

PRESENTATION

**UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK
SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK**

**NEW BRUNSWICK COMMUNITY COLLEGE
SAINT JOHN CAMPUS**

**NEW BRUNSWICK'S POST-SECONDARY
COMMISSION (April 2007)**

PRESENTERS:

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INTRODUCTION:

Citizens of the Greater Saint John Community and southern New Brunswick were particularly pleased when the Premier of the New Brunswick and the Minister of Post-Secondary Education Training and Labour announced earlier this year the establishment of a Commission to review and make recommendations on the state of post-secondary education in this province.

With the establishment of the University of New Brunswick in 1787, students from this area began their travels to Fredericton to obtain a university education. A number of those individuals later became members of the Faculty of UNB. Some later served as President of the Institution.

Supporting UNB and its Fredericton campus was an accepted fact of life for over 180 years. It was felt to be a public interest that served all New Brunswickers.

In 1959, Saint John lost its only post-graduate or post-baccalaureate institution, the UNB Law School which this city and its' legal community had strongly supported for well over 70 years. This community accepted, not without some sorrow, the advice that it was in the interest of the growth of the Faculty of Law that it be situate on the Fredericton Campus. The Law School at that time was a proud Saint John education institution.

Following the last major review of university post-secondary education in New Brunswick by the late John J. Deutsch in the mid-1960s, the citizens of Greater Saint John and southern New Brunswick having made presentations to Dr. Deutsch were extremely gratified that the Government of New Brunswick agreed with and accepted his recommendation that a second campus of the University of New Brunswick be established in Saint John. Since that time, the support and pride in UNBSJ from the Greater Saint John area has been immeasurable.

Tragically, the establishment of UNBSJ was not fully embraced and supported by the Fredericton centered administration, faculty or Board of Governors at the time.

This reluctance was compounded over the past 40 years by the fact that UNBSJ is administratively and fiscally controlled from Fredericton. UNBSJ has gradually gained some limited autonomy but aside from having its own senate, Deans and Registrar, its Senior Administrator remains a Vice-President who still reports to Fredericton.

UNBSJ does not receive its' funding independently. It is only as a component of the UNB budget. Over the past 20 years, on each and every occasion when UNBSJ under funding issues are raised and suggestions are made that UNBSJ should separate from Fredericton, overtures and promises were made in return to address and correct the situation.

In each and every occasion, accepting those undertakings in good faith, the citizens of southern New Brunswick adopted a patient approach waiting for equitable budgetary changes to be put in place.

In 1989-90, as a result of a three year Saint John led UNBSJ under funding effort, a special grant of \$700,000.00 a year was provided to UNB Fredericton to partially address the Saint John inequity. This was one of the early temporary appeasements to UNBSJ respecting underfunding.

UNBSJ still continued to grow. The student enrolment in UNB Fredericton did not. Budgeting, administrative authority and decision making still remained in Fredericton.

Another Saint John based community based effort formed to again address the ongoing fiscal inequity in 2001.

An Education Committee was established by the Mayor of Saint John's Integrated Growth Task Force. The authors of this presentation served on that Committee along with a broad spectrum of the Community.

During that same time period in 2000-01, certain Saint John community leaders with a much better appreciation of the financial inequities and the resulting restrictions on the growth of UNBSJ began to publicly advocate that UNBSJ should be an independent institution and the master of its own destiny. This created concerns in UNB Fredericton at higher administrative levels. Public support for separation became a topical subject in the Saint John media.

The Current President of the University of New Brunswick, Dr. Elizabeth Parr-Johnson, had submitted her resignation in this same time period, effective June 30th, 2002. The Mayor's Education Committee was suddenly invited to participate and make representations with respect to the Search Committee for a new President. It was also requested to advance proposals that could alleviate the fiscal inequities in order to stifle the calls for an independent UNBSJ.

These efforts, based on the UNB promises that were made respecting UNBSJ were initially again successful in "quieting the masses".

The Mayor's Education Committee, representing the citizens of southern New Brunswick, accepted in good faith that changes would soon be made with respect to the financial inequities and that UNBSJ would operate on a level fiscal playing field with UNB Fredericton.

The citizens of southern New Brunswick had now accepted UNB overtures towards fiscal and administration equality in good faith on two occasions: in 1989-90 and in 2001-02. Five years later, nothing has substantially changed. Good faith has been rewarded with a bad faith lack of response.

The relationship with UNB Fredericton must change. The citizens of southern New Brunswick can no longer accept more good faith intentions. Trust has been lost.

A New Structure:

UNBSJ is justified in its desire for a new governance model with greater autonomy in the region.

In advocating this position, your authors recognize the difficulties in creating a new governance structure in such a small province.

More radical changes are needed with respect to governance to avoid further duplications and competition as well as meeting the present and future needs of New Brunswick's post-secondary education.

It is in that context that your presenters advocate a full post-secondary education partnership based in southern New Brunswick comprising UNBSJ and the New Brunswick Community College – Saint John Campus.

UNBSJ Today:

When UNBSJ was established in the mid-1960s, it was just an appendage of a significantly larger institution. At that time, there was no academic senate in Saint John. All the Deans of the Academic Programs were located in Fredericton. There were no complete programs here and all students had to transfer after year one or two in order to complete their degree.

Since that time, UNBSJ has continued as an extension of the Fredericton operation and continues to be subject to the Fredericton budgetary process. However, with the support of the UNBSJ Faculty and strong community support, UNBSJ did gradually obtain its own senate, Deans, Vice-President and Registrar. It offers over 60 undergraduate and graduate programs that can be completed in their entirety on the Saint John campus. It also comprises of over 25% of the total university enrolment. The Tucker Park Campus, in the Millidgeville area of Saint John overlooking the Saint John and Kennebecasis River, is a beautiful site with lots of room for growth.

UNBSJ is able and ready to operate with greater autonomy under new Governance

NBCC - Saint John Today:

The New Brunswick Community College, Saint John Campus, has existed under various names since 1963. This institution has never had the post-secondary education recognition that it deserves.

Culturally, over the past 50 years, the social emphasis and profile with respect to post-secondary education has been to advocate attainment of a university education as the primary goal for New Brunswick's high school graduates.

Equally, the prevailing and over-reaching media influence in our society has for many reasons emphasized activities that occur at the university level, whether it be outstanding athletic teams, the importance of research or a university degree as a basic requirement to obtain employment. This has created a "blue collar and white collar" separation which has socially undervalued specifically the trade fields and to a lesser extent the fields of Business Information, Health and Engineering Technology.

Over the past 10 years, as a result of recognition of an aging workforce in the trades as well as students' inability to appropriately access Community College programs to fill this void, business and industry throughout New Brunswick, particularly in southern New Brunswick, have become increasingly concerned about the lack of sufficient young people entering the trades.

NBCC – Saint John offers the greatest number of certificate and diploma programs in the Province. It also has the largest student population when one combines regular programs, apprenticeship in training, long-distance education as well as the contract training programs that it offers to industry.

The buildings on Grandview Avenue, as well as the north end of Saint John, are aging and deteriorating. The newest structure is over 30 years old. The infrastructure has totally outlived its usefulness as a proper teaching and student environment.

The location does not provide NBCC - Saint John, with an appropriate environment for either its instructors or its students. NBCC - Saint John must be able to grow and be seen.

It should also be located in an environment which integrates the so-called blue collar and white collar cultures and creates a mutual appreciation of what each education stream contributes to our society. There is no physical capacity for greater student enrolment on the Grandview Avenue campus. There were 3,000 applications seeking 636 first year seats in 2006. This is a tragic situation which has existed for a number of years.

High school graduates in southern New Brunswick who wish to stay home are forced to leave because they are not able to access admission to the trade and technical programs of their choice.

New Brunswick Community College graduates from the Saint John Campus generally do not leave the province. Student tracking has demonstrated that over 90% remain in the province.

The province has a policy in place encouraging our young people to stay and live here as well as to return home.

Similar to UNBSJ, NBCC - Saint John, while its profile has been lower, continues to have excellent support as well as partnership in training programs with business and industry in southern New Brunswick.

The shortage of tradesmen and technical people and the labour needs that are evident in the Greater Saint John area immediately as well as into the future are well recognized. Expanding NBCC - Saint John is not a consideration. It is an absolute necessity.

Elevating the profile and creating a greater appreciation in our society for these highly qualified trades and technical persons would be an added positive cultural adjunct.

The healthcare programs offered at NBCC - Saint John, ie. respiratory technology, licensed practical nursing and home care to name but a few are a valuable resource for Atlantic Health Sciences Corporation.

The fact that a medical school is being established in Saint John only enhances the value of NBCC - Saint John. These health education programs provide New Brunswick's only tertiary Medical Care Center with a supply of valued medical personnel enhancing the quality of medical care. They also complement the Faculty of Nursing at UNBSJ.

Recommendations:

Radical change and innovation is needed in post-secondary education. The Government of New Brunswick has recognized this.

Segregating Community Colleges and university students has in many cases created, albeit unintentionally, social and cultural segregation. This is a societal deficiency that must be corrected.

Attaining a university education was never intended to create an elite segment in our society. Yet these attitudes currently exist among some members of our society.

This aspect of "blue collar and white collar" segregation must end. Each segment relies strongly on the best attributes, education and training of the other.

Where would our children be without teachers and professors educated in the university system?

Where would we be without plumbers, pipefitters, carpenters and electricians?

These are just two analogies. Similar comparisons can be made whether it be in the field of the delivery of health care, information systems, engineering and other examples, too numerous to cite.

Fundy Region Post Secondary Education Corporation:

Uniting the campuses of NBCC and UNBSJ offers outstanding opportunities to create an organization that would be responsive to the needs of the students and the economy of New Brunswick. It provides an unprecedented opportunity to combine the best of academic education with the technical skills needed to meet the pace of change that is facing us.

(i) Governance:

Both UNBSJ and NBCC - Saint John, have been frustrated in their opportunities to enhance and advance the programs which they wish to offer based on their lack of autonomy. On a fiscal basis, UNBSJ is simply a minor part of UNB Fredericton. Control remains in Fredericton. Priority is always given to the needs of the Fredericton Campus.

NBCC - Saint John is totally controlled as are all community colleges within the Department of Post-Secondary Training and Labour. It too, is totally subject to government bureaucrats based in Fredericton.

Fredericton's university and government bureaucrats' appreciation of the special needs of southern New Brunswick are almost non-existent. We are simply a noisy aggravation!

Business, industry and provincial politicians do recognize what Greater Saint John provides and will continue to offer to the province's economy.

Both institutions' frustrations relative to their growth and success emanate from separate isolated head offices in Fredericton. This is not surprising. Fredericton's culture is much different than that of southern New Brunswick. It is principally a university and government based society with a number of supporting white collar industries.

Greater Saint John and southern New Brunswick have far more in common.

The Premier of New Brunswick has identified Saint John as the energy and growth centre of the Province. Current projects include:

- The establishment of the Department of Energy in Saint John;
- The prospects for the construction of a second oil refinery;
- The liquified natural gas plant currently being constructed
- Point Lepreau II.

These are not speculative. They are real! They are likely to occur! They are occurring!

In order to effectively administer NBCC - Saint John and UNBSJ under the strategic aegis of a new Post Secondary Education Corporation, they must enter an autonomous union.

They must have their own Board of Directors. The Chief Executive Officer of that Corporation must ensure that the integration of the institutions is completed. They must have the opportunity to address those issues which currently hinder advancement in the University and Community College.

Personnel practices should be more in line with industry successes and failures.

Professors and Instructors must continue to meet appropriate standards. Senior Administration should insist that the maintenance of excellence and performance is regularly assessed.

The five Mayors in the Greater Saint John area, Enterprise Saint John and the Board of Trade and numerous interested groups wish to see both southern New Brunswick and the Province become self-sufficient over the next two decades.

In order to meet those objectives, post-secondary education is the foundation of that growth.

The Fundy Region Post Secondary Education Corporation Model must have its own Board of Directors, its own budget and set its own strategic direction for both post-secondary education streams.

NBCC - Saint John does need new capital infrastructure. Where better to locate it than on the Tucker Park Campus?

A Board of Directors which reflects the needs of the Province but is also directly involved with Greater Saint John and the southern New Brunswick area has the ability to respond much more quickly and efficiently to the needs of the students and the community.

The Board of Directors would include community stakeholder representation, including but not limited to labour, students and employees of these institutions.

Conclusion:

The intention of your presenters has never been to denigrate the past. Unfortunately, past comparisons are necessary in order to support our case for radical innovative change in the post-secondary system.

Both of your presenters had the honour of receiving Honourary Degrees from the University of New Brunswick. Much of that recognition was based on the fact that we have both actively volunteered our time on numerous provincial and community based initiatives over 40 years. We have a great deal of experience in both, interacting with and observing UNB Fredericton, UNBSJ, the New Brunswick Community College System and NBCC - Saint John.

Our time is passing. We are both senior citizens. We have made our contribution. We will continue to do so as long as we are able. However, our advocacy and recommendations are directed towards the betterment of the generations that will succeed us.

The problems which your Commission is addressing are real.

Innovative and substantial changes are needed.

Institutional barriers must be eliminated.

Cultural changes must be put in place for future generations.

We are now in a global marketplace.

Jointly utilizing the facilities and the human resources of NBCC - Saint John and UNBSJ may be considered a radical move today. Changes that were considered radical in the past have become accepted today.

These changes soon become necessary alterations. It must occur again for successor generations to progress.

This type of Post-Secondary Education Corporation could be used as a model for the Province i.e. CCNB Dieppe and Universite De Moncton, Mount Allison and NBCC Moncton

Merging the two cultures, the Community College system and the Universities, is an absolute necessity.

The Board of Directors and CEO would report directly to cabinet or a cabinet secretariat. The Board must also be autonomous and independent of government although obviously responsible to report to the Legislature.

Fiscal responsibility in the delivering of high quality post-secondary education must continue to be a paramount consideration.

The model we suggest would provide the regional autonomy required in serving both the Anglophone and Francophone citizens of the Province while providing the necessary oversight.

The status quo is not acceptable in the 21st Century!!

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED this 29th day of April, 2007.

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