

Commission on Post-Secondary Education in New Brunswick
535 Beaverbrook Court
Suite 105
Fredericton, NB
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27 April 2007

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of St Stephen's University (SSU), we want to thank you for the invitation to provide input and respond to the work of the Commission on Post-Secondary Education in New Brunswick. As the dates available for SSU to present to the Commission were impossible for the President and Academic Dean to attend due to travel abroad, this letter will be our submission. A printed copy is in the Mail.

St Stephen's University is a private, not for profit, trans-denominational, Christian university, which opened for classes in 1975 and has been in continuous operation since. In 1998, SSU was incorporated by Bill 49, An Act to Incorporate St Stephen's University, by the Legislature of the Province of New Brunswick. The Act establishes SSU as a private Christian university which grants Bachelors and Masters Degrees in the Liberal Arts and Ministry Studies. Comprehensive information on SSU's degree programs and teaching faculty are available in the Academic Calendar:
http://ssu.ca/documents/SSUcalendar_0608.pdf

With just under 100 students, SSU is distinctive for its seminar style classes with a low student to professor ratio, its commitment to Study Abroad, and its focus on living and learning within an intentional academic community. Normally, all students in the undergraduate BA program spend two terms (30 credit hours) overseas with SSU faculty in Europe and a developing region, usually Asia, sometimes Africa. These programs emphasize experiential learning and they shape profoundly our undergraduate curriculum. Students typically choose SSU because of our Study Abroad programs.

The university's academic standard is high. Our courses and degrees are recognized in New Brunswick and elsewhere. Our students move on to advanced degree programs in major universities in Canada, the United States and Great Britain. SSU has an excellent relationship with UNB and a letter on file from President John McLaughlin acknowledging the good performance of SSU students who have studied at UNB. SSU's Bachelor of Arts has been accepted by the New Brunswick Department of Education for Teacher's Certification. Three SSU graduates are studying presently in UNB's Bachelor of Education program.

We strongly support facilitating articulation possibilities for students moving between universities, including community colleges. SSU is currently dialoguing with NBCC-- St Andrews toward a closer working partnership. The Commission should encourage more collaboration among post-secondary partners so that students have maximum choices

going forward, without losing time or credits for work previously done elsewhere in the post-secondary education system.

While SSU receives no government funding according to the St. Stephen's University Act, our students receive the benefit of student loans from government. This is important to the province as students are given more choice for post secondary studies. As a Not for Profit institution, SSU seeks no gain and only wants the best for its students. SSU encourages the Commission to support student assistance.

SSU was recently advised by Premier Graham that our students would not be eligible for the \$2,000 first year grant now made available to students attending publicly funded universities. It was explained that the province is now considering extending this to private institutions that are AUCC members. AUCC membership is open to schools that have in excess of 600 students. Size should not be a consideration for favouring schools as the quality of education in small universities such as SSU can be very high. Not for Profit is a better criterion as tax payers get full value. SSU is disadvantaged by this stance. We encourage the Commission to seek fairness in student assistance grants.

Finally, we want to explain that SSU attracts students from across North America and from abroad. Most of our students are 'from away' and many continue within the NB education system or have resettled here in New Brunswick. Many faculty and staff have come from other parts of Canada to live and work here. We are an important contributor to the economic life of St Stephen and SW New Brunswick. In large measure, SSU is an "exporter." However, we feel it is important to be supported by New Brunswick and to ensure that our programs are available to New Brunswickers on an even footing.

We are grateful for this opportunity to contribute to the Commission's work. Please feel free to contact us regarding any questions you may have.

Kind regards,

St Stephen's University

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