented

graduates. They will be our leaders and opinion-setters in the public, private, artistic, and other communities of the future. On the other hand, we appreciate that the New Brunswick context demands a more ‘systematic’ approach to post-secondary education than may have been taken in the past. In this, we look forward to playing our role and to shaping a more ‘systematic’ approach to post-secondary education. We believe that there should be ongoing and dynamic collaboration amongst the New Brunswick universities and with the community colleges, the government, and various parts of the private sector.

We hope that the self-sufficiency and PSE agendas will intersect substantially over the coming months and years. It is our view that the university sector comprises a real and genuine comparative advantage for New Brunswick. It is a sector that can generate substantial knowledge, wealth, and capacity. And it is a sector that can provide leadership and partnership opportunities with the government and with a variety of other economic sectors in New Brunswick and beyond. New Brunswick universities’ economic impact is presently over \$1 billion, generating over \$200 million in annual pay and \$110 million in total tax revenues. Our universities produce \$113 million in R&D activities, 72% of the New Brunswick total.

As a general strategy, we hope that the province will ‘lever’ their past PSE investments in two ways.

First, we believe that the New Brunswick government should partner with its universities in marketing the unique and quality styles and approaches that we bring to university education. It is our view that this will help to attract an increased number of national and international students, private sector support, and foundation/philanthropic support for government (both people and financial resources). This initiative has academic merit in itself, as a more national and international student cohort increases the quality of experience for New Brunswick students. But it could likely more than neutralize the demographic challenge that the Discussion Paper has illustrated – remembering that over 80% of graduates remain in New Brunswick after they complete their post-secondary education. And, this initiative could add substantial value to the economic system. We note the Harper government’s first tentative steps in its recent budget, to invest \$2 million in an effort to attract an increased number of quality international students to Canada. The New Brunswick government could partner with the

federal government in this regard and could also launch a national initiative to attract students from across the country.

Second, we hope that the province will appreciate that the university sector has the capacity to generate economic growth, in partnership with the government and the private sector. As in the previous point, it should be a priority public goal to make New Brunswick a destination spot for labour and capital from across Canada and around the world. Mount Allison University feels that it has the capacity and is particularly well-placed to form partnerships with the government and the private sector in areas like the fine and performing arts, environmentalism, globalization, scientific research, and development of the public sector. We will pursue this suggestion in the concluding section of this submission.

### **MOUNT ALLISON UNIVERSITY**

The CPSE discussion paper characterizes Mount Allison University as (a) ‘one of the country’s leading undergraduate liberal arts institutions’ (page 3) and as (b) a ‘primarily undergraduate teaching university.’ (page 8) We very much appreciate that the Commission understands our academic quality and our elevated national ranking in the post-secondary system. But we feel that we should assert that we are a ‘full-service’ university despite our size (2000+ students). This differentiates us from most other universities in both the New Brunswick and Canadian systems.

To begin, we offer a **full** range of Science, Fine and Performing Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Commerce programmes. While we are widely known for the latter programmes in particular, the fact is that about a quarter of our faculty and students are in the Sciences, where we offer academic programmes and technical and lab facilities across the full range of scientific disciplines. We hold a number of Canada Research Chairs in the Sciences, have numerous science faculty with NSERC and SSHRC grants, and we graduate excellent NSERC-funded students who have gone on to top graduate schools in Canada and across the world.

This fact of offering a full range of academic programmes is a positive and substantial differentiator of Mount Allison from the rest of the system. Notwithstanding our intimacy, our students experience a broad and full range of academic and interdisciplinary experiences across the sciences and arts. This gives them the opportunity to attain a genuinely interdisciplinary

and broad academic training. We feel that this experience is valuable in itself and also particularly appropriate for the complex and changing technological world that they will enter.

A second factor that differentiates Mount Allison in the post-secondary system is that we provide our students with ‘more than a degree.’ As outlined in our strategic plan, Mount Allison offers its students an extensive array of extracurricular and community-based activities in a residential, small-town setting. The experience outside of the immediate classroom complements the students’ academic programme and offers them a ‘value-added’ skill set that is incredibly important for the world they will live in. These experiences range from community living through leadership and organizational opportunities, from international and multicultural experiences through social participation and activism. As outlined in our recent strategic plan, these activities cluster around a number of themes, which we feel will inform their lives in the future: globalization, the environment, arts and culture, science and creativity, and public service. These ‘horizontal’ activities complement their ‘vertical’ academic studies, providing them with ‘more than a degree’ – and a real comparative advantage - as they move forward into their professional and applied lives. Indeed, our data indicate that more than 60% of our graduates go on to further professional and graduate study.

The Discussion Paper raises a number of thematic points. The remainder of this submission will follow its presentation in most regards.

### **ACCESSIBILITY**

The Discussion Paper raises a number of intriguing points in this area. It notes that the participation rate in the New Brunswick university sector is high and that the retention rate is low. It is our general view that there is a relationship between these two factors that needs examination. Our internal data show that our retention rate is higher than the system’s and varies yearly in the 82-84% range. Notwithstanding this, our strategic paper presents a number of issues to this end, particularly as we attract a relatively young age cohort. We will be developing more substantial academic and advisory support systems and will be working to ensure professional skills development. This will address the fact that students are not arriving at university with a similar skill set relative to those in previous decades.

Second, as will be discussed below, we are keen supporters of the development of an excellent and coherent community college system. The community college system provides an enormous benefit to the region in a range of activities. As in other provinces, there is enormous opportunity for collaboration between the two sectors, concurrently or consecutively. We support increased mobility and collaboration between the two systems and will be willing partners.

To the broader accessibility agenda, after preliminary discussions with other universities and socio-educational organizations in the region, we see four particular opportunities/responsibilities for Mount Allison in the future that are worth exploring at this time:

- (i) English-language post-secondary education in southeast New Brunswick, particularly the greater Moncton area
- (ii) Bilingual post-secondary education
- (iii) Programming/support for aboriginal students, in focused areas like public sector management and sciences and mathematics
- (iv) Rural and historically disadvantaged students, given our tradition of providing educational opportunity and support in the province

(i) *SOUTHEAST NEWBRUNSWICK AND MONCTON*

We are keen to participate in the expansion of English-language post-secondary educational opportunities in southeast New Brunswick. We have deep roots in the area and we feel a responsibility in particular to the greater Moncton area. Indeed, we feel very much a part of that community, particularly given increased mobility and the improved transportation systems that have developed in the area. Many of our faculty, staff, and students live in the Moncton area and we increasingly identify ourselves with Moncton and area.

There have been some attempts at outreach in the Moncton area over the years. But this has lacked either a systematic approach or a systemic context. We feel that the time for both is now.

We have recently made a number of new overtures in this regard, including a number of collaborative initiatives with l' Université de Moncton (UdeM). Moreover, as we will articulate more fully below, we are partnering with the

Moncton Flight School and NBCC in a new Bachelor of Aviation, pending MPHEC approval.

That said, we appreciate that the English-language population of the Moncton area wants and deserves more than an ad hoc programmatic approach. We understand that Mount Allison University on its own does not have the capacity to respond to this need. But we feel that we can provide developmental leadership in a collaborative approach in the Moncton area, working with UdeM and NBCC in particular. Broadly put, we anticipate the creation of a working group, with representatives of the government, the city of Moncton and our collaborative PSE partners. This group could develop a set of understandings and commitments, where each of the partners develops and provides those segments of a number of degrees that they are best-positioned to provide. These could be provided in Moncton itself but also in Sackville, where transportation would be organized for and provided to students.

With respect to a physical location, we suggest one of two approaches. The City of Moncton could fund and provide the core teaching/office buildings to get the project started, perhaps in buildings that it owns or would like to see modernized (for example, see Wilfrid Laurier campus at Brantford). Or, the initiative could use facilities at NBCC and particularly UdeM to start, with expansion in those locales at a later time (for example, Trent and York at the Durham College campus in Oshawa).

For further discussion, see ‘Collaboration’ initiatives below (page 14)

*(ii) BILINGUAL EDUCATION*

New Brunswick is unique in Canada as the only officially bilingual province. We feel that this brings both responsibilities and opportunities, to provide a more self-consciously designed set of post-secondary bilingual opportunities and programmes. We believe that existing programmes should be surveyed to assess which of them would offer benefit to students and to society, if provided in a bilingual format. Once identified, we would enthusiastically collaborate with the UdeM and other partners to design and deliver a set of appropriate bilingual programmes.

We have already initiated discussions to this end with the UdeM. As one of our core priority areas of competence and differentiation, we are contemplating providing a bilingual degree in ‘Public Sector Studies’. This

would be modeled after the famous Oxford PPE degree (Philosophy, Politics and Economics). As is widely appreciated, there will be an enormous turnover in the public sector in the next decade. Given the importance and centrality of the government's leadership in New Brunswick, it is vital that it enjoy a top-class, bilingual civil service. Indeed, a similar demographic challenge prevails in Ottawa. We believe that there is an enormous opportunity for New Brunswick to become the destination place for the education and training of the next generation of leading public servants in New Brunswick and across Canada.

This would be pursued jointly by our two universities through a Bachelor of Public Sector Studies, to be offered in a bilingual programme. Students could take courses concurrently and/or consecutively on both of the two campuses, with applied specializations available on either campus.

*(iii) ABORIGINAL PROGRAMMING*

We would like to pursue our community responsibilities in providing educational opportunities for First Nations. We have had discussions with the Ministry and with aboriginal officials in this regard. Sackville's location suggests that we would be most useful in offering relatively specialized programmes that respond to a real need and in areas not already offered elsewhere.

Our understanding is that other regional universities are providing a reasonable level of opportunities in areas such as Arts, Social Sciences, and so on. We have been informed that we could possibly usefully provide a programme in the area of Mathematics and Sciences, as well as in public sector management and fisheries sciences. We are presently exploring these opportunities.

*(iv) RURAL AND DISADVANTAGED POPULATION*

Mount Allison has a long tradition of providing educational opportunities for the rural and small town population of the region as well as for disadvantaged students. Given our human size and the intimate character of Sackville, Mount Allison is an attractive destination place for students from these areas. Moreover, our capacity to fund raise has increased our capacity to offer targeted financial support. We provide over \$2 million annually in financial support to our students, which works out to over \$1,000 per student on average. Our recent strategic plan looks to create a future situation wherein any able and willing student would not be constrained from

attending Mount Allison University for financial reasons. We are also interested in addressing the issue of lifelong learning, and have nearly 150 mature students in our student cohort.

### **RELEVANCE AND RESPONSIVENESS**

The Discussion Paper poses the rhetorical question: ‘*Why do so many university students enroll in arts programmes?*’ (Page 6) The question is premised on an ostensible disconnect between students’ demands and the changing world/market. However, we do not believe that there is a substantial disconnect.

To begin with, about one-quarter of our students enroll in Science courses – from Environmental Science, Physics, Chemistry and Biology to Mathematics, Computer Science and Psychology. These students have the qualifications and aptitude in these areas. These are very rigorous programmes of study, with enormous opportunities for students to engage in research projects and teaching with their professors. Moreover, they pursue their studies within broader liberal arts and science programmes and an extracurricular community environment that sees them emerge as well-rounded individuals with their specialized degrees. We anticipate expanding and maintaining the rigour of these science programmes and deepening and widening the broader extracurricular and community context in which this academic experience is situated.

In other areas, we provide students with opportunities in the social sciences, humanities, commerce, and fine and performing arts. These are rigorous programmes as well, albeit to a more myriad and eclectic array of ends. These programmes have been and continue to be popular – here and across the country - for a number of reasons.

First, as in the Sciences, high enrolment in these programmes reflects students’ qualifications, interests, and aptitudes. Second, the students choose these programmes precisely because they understand the kind of education that they need. They understand that a core, if not the primary, purpose of an undergraduate education is to become an intelligent, articulate, and competent person who graduates with a high capacity for creativity, adaptability, communications, and social, international, and cultural understanding. They are then poised to pursue complementary professional or graduate studies and accumulate work and social experience that provides



opportunities for career and professional development over the long term. Indeed, over 60% of our graduates successfully go on to take further professional and graduate training, with this experience as their foundation. Moreover, we have no evidence that this educational experience disadvantages their career or income prospects.

Does this type of education or programme ‘prepare’ them for the complex, changing technological and international world that the Discussion Paper presents? (Pages 2, 6)

It is our strongly held view that an overly narrow and focused programme of study would disadvantage our students over the long term. Our role is to produce graduates who have the skills and capacity to understand and to adapt to change, owing to the transferable skills that we inculcate – critical thinking, analysis, research, verbal and written skills, and so on. This is much more important and durable than simply being market driven and tooling up to respond to the latest perceived need in the labour market, only to have it evaporate in five years’ time. Indeed, prospective employers and major firms tell us time and again that they desire our graduates – particularly those young people who are intellectually quick and nimble, creative and critical, and with strong communication skills.

Of course, the set of skills that we offer to our students is produced through applied courses of study that reflect contemporary changes in society, the economy, and the world. A survey of our calendar and courses will reveal this – the extent to which our courses reflect globalization and technology, as well as environment, gender, multicultural, and other critical contemporary issues. Similarly, our science courses are modernized and modified by our engaged and active science faculty, reflecting their external professional and research activities that touch modern developments and the latest innovations.

Moreover, our academic programmes and activities are pursued in an environment that combines warmth and humanity with the latest technological developments. Mount Allison was the first to develop a wireless campus and our students use modern communications and research technology in their academic studies and beyond. We have modernized our classrooms to give students and faculty access to the new technological developments and possibilities in pedagogy and much of course work,

administration and so on is delivered through web-based systems. Our students graduate with enormous technological capacity.

Finally, we believe that our students experience a relevant academic and university experience to the extent that they live and act in a university world that reflects the broader world. Our university has certainly reached and moved beyond gender equity. About one-third of our students originate from outside the Atlantic area, ensuring that our students have a national and international experience. Indeed, about 8% of our students are international, giving our students both international and multicultural dimensions. This in turn is complemented by on campus international programming as well as exchange programmes. Within this national and international context, the students' education extends to a rich array of extracurricular activity, including international, communications, organizational, cultural, and leadership activities, which help develop the personal and technical characteristics to function and adapt in a rapidly changing world.

### **QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

At the risk of being repetitive, Mount Allison University is committed to providing the highest possible academic quality and experience for its students. At the core of the strategic plan is our commitment to academic quality and differentiation. We support efforts to ensure academic quality across each of the dimensions of the university: including our academic programmes, teaching, and research.

In general, we support external accountability mechanisms like the Maclean's surveys and we will be participating in surveys that measure students experience and satisfaction (e.g. National Survey of Student Engagement – NSSE – and the Canadian Undergraduate Survey Consortium – CUSC).

With respect to academic programmes, we support the principle of external review of academic programmes, directed by a central agency like the MPHEC that sets guidelines and processes for university programmes. Indeed, we were one of the first universities to undergo the new MPHEC quality assessment review. We are committed to regular review of academic programmes and with public accountability for the process.

With respect to teaching, Mount Allison is committed to the principle that good quality teaching is central to the university experience. We support the idea that a mechanism should be in place to review and evaluate teaching. Mount Allison places a high premium on quality teaching and commits substantial resources to this end. We have a 15:1 student-teacher ratio, to ensure small class size and faculty accessibility to students. We have developed the Purdy Crawford Teaching Centre as a resource to improve our faculty's pedagogic technique and also to provide student teaching internships. We have also re-introduced a formal system of student academic advising. The University offers multiple teaching and faculty awards that offer incentives to and support of good teaching and pedagogy. A number of our faculty are 3M Teaching Fellows and other teaching award winners. Our Senate has made a formal commitment to the principle of student evaluation of teaching and the University has taken action to operationalize this principle. There are ample formal and informal opportunities for student feedback and evaluation.

With respect to research, we would like to reiterate our role in the research enterprise that is also at the heart of the university experience. Indeed, this feature differentiates the University from other institutions. We have the mandate to create new knowledge and to teach the next generation of researchers the techniques with which they can go out and create new knowledge. And underlying all of our research activity and policy at Mount Allison is the principle of peer review – which is an intense accountability mechanism.

While it may be fair to characterize Mount Allison *relatively* as a 'small' player in the research field (7), this is not quite an accurate observation. Mount Allison holds five Canada Research Chairs. A large portion of its science faculty is NSERC-funded. And many of its Social Science and Humanities faculty is SSHRC funded, including its President and Vice-President Academic who is also a member of SSHRC Council. We have developed mechanisms that allow a certain amount of workload flexibility to those faculty who are more active or less active researchers.

There are multiple roles and rationales for research in a small institution like ours.

First, there is an accountability dimension to research. Research activity and external professional involvement is a way in which we can be assured that

our faculty's academic courses, their teaching, and their professional development are informed by the most up-to-date innovations and knowledge in various fields.

Second, we need to provide a healthy research environment to attract good, quality faculty to our university. They in turn act as a resource for the community and for society at large, in a province where little research is carried out by the private sector. Indeed, we are building up our own capacity for technology transfer and commercialization of research and we encourage the government to work on a mechanism to assist our efforts in these regards.

Third, our researchers use our top undergraduate students in their research teams, during the academic year and in the summer. Indeed, the research granting councils have become increasingly aware that the training of future researchers should begin at the undergraduate level in a foundational way. Mount Allison offers countless opportunities for our undergraduate students in this regard, which is a genuine differentiating factor in the system. Our best students graduate with an extraordinary amount of research experience, thereby increasing their professional and post-graduate opportunities.

We believe that there is a thriving and effective research culture at Mount Allison. Much of this research activity is collaborative and/or externally oriented. Given this, and given our size, we are open to ideas surrounding a province-wide Research Council. We think that there are opportunities for creating, building on, and extending research collaboration amongst our researchers and amongst our institutions. This could complement a province-wide Graduate School of New Brunswick, with regard to training graduate students and our future researchers in a collaborative way. This would also encourage faculty networking and collaboration. Given the size of the province and recent developments in electronic communication, we see the possibility of a denser network of research and graduate studies across the province.

### **COLLABORATION WITH DIFFERENTIATION**

We were especially interested in the Discussion Paper's presentation on possible modes and areas of collaboration in the post-secondary system. This issue is at the heart of the potential transformation of the New Brunswick system.

By way of introduction, Mount Allison is highly supportive of creating mechanisms or processes that increase collaboration amongst our universities and between the university and community college system. We believe that this is in the best interests of students, citizens, the government, and the institutions themselves.

At the same time, we do not believe that a highly centralized system would be appropriate in the post-secondary education sector, particularly one that involved another cumbersome layer of expensive bureaucracy. On the one hand, we believe that it is important to allow our universities to retain a great degree of autonomy. This allows them the space for creativity and for nimble responses to change and pressure, as well as adequate incentives to take bold initiatives and risks. Moreover, a specific institutional identity provides loyalty and support to each university from the wider community.

On the other hand, we do believe that there is room and requirement for a more 'systemic' approach to the post-secondary education sector. This systemic approach need not start with a grandiose or unwieldy structure. It could start in a relatively modest way, with a steering committee comprising representatives from the PSE sector interacting with a small unit in the PSE Department. This could see the later development of a quasi-regulatory or system regime, with a relatively soft or deft touch. With experience and success, this model could expand over time into wider or deeper waters.

We have already noted a number of areas where institutional or system collaboration could be effective:

#### *UNIVERSITY COLLABORATION WITH COMMUNITY COLLEGES*

The New Brunswick community college system provides substantial benefits to the region. Mount Allison is willing to support collaborative initiatives with community colleges in appropriate areas. Indeed, we have already presented a set of working principles to guideline to our Senate that would frame or inform possibilities in this regard. Moreover, we also have a standing policy on transfer credits from community colleges and would consider updating this policy in the event of any systemic developments. We would support an appropriately flexible and light-handed process or approach to both of these issues and in other areas such as research and technology.

Indeed, we have already helped to develop a new academic programme in this spirit. We have entered a three-way partnership with NBCC (Moncton) and the Moncton Flight College to create a Bachelor of Aviation degree (subject to MPHEC approval). Mount Allison would provide 70% of the courses in a wide array of academic disciplines spanning science, arts, and commerce. NBCC would provide 30% of the more ‘technically-oriented’ courses. The Flight College would provide the flying instruction. The creation of this degree programme reflects an increasing professionalization of this career area and an educational opportunity for pilots who anticipate a career in management.

This sort of partnership arrangement is unique and exciting. It demonstrates how institutions can work together (and with the private sector), not by changing their identities or re-inventing themselves, but by building from their strengths. Indeed, Mount Allison will not have to introduce one new course to fulfill its partnership responsibilities. This also demonstrates that new initiatives do not necessarily require large new expenditures. There can be substantial value-added in partnerships like this one. It also demonstrates how the university can respond quickly and appropriately to changes in market demand.

#### *UNIVERSITY COLLABORATION AMONGST THEMSELVES*

As noted earlier, Mount Allison does not support the notion of a highly centralized system, with a new layer of bureaucracy. Nor do we support the idea of a highly differentiated and fragmented system that would see research being done at only one or two universities and the others doing only teaching. As noted earlier, there cannot be a separation of research from teaching without serious consequences.

We do believe, though, that there is opportunity and room for some sort of system, where the universities act amongst themselves to deliver programmes or areas of activity.

There is a certain degree of collaboration already in the system (e.g. purchasing, library, services, cross-appointment of graduate faculty, research projects, technology). To push this state of affairs even further, it may be useful to have a mechanism at the centre to encourage the process and to provide the proper financial incentives and support to expand it.

This could begin in areas where there could likely be straightforward possibilities for collaboration, such as transfer credits, graduate studies, and research. Then, the system could consider issues like student mobility amongst the universities; the provision of electronic classroom exchange and virtual courses; and the joint provision of programmes and courses outside the immediate university areas. At a later stage, the universities could consider some nuanced differentiation amongst themselves, where circumstances, finances, and opportunities warranted it.

Mount Allison would be willing to partner with UNB, STU, and UdeM in any number of areas, as suggested above.

*SPECIAL PROJECTS: E.G. MONCTON*

Inter-university collaboration would be especially warranted in the greater Moncton area. This is a fast-developing area, whose francophone population is well-served by the UdeM. Its anglophone constituency is anxious to see a greater university presence in the Moncton area.

Mount Allison is keen to respond to this demand, as it feels that it has a geographic responsibility in this area as well as an exciting and interesting opportunity. Indeed, we have had a presence in Moncton, mainly through our part-time or continuing education office and in various ad hoc and service initiatives. We believe that it would be timely to take on greater responsibilities and presence in the Moncton area.

We see the possibility of providing first and second year courses and the foundation of academic programming for 250-300 students in Moncton. These courses would then feed into upper year courses, offered at Mount Allison and/or in collaboration with other universities such as UdeM. There could be sharing of facilities, including lab facilities, and the development of bilingual programming where appropriate.

There are areas of particular specialization and expertise where Mount Allison could develop a substantial presence in Moncton on its own. However, we believe that any substantial or broad initiative in Moncton would require collaboration. In the first instance, we propose the introduction of a joint-initiative with a partner university, in which each would provide courses and programmes in which they had some comparative strength and advantage. A central agent would determine when the sum total of offerings was sufficient to offer genuine degree

opportunities. This could be complemented by mobility arrangements (e.g. transportation to and from Sackville), e-courses and virtual courses, the use of electronic classrooms, and so on.

As noted earlier, the introduction of targeted bilingual programmes by Moncton and Mount Allison could also be part of the mix of offerings to the anglophone community.

## **FINANCE**

### *(i) TUITION AND INDIVIDUAL COSTS*

Mount Allison supports a system of ‘mixed financing’ of the university sector, whereby students, parents, the taxpayer, and supportive citizens (donors) collectively finance the university. This is a mixed system that has served Canada reasonably well since the war. The issue now is the relative financial responsibility assigned to each of these partners in this mixed system, given the way in which the respective shares have altered in recent years.

Fifteen years ago, the ratio of government support to student tuition at Mount Allison was about 3:2 (\$14 million and \$9 million respectively). Presently, it is about 1:1. This parallels developments in the New Brunswick system. The student tuition share of university expenditures has risen from the 15-20% range in 1975-85, to 25% in the 1990s, to over 40% recently. The government share has declined from 80% to 53% in this period. We feel that this situation needs redressing.

Our perspective on the financing issue stems from a number of considerations.

First, we believe that post-secondary education is a kind of public good, from which all New Brunswick citizens will benefit (albeit to differing degrees). So, there is a compelling argument that universities remain as public institutions with public support.

Second, there are differentiated benefits from this public good, which cannot be captured by governments without draconian tax measures or regulation. So, there is a good argument that those who attend university should pay for part of the expense, in essence to pay back part of the differentiated benefit



of attending university. This can be done either ‘up front’ and directly in the form of tuition fees and/or indirectly and afterwards in the form of progressive taxation.

Third, the burden of the direct costs of going to university can be partially if not wholly mitigated through creative tax incentives. These can encourage parents to save for their children’s post-secondary education (education trust plans) or offer tax relief when their children are attending university (through the transfer of tax credits to them from their children).

Lastly, the expense burden can be eased directly through scholarships and bursaries provided by the host university, support which is provided through charitable giving and philanthropy. This in turn is supported by the tax system. For example, Mount Allison provides over \$1,000 in support on average for all of its students – over \$2 million in total. The vast majority of this support is provided from endowment income. Moreover, universities can provide significant employment related to students’ educational programmes, if the proper funding and activities are in place (e.g. research projects, student tutoring, summer festivals, and workshops, etc). At Mount Allison, we provide \$1 million in student wages. In sum, we offer over \$3 million in support to our students. The government could consider some system of ‘matching’ donations made in this area.

Each of these ingredients has merit and rationale, and should comprise a significant part of the mix. The government – as well as private corporations - could assist the universities in their efforts to provide financial and income support by supporting the universities’ research activities, partnering with them in various activities (see below), and by working with universities on summer co-op and placement opportunities.

In the last analysis, though, the level of tuition and relative financial responsibilities is a matter of public policy choice. And this matter is of crucial importance to the overall capacity of universities to provide quality education – as someone has to pay to support the activities of the university. We do not believe that this situation should be addressed through the diminution of academic quality. This would be a disservice to our students and to society, and would undermine our potential comparative advantage in the PSE sector.

(ii) *UNIVERSITY FUNDING*

This is the flip side of the tuition issue: who will provide financial support to universities as they provide their academic programmes and activities?

Mount Allison appreciates the support provided by New Brunswick citizens through their taxes and efforts. Generally speaking, though, it is our view that the level of public support should approximate the Canadian national effort – in the \$10,000 per student area. All things being equal, if this level of support is not forthcoming, then the level of academic quality cannot be maintained at the national average. Observers have noted the extent to which governments in Ontario and Alberta have ratcheted up their support to universities. This has placed New Brunswick universities in a highly competitive situation with respect to attracting and retaining quality faculty and students and maintaining quality programming. Per student PSE funding in New Brunswick has declined from \$7653 in 1993-94 to \$5562 in 2004-05 – the latter about 55% of the average level across Canada (\$10,011).

A second point to note is this. Tuition levels in Maritime universities have typically been above the national average (about 50% above Ontario and the national average). This reflects a number of issues, including economies of scale and the provision of high quality academic programming. Indeed, Mount Allison has raised tuition fees precisely because it did not – and does not – want to finance financial shortfalls by diminishing academic quality. Indeed, academic quality may well require higher tuition fees in general. The universities would then be able to deal with the resulting equity and accessibility issues through their scholarship, financial aid, and student employment strategies.

Mount Allison has made enormous efforts to mitigate these financial issues through concerted fund raising initiatives. We launched our new \$86 million JUMP campaign this winter and we have reached the half-way mark. This effort will support priority areas, such as scholarships, student supports, and renewal. Moreover, we have built up our endowment funds to over \$100 million, and this will finance around 8% of our operating expenditures in 2007-08. Without this effort and support we simply would not have been able to maintain academic quality and our external reputation.

To repeat, at the moment, public funds support 43% of Mount Allison's direct operating budget in 2007-08. We feel that a public target should be set. In the short term, this should be at the 50% level.

### **THE UNIVERSITY IN THE SELF-SUFFICIENT ECONOMY**

The university education sector is one of the larger sectors in the New Brunswick economy. It generates an enormous amount of economic activity, providing jobs and income to thousands of New Brunswickers. The government re-collects a considerable amount of its post-secondary education investment in direct and indirect taxes and through the multiplier effect. Universities' economic impact is over \$1 billion, providing 3,600 full and part-time jobs and over \$200 million in salaries, while generating over \$110 million in taxes.

The sector attracts students from outside of its borders, who contribute to the economy through their tuition, fees, and expenditures. There are about 2,000 international students in New Brunswick universities and 80% of all university students remain in the province after graduation. One-third of Mount Allison's students are from outside the Atlantic area (8% international). The sector also attracts considerable community support through universities' fund raising efforts which have a national and international character. Mount Allison University raises million of dollars annually in Ontario, western Canada, and internationally.

New Brunswick also benefits directly and indirectly through the research activities of its university professors. Indeed, 90% of New Brunswick's research is done by post-secondary institutions. These activities tend to be financed from outside of the province, particularly through the national granting agencies. They offer spin-off benefits in terms of technology transfer, commercialization, and social activity. Moreover, the universities engage in various activities, from housing and social programming that benefit their communities.

Our view is that all of this activity could go one step further, if the universities were considered as a sector of the economy that partnered with other sectors and the government in promoting or generating economic activity. Mount Allison has focused its strategic plan on five areas – presented below - each of which could be an incubator or generator of economic activity with proper leadership and collaboration.

An often cited area is **internationalization**. Working with the universities, the government should consider marketing New Brunswick post-secondary institutions as a destination place for top international students as well as national ones. A provincial effort could partner with the recently announced \$2 million federal initiative to attract top international students.

This initiative has possible multiple benefits. The presence of these students enhances the quality of New Brunswick students' academic experience and offers them potential lifelong contacts and access to the global world. These international students would also generate life, ideas, and culture into the province while contributing to the economy financially at the same time. Moreover, to the extent to which there is progressive and intelligent socio-economic policy provincially, these students could be enticed to stay in the area and/or provide valuable long-term international contacts for the province.

A less obvious sector is **arts and cultural activity**. This is an enormously labour-intensive sector, comprising a broad range of activities from music and theatre to the visual arts. The universities support an enormous amount of talent, creativity, and resources in this area. At Mount Allison, we attract a national clientele for our programmes in music, fine arts, and theatre. We house a nationally recognized and supported art gallery as well as music recital facilities, and have plans to construct a new Arts centre. We hope to 'leverage' our strengths in these areas into other areas like entrepreneurship, organization, and management.

Many of our creative graduates remain in the province, because it is a congenial, low cost, and supportive environment. The government should consider taking the lead with the universities and other cultural groups to make New Brunswick a destination place for artists, creative workers, and cultural activity. New Brunswick has a network of facilities, programmes, activities and people that could be levered more effectively into a total economic system of art and culture. The sector also offers enormous tourist potential, so the sector offers real synergies for educational and economic activity through collaboration and a systematic approach.

It is abundantly clear that dealing with the **environmental** crisis over the next decade will generate economic opportunities for firms and organizations that develop new technologies, processes, and products. New

Brunswick boasts a post-secondary system comprising environmental programmes, activities, personnel, research dollars, students and enthusiasm. Indeed, at Mount Allison, we have a lively, active and growing Environmental Studies programme, with a deep reach into society and the economy and a burning desire to be useful and to make a difference.

The government should consider coordinating efforts with the universities who are highly active in this area in partnering with private sector firms to make New Brunswick a world leader in environmental solutions – whether in the form of developing new equipment and technology or in developing progressive processes and providing consultative advice and public policy ideas.

As noted in previous sections, governments are facing enormous challenges in creating the quality **public sector** of the future. There is an aging public service in the region as well as in Ottawa. The federal government has launched a national review of this issue and the needs are very pressing. This is particularly the case with regard to trained bilingual personnel.

The New Brunswick government could lead a process with the universities in establishing a world class set of programmes that train the top bilingual civil servants of the future. This programme could extend to training for NGOs, not-for-profits, and international agencies as well as for private firms that interact with the public sector.

Finally, New Brunswick universities comprise top-notch science facilities and world-class scientists. It also attracts some of the brightest and most creative students in the country. There will be enormous demand for **creative scientists** in the future, given the range of issues confronting modern societies. The government could work with universities and the private sector to attract top scientific people to New Brunswick, in targeted areas like energy, the environment, fisheries, electronic communication, and so on. This effort could take the form of a joint government-university-private sector research institution in each university, which would also offer undergraduate and graduate students creative research opportunities within their programmes and in co-op and summer activities.