

Good Day,

My name is Jason Hoyt. I am a past graduate from the New Brunswick Community College, Miramichi. I graduated from the Environmental Technology Program in 2004. I still maintain close ties with my classmates and my former instructors.

In various discussions I have had since I left the program, I have begun noticing a trend in the quality of student being admitted to the program. I have also noticed a changing view from the administration towards applicants and students. From my perspective, it appears that the pre-requisites for the course are being waived or ignored for a number of individuals. In previous years, it was necessary for any applicant to meet a minimum number of education requirements in order to be considered for admission into any NBCC course. It has in recent years changed focus to a "first come-first serve" basis. Where I am not against anyone having a chance to further their education, these requirements were set in place to insure that any applicant would have the best chance at succeeding at the course, and their subsequent career.

Some of these individuals will likely succeed and do very well. However, others may not. This brings me to my second point where I'm concerned that the education standards for the course are being relaxed at the behest of the administration. I have been witness to some past students that were simply not capable, but yet were given multiple opportunities, above and beyond what any student should expect to pass the course. To me, this degrades the work, time and effort that all past graduates have done in order to receive their diploma at the end of two years. I have heard recent students comment that the work being assigned is too hard, the hours too long. I agree that the work is hard; it's because the job after is hard and this is to help one prepare for that eventuality! What one does in the classroom, how one performs the tasks assigned them is a direct reflection on how well they will be able to perform their job in their chosen field after graduation. If the work required is reduced to a level that the student finds "easy", then they will be monumentally unprepared for dealing with the requests given them once in the workforce.

In talking to instructors, they admit that they are being pressured to lower their standards to meet the demands of the students. The work assigned is based on the tried and true. If a Civil Engineering Technologist incorrectly determines a concrete mix used to build a structure, and that structure fails, is he to be allowed to say "well my instructor gave me part marks when I did this in class"? If a graduate from Environmental Technology tests a municipal well and determines a result that it is safe to drink, and the well in instead contaminated; and many people fall ill and die, can they then say "I never did very well at that in Water quality"? It begs to question, what kind of graduates are going to be entering the workforce in my field. Am I working with someone who graduated with the same diploma at half the education? Of what quality and worth are they going to be? Am I going to be judged on their reputation, and not on my own? As the quality of the graduate declines, so does the course reputation and the dangers inherent on certifying people who were judged to lowered standards.

The standards for successfully completing the courses have been set by the employers who will be hiring the graduates. They are what the companies will want if they were to hire a graduate from the Community College system. Indeed, the trend seems to be that University graduates are attending the College system to further advance their education. This trend goes to show what exceptional value the New Brunswick College system has. I myself am attending the Memorial University of Newfoundland. In an agreement between the college system and the University, I was able to complete a large block transfer of my credits, totaling more than 3 years of course credit.

If the posted standards to the courses offered throughout NBCC are not met, what then becomes of these agreements? Will other post secondary graduates wish to participate in these courses if the standards and expectations are lowered?

My comment is this- The college system should step back and look at the standards that make it the exceptional education it is. Whereas everyone deserves to have a chance to get an education, bluntly, you can't have a square peg in a round hole. Those standards to admission and those standards required for graduation are there for a reason. It's not to prevent people from gaining what they desire, it is more of a sober second thought (this is what you need to succeed, do you have it, can you get it, is this what you want?). The standards for one to graduate are there to ensure that the person with the diploma knows within reason what they are doing. These are not only for the safety of others, but the safety of the individual. If the quality of the graduate degrades, it not only affects the course reputation and all future grads, but it affects the past grads as well.

I thank you for your time.

Regards,

Jason Hoyt