



**New Brunswick  
Community College  
St. Andrews**

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

**May 1, 2007**

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### **Overview of NBCC St. Andrews Campus**

In September of 1963, the building that is now known as the St. Andrews campus of NBCC opened its doors as the Lady Dunn Trade School. Since then, the campus has offered a wide variety of training and educational programs to New Brunswickers and it continues to be particularly focused on meeting the needs of the residents and employers of Charlotte County. The location, in the heart of prime fishing and tourism areas, has led to the campus's specialty training in aquaculture, marine transportation, hospitality and tourism, and refrigeration and air conditioning. Also, in its commitment to being an "international" institution, the St. Andrews campus offers many mobility, intercultural, and international opportunities to its staff, students, and community. This year, almost 300 students were enrolled at the campus full-time and 325 were enrolled in part-time or contract training.

### **Introduction**

The St. Andrews campus of the New Brunswick Community College recognizes the need to be flexible and able to adapt quickly to new opportunities. Management, faculty and staff are committed to preparing students for work in an ever-changing global environment. There are a number of challenges and opportunities facing the campus though. In addition to touching on the key themes of relevance and responsiveness, quality and accountability, efficiency, collaboration and differentiation, and finance, the following remarks will address the question of accessibility, particularly in a rural area.

### **Accessibility**

Based on the data which shows that college participation rates, nationally, are much higher than those in New Brunswick, it seems clear that many Canadian students recognize that college is a good choice for post-secondary education. As a provincial college network, NBCC needs to understand better how New Brunswick students are making post-secondary educational choices. Could the twenty percent of students who enter university and drop out in first year have been better served at NBCC? It must be NBCC's goal to find out. The college

must continue to promote the value of a college education and work closely with high schools to help ensure that New Brunswick students are making the right choices. NBCC must also collaborate with the New Brunswick Department of Education so that high school curricula are aligned with post secondary higher education's academic expectations to promote student success at college.

The New Brunswick Community College must continue to develop and promote articulation agreements with universities. Many students who have attended the St. Andrews campus have experienced the combined value of a degree and a diploma through our two plus two partnerships. For example, students who successfully complete the Adventure Recreation diploma program can go to the University of New Brunswick or Thompson Rivers University for two more years and obtain a degree. Students who meet the requirements and successfully complete any of the Hospitality and Tourism program options can go to UNB-Saint John and obtain a Bachelor of Applied Management degree. The process for developing these agreements is complex and time-consuming and could be more efficient through block transfers and more seamless processes. Also, offering students an option to complete their first year of university at home through a one plus three model of college and university partnership would help reduce student costs and serve as a transition to university and possibly help reduce the university first year drop out rates.

Many students and their parents choose smaller rural schools over larger city ones for a variety of reasons including the lower cost of staying at home, the sense of community, security, small class sizes, and more involvement of faculty. Rural and remote campuses have great potential and can become more accessible and attractive destinations for students from outside the area as well as within the community. St. Andrews is a charming community and scenic location and there is a lot to attract students to the area; however, housing and student life are critical issues. The campus and the town work together to ensure there are extracurricular activities and events available for students, but much more could be offered through an investment in student life. This could mean funding a position in the campus that is dedicated to the development and coordination of student life activities. And as dorm life is typically a critical part of rural campus life, a student residence in St. Andrews is essential. A residence will make a significant difference in attracting students from outside the area who might choose to study at the St. Andrews campus.

The government must provide sustainable funding in order for NBCC to become a true leader in learning by keeping tuition fee increases affordable, as well as ensuring that financial aid reflects the true cost of education. Students must have access to student loans regardless of their parent's economic status. Also, the amount of interest rates on student loans could be reduced. There is currently a \$2000 rebate to first-time university students which does not benefit students who choose community college. Students who will be continuing their education at university after two years at the college will not qualify for this incentive. A

change in this would help make a college education more accessible and affordable to students. Infrastructure capital is required in order to sustain or replace aging buildings, provide necessary upgrades and state-of-the art improvements, and accommodate growth. This cannot be one-time funding.

The reputation of any post-secondary institution typically comes from the strength and excellence of their regular programs and offerings. However, custom training and online course and program deliveries create greater flexibility, enhance options for students, and open up other markets. NBCC St. Andrews must continue to enhance and strengthen its regular program offerings as well as continue to develop the excellence, expertise, resources, and necessary reputation required to attract corporate, business and industry clients and an online student market. As a rural campus, it is especially important for St. Andrews to offer more online learning options, not just courses, but complete certificate programs. Prior learning assessment and credit transfer must also become a priority for NBCC. By acknowledging prior learning and work experience, NBCC may be able to address the high number of mature students who are currently not participating in post-secondary education.

Responsiveness to industry needs and market demands is critical to the provision of accessible, relevant learning opportunities. The college needs to respond more quickly to industry needs for trained workers in the trades. NBCC should continue to utilize different delivery models, such as partnering with employers for on-the-job training and customizing training where appropriate. One size does not fit all. The college also needs to find ways to ensure more women are participating in trades training and apprenticeship. NBCC should have greater independence and closer ties to community and industry. The college needs greater flexibility for differentiation in order to respond appropriately to identified training needs. In addition, it must have the flexibility to plan and implement innovatively and strategically at the institutional level, without potential limitations.

There are critical services that a campus support team provides to students with disabilities. NBCC St. Andrews offers visual language interpreting services; on-site specialized adaptive equipment; note takers; taped lectures; alternative formats for tests and examinations; optimal course scheduling; early registration and assistance; instruction in adapted study skills and compensatory strategies; campus orientation; publicizing of special services available to students with disabilities. In addition to these, the campus could provide further assistance, such as improved wheelchair accessibility and information in other communication formats such as audio tapes, Braille, and large print.

There must be a commitment to accessibility that guarantees New Brunswickers the option to pursue postsecondary education opportunities through the provision of services, supports and delivery options that exceed students' needs, as well as, limit the barriers of time, distance or disability.

## Summary of Key Recommendations

- Understand better how students are making post-secondary educational choices
- Promote the value of a college education
- Continue to develop and promote articulation agreements between NBCC and universities
- Offer students an option to complete their first year of university at home through a one plus three model of college and university partnership
- Develop a more sustainable funding formula to NBCC, including a continuing investment in infrastructure
- Offer tuition rebates to community college students
- Invest in rural student life activities and a student residence in St. Andrews
- Respond more quickly to market demand and industry needs for trained workers in the trades
- Continue to utilize different delivery models, such as partnering with employers for on-the-job training and customizing training where appropriate
- Ensure more women are participating in trades training and apprenticeship
- Create greater independence and build closer relationships with universities, community and industry