

**PRESENTATION RE  
NEW BRUNSWICK COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

(With particular reference to the NBCC Saint John Campus  
and its role, and with recommendations and suggestions for increased  
collaboration, cooperation, and partnerships between  
the NBCC Saint John Campus and UNBSJ.)

TO THE

**COMMISSION ON  
POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION  
IN NEW BRUNSWICK**

*April 30, 2007*

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## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The mandate of the New Brunswick Community College is to develop (i.e. educate and train) the human resources of this Province, targeting both current and emerging labour market needs.

This noble and challenging mandate is fulfilled by College professionals working in partnership with business, industry and health sector officials to ensure that the various curricula developed (in partnership) and taught in colleges is current, relevant and leads to meaningful employment and “self-sufficiency” at the individual level for the colleges’ graduates.

The New Brunswick Community Colleges (NBCCs) are true “engines” for socio-economic development. That summarizes who they are and what they do for New Brunswickers.

Annual Graduate Follow-Up Surveys, conducted by the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training, and Labour, indicate that historically the colleges have been largely successful in meeting the challenging mandate assigned them.

With a decreasing high school population, an aging population generally, a low immigration rate and a disturbing trend of “out” migration, coupled with a well recognized current and forecasted skilled labour market shortage set in the context of the N.B. Government’s goal for self-sufficiency by 2026, attention needs to focus on the NBCCs and their most significant role as a key player in helping to resolve the need for a well educated, skilled workforce.

The March 24, 2007 editorial in the Telegraph Journal cites Premier Graham as follows: “The Community College system is a key growth tool for self-sufficiency in the Province of New Brunswick. Our universities play an important role, but our community colleges today are playing an even more important role”.

Currently, N.B. has a Community College system comprised of a Francophone College (5 campuses = CCNB) and an Anglophone College. (6 campuses = NBCC) – a NBCC network of 11 separate campuses, 5 Anglophone and 5 Francophone. These 11 campuses and 4 provincially-funded universities make for a very “rich” offering for a small province with fewer than three quarters of a million people.

## GOVERNANCE OF COLLEGES

How institutions are governed is critical to their success in achieving their mandates, and leadership at all levels is vitally important.

The NBCC network currently operates as a Special Operating Agency within the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour. There have been over the past several years internal reviews and proposals developed within the Department regarding how best the NBCCs might be governed and operate.

Most people familiar with the past and current governance model for the colleges recognize a need for change towards a more effective, efficient, “nimble” and responsive model as the current structure, with its central control, very often inhibits or blocks an individual college’s innovative ideas, positive initiatives and growth needs (e.g. in areas of special projects, human resources, equipment acquisition, lack of infrastructure, investments, etc.). Colleges often feel hamstrung by government’s slow moving, often cumbersome policies, regulations and practices.

The establishment of a centralized *College Office* in Fredericton historically tends to create an entity that is often experienced by the people in the field to be quite separate and apart from the campus operations. Any central office operation should always focus on what more could and should be done centrally to integrate the Provincial leadership into the campus’ operations and to support the work of the colleges, rather than creating more work for campuses with no new resources.

## RECOMMENDATIONS RE GOVERNANCE

NBCCs clearly need to be separate from a government department to allow for increased flexibility and overall effectiveness in meeting its challenging role and meeting clients’ needs in a timely fashion. The NBCCs should report to Government through an “at arm’s length” mechanism, such as a Board of Governors/Directors/Trustees. Such a model would recognize that operational decisions need to be made at the Campus or College level.

There are, arguably too many NBCCs (or “campuses” as the current terminology refers to them) for a small province of fewer than 3/4 million people. Although it is a privilege to be able to seek quality training in 11 different regional locations within N.B. (and in either official language – a real plus!), it may be too “rich” and not necessary for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This submission offers several governance options, two of which are fairly “conservative” and two which may seem more “radical” vis à vis the status quo. The suggestions include:

1. The NBCCs could be governed by a Board of Governors (perhaps a combination of appointed and elected Board members), with a “CEO” or “system President” reporting to the Board.

The number of NBCCs would be reduced from 11 to 5 (from 6 to 3 Anglophone and from 5 to 2 Francophone) and each college would have its President, so there would be 5 NBCC presidents in lieu of 11 college Principals/ Directors. Each College might have 1 or more “satellite” campuses which would report to the respective College President. (see Appendix A, 1 and 2)

Note:

Collapsing NBCCs from 11 to 5 would save scarce resources in that there would be no need to duplicate much of the existing administrative structures, leadership positions, management and administrative positions. (e. g. satellite campuses would have an on-site manager, perhaps a Director of Administration or a satellite Director); all H.R. issues could be coordinated by the main colleges. Upon study, not all current campuses may be needed as satellites.

As currently, Deans would be responsible for leadership in specialty areas wherever they are offered (e.g. Dean for Health Studies, Business and Information Technology and Engineering Technologies and Trades).

Department Heads responsible for a number of programmes at main and satellite campuses would report to the appropriate Dean.

Possible considerations include main colleges being charged with delivering diploma programmes (i.e. two and three year programmes) while satellites could deliver one year certificate programmes. As well, selected first year technology programmes could possibly be offered at some or all satellites.

Qualified educators must be “in charge” of college educational programmes and positions of leadership and all positions of “additional responsibility” should be advertised publicly to ensure the system “seeks and finds the best there is at the time”. Faculty and staff should be granted their positions through a competitive process with assured integrity.

Sabbaticals and educational leaves, once available with little financial resources and currently non-existent for college professionals, should be reinstated with adequate funding.

2. A second option for governance encourages New Brunswick to adopt the organization and governance system currently used by the Maine Community College System, one that works closely with the Maine university system. (see diagrams in Appendix B, 1 and 2)
3. A third option would see the New Brunswick government working towards a “regionalization” of colleges within Maritimes or Atlantic Canada with identified specialty colleges – e.g. Health Specialty for Saint John. There are, for example, more students annually at SAIT (Saskatchewan Institute of Technology) than there are in attendance at all Atlantic colleges.
4. A fourth option recognizes that perhaps the time has come for a very bold move to facilitate the merging of the “two cultures”- that of the community colleges with that of the universities -and in the Saint John region, that of NBCCSJ with that of UNBSJ. In this scenario, one envisions one Board of Directors which would have responsibility for strategic direction and oversight of the two separate, yet closely cooperating and mutually reinforcing institutions. Such a model would call for an increased community representation on the governing body, including students and employers, institution employees and labour. (see diagram, Appendix C)

## NBCC SAINT JOHN CAMPUS’ CAPACITY AND CHALLENGES

With a shared understanding about the NBCCs’ role generally and our concerns about how to meet the required labour market (both current and forecast), accompanied by the expectations for the anticipated “boom” in employment opportunities in southern N.B., let us focus on the critical role to be played by the NBCC Saint John Campus.

The NBCC Saint John Campus is the largest in the network in terms of the number of different certificate and diploma programmes offered, and in student

population, including those enrolled in regular programmes, apprenticeship training, distance delivery and contract training programmes.

The NBCC in Saint John is “oversubscribed”, i.e. the number of applications far exceed the availability (or number) of training places (over 3,000 applications for first year 636 seats). It is well worth noting that this situation has existed for several years, resulting in qualified New Brunswickers not being able to access admission to the programme of their choice at NBCC Saint John Campus. The quality of programmes offered by the NBCC Saint John Campus is recognized and in demand by potential students and its graduates are in demand by potential employers. Applicants hail from all corners of New Brunswick as many of the programmes offered are unique provincial offerings of this campus.

It is also important to note that NBCC graduates generally do not contribute to the “out migration” phenomenon as most stay to work in N.B. following graduation (over 90% as cited in Annual Graduate Follow-Up Survey) and the vast majority find employment in their field of study. This is an important fact as the Province and its communities are trying to keep our people here and entice others to return.

The NBCC Saint John Campus has enjoyed a proud history of support from and partnership with its labour market partners – business, industry and labour, both regionally and provincially. Its mandate could not be achieved without this long-term and ever evolving partnership.

The employment needs, known and forecast, indeed challenge the College in terms of adequate resources. Since 1963 the NBCC Saint John Campus (under various names) has contributed significantly to the social and economic development of the region, the Province and other jurisdictions nationally and in the last two decades, internationally as well as Colleges engaged in international partnerships.

The buildings from which most of the College’s excellent programmes and services are offered (Grandview Avenue and the North End Center locations) are aging, nearly 45 years old; the newest structure at the main campus built in 1976 is over 30 years old. Since that time, there has been little financial investment in the infrastructure – apart from routine maintenance and too frequent, small scale

renovations executed to accommodate new programme offerings and a steadily growing client population. The College's infrastructure has often been referred to by College professionals as "the wall with zippers", i.e., no new space to accommodate new programmes or additional students, just a rearranged space. Such undertakings have contributed to less than ideal and likely unhealthy conditions for teaching and learning (e.g. poor air quality is a common complaint from students, faculty and staff).

The College estimates it needs to double its "intake" to meet the forecasted needs for the labour market. With current resources, this is not a realistic goal. However, there is a definite and documented need for additional and improved teaching and learning space at the College. Studies in the last decade have been done recognizing this need and estimated costs. (Report of September 1999 "New Brunswick Community College – Saint John Year 2000 & Beyond Functional Program & Master Plan").

In the early-mid 80's, under the Hatfield government's tenure, there was the understood intent to make an infrastructure investment at the NBCC Saint John Campus and plans were developed locally. Twice that priority was delayed as investments instead were made in building new colleges in Woodstock and in Dieppe. Saint John was next on the list for a major investment. In 1987, the government changed and the McKenna government's strategy of the day had little money for "bricks and mortar". Well, that was 20 years ago and there has been no infrastructure investment, really since 1976. The needs have grown substantially over those two decades.

In this last two decades, disappointingly, there has been no elected politician, either from the Greater Saint John region or provincially, who has championed publicly the much "value-added" work of the NBCCs generally nor this College's needs specifically for major investment in spite of the fact that four of the last five Ministers responsible for the NBCCs have been elected in Saint John and Kennebecasis Valley ridings. Hope remains high for the current Minister, the Honourable Dr. Ed. Doherty, whose term is yet in the early stages.

Colleges, unlike universities, are not allowed to unilaterally introduce major fundraising initiatives for capital or other needs (with the exception of the recently established NBCC Foundation for student scholarships and bursaries), so colleges are totally dependent on central government's largesse (or lack thereof).



In recent years, provincial universities have received increases in their grants and there has been a lot of political, public and media attention drawn to the needs of the universities (which we acknowledge are real needs). However, there has been a sadly notable dearth of attention paid to the historical “poor cousin” in the post-secondary education family of New Brunswick. Apart from the occasional Saint John Board of Trade official raising the need for College investment, there’s been a shameful government silence and an equally shameful accompanying neglect.

So, let’s end this long-term, unwarranted neglect and look positively to the future with not only hope, but bold, decisive action.

The NBCC Saint John Campus is located in the Province’s largest and most industrialized municipality – a city which boasts a “True Growth Strategy” and which anticipates several major industrial and business growth initiatives which are calling for significant increases for educated and well trained employees – the kind of skilled workers that the College educates and trains – technicians, technologists and tradespersons.

The “Growth Strategy” rests on four “pillars”: Energy, Information Technology, Health and Tourism. The NBCC Saint John Campus has programme “specialties” in three of four of these pillars (i.e. Energy, Health, and I.T.) and has provided part-time training in the fourth, Tourism.

If ever there were an opportune time for a provincial government to provide bold, visionary leadership and to seize this critical moment to facilitate its articulated vision of “self-sufficiency” for the Province and its people that moment is NOW! And the greatest need for an, affirming response to the well documented labour market needs and the greatest opportunity of meeting many of these needs come together right here in Saint John, at the NBCC Saint John Campus. The College, in partnership with UNBSJ, has the potential to effect the desired education and training outcomes, the likes of which would far exceed any historical achievements.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVED RESULTS

Following are recommendations, including suggestions related to increased collaboration, cooperation and partnership with UNBSJ, resulting in increased sharing of scarce resources and potential for an increased competitiveness for both institutions.

What needs to be done to alleviate the ongoing, often growth inhibiting needs of the NBCC Saint John Campus?

Following are some recommendations:

1. The Campus has identified the need for a brand new building of at least 100,000 sq. ft. to accommodate the Engineering, Business and Information Technology programmes as it requires larger classrooms and labs to accommodate additional students and to achieve better efficiencies. The current main campus on Grandview Avenue consists of three connected and ageing wings: A, B, and C, therefore, Buildings A and B (built in '63 as a Trade School) should be torn down and a retrofit provided to C Building (established in 1976 to accommodate technology programmes.)

In addition to the above,

2. The College's accredited Health specialty programmes should be transferred to a shared space with UNBSJ's Bachelor of Nursing and Bachelor of Applied Health degree programmes. NBCC and UNBSJ's health care programmes, working with the health sector partners, especially the Atlantic Health Sciences Regional Authority could constitute an "Allied Health Centre of Excellence".

With the advent of a Medical School for Saint John, anticipated in 2009, this Centre of Excellence for Health Programmes and Services" would be timely. The education and training programmes in health studies should be housed together for the didactic elements and the clinical components at the hospital(s) as needed. Scarce resources – both human and equipment – could be shared.

With UNBSJ experiencing declining enrollments, is there a possibility of a facility (space of about 100,000 sq. ft.) to be made available to accommodate

such an integration? In this shared space, one foresees UNBSJ's Bachelor of Nursing, its Bachelor of Applied Health degree programmes plus all the NBCC Saint John Campuses' Health specialty programmes: Medical Laboratory Technology, Respiratory Therapy Technology, Nuclear Medicine Technology; Pharmacy Technician, and Practical Nurse being able to develop an inter-professional, collaborative, practical model and enhanced opportunities to train new health care professionals to become members of "health care teams". This opportunity for a 3-way partnership (already established for Nuclear Medicine and Respiratory Therapy) is ripe for cooperation in seeking financial resources from government and industry for R&D in health education and health care areas.

Such an initiative as described above could represent a possible Phase 1 of a closer, more collaborative teaching and learning partnership between the NBCC Saint John Campus and UNBSJ.

3. A Phase II could see the eventual transfer to a common site for the College's Business and Information Technology programmes with UNB's Business faculty. Similar sharing of resources would be a positive educational and economical venture.
4. A Phase III might see the College's various Engineering Technologies share a space with UNBSJ's Engineering Faculty.
5. Health Care programmes like the College's Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) and Home Care programmes (which is a growing field) needs joint collaboration between the College, the University and the appropriate professional associations, to ensure appropriate "career laddering" opportunities for students and graduates (e.g. a Home Care graduate must have an identified route to attain a Licensed Practical Nurse credential and if desired, a route to a Bachelor of Nursing - R.N. credential.) The LPN credential needs to somehow be recognized by the University's Bachelor of Nursing programme. This currently does not exist.

The Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) methodologies need to be revisited, reviewed, revised and revived to facilitate career laddering, not just for Health programmes but for all programmes.

The Bachelor of Nursing programme, reportedly, is in need of a solid two years of technical training to better support the Bachelor of Nursing graduates for their clinical and supervisory roles. The NBCC faculty for the LPN programme could ably provide this component as they are all well qualified, seasoned adult education instructors, possessing R.N., B. of N and graduate degrees. College instructors' credentials are often not known (or are underestimated) by university officials and professors.

6. Environmental Technology – With a high level of awareness and concern by citizens and governments regarding a sustainable environment, along with increased economic well-being, the NBCC Saint John Campus is well positioned geographically and human resource-wise to assume a leadership or “specialty” role for Environmental Technology. A two-year diploma programme has existed for some years at the NBCC Miramichi Campus and strong arguments can be made for transferring that specialty to the NBCC Saint John Campus which is ideally positioned to work with UNBSJ and industrial partners to deliver the best possible learning experience. Such a three-way partnership could result in some much needed Environmental Technology R&D which could result in both a healthier environment and a lucrative market for any new technologies which might assist industry in its environmentally conscious efforts.
7. The “2 + 2” Formula – College graduates from diploma programmes should be able to transfer their credits on a guaranteed basis to a further two years of university study where applicable. This type of formula or transfer agreement exists in other jurisdictions. Nearby, the State of Maine has adopted this formula for use between its Community Colleges and Universities. Such an arrangement would facilitate “the seamless web” that one aspires to when organizing the ideal post-secondary system.

To facilitate this type of transfer agreement, appropriate officials from the universities, college and the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training, and Labour should meet forthwith to ensure such appropriate, barrier-free pathways or “career ladders” exist for our institutions' graduates. This type of transfer can work in both directions and has done so in a limited number of areas in the past.

8. Contract Training – The NBCC Saint John Campus has a long history of providing specialized, customized contract training (fee for service basis) to groups, industries, businesses and governments. In recent years, income from this type of training has been campus-based and any surplus has been used to address NBCC Saint John Campus needs. The NBCC Saint John Campus generates more contract training income than any other College. There would certainly be opportunities to partner with the UNBSJ to enhance such training and to enrich the teaching experience of both instructors and professors.
9. Distance Education – Delivering courses and entire programmes to students “at a distance” is a growing field. The College has developed considerable expertise in this area of education, using a variety of technologies and methodologies. At time of writing, there were over 200 students enrolled in distance delivery by the NBCC Saint John Campus.

Note: The College has an enviable, credible experience in delivering an entire programme, not just courses, to registered students from various parts of the Province; this distance delivery model enables them to pursue an academic and training credential from their home villages, towns and cities. This represents delivery of an entire educational programme delivered “at a distance”. Students are often prepared to pay significant sums and take on considerable personal /family debt to access quality education and to advance their career development for the privilege of pursuing the credential “at home”.

Much has been accomplished in distance education and great potential exists. This is yet another area where the NBCC Saint John Campus and UNBSJ might look for opportunities to cooperate, collaborate and partner to provide quality educational opportunities for students “from away” as well as within the Province’s borders. Such a partnership has the potential to ensure the increased competitiveness of these two institutions nationally and internationally.

10. Literacy Education – there is a well identified need for increased adult literacy skills. NBCCs have a significant history of working with others – volunteers from community groups and employers – to increase literacy skills in N.B. There continues to be a critical need for leadership and

increased resources allocated for literacy. The Colleges are obvious leaders and should be charged with oversight and leadership in the Province's much needed increased investment in adult literacy.

11. Incentives for High School Graduates – Approximately only 7% of NBCC Saint John Campus' student population arrived directly from high school. The State of Maine experienced the same phenomenon and introduced a number of incentives to high school students to consider community college opportunities. Such an initiative has resulted for them in a substantial increase in the number of "straight out of high school" students enrolled. New Brunswick should learn from our American neighbour's experience. The institution of the "2 + 2" formula for credit transfer apparently was a very attractive incentive to high school students. Also, the construction of residences on college sites proved to be an attraction for many. (There are no residences currently in the NBCC network.)

The colleges and universities need to establish and nurture healthy relationships with the provincial high schools; this is an area where the two institutions, NBCCSJ and UNBSJ, could work together more effectively, rather than in competition against each other. The establishment of a University and College Council would be a positive initiative. Such a Council could include high schools or include this role in a sub-set of same.

12. Student Support – There is a need for:
  - a.) Consistent, predictable sources of financial help for students to ensure that they are able to apply for, enter and complete educational and training programmes offered by the College (e.g. – student loans, government assistance, scholarships and bursaries). Over one third of the current student population at NBCCSJ are needy recipients of the Department's TSD (Training Skills Development Programme). There appear to be problems with the flexibility in the TSD funding process. As the colleges become more flexible, to better serve the students, the funding mechanisms seem not to be evolving as quickly and efficiently to accommodate the flexibility in the training offerings (e.g. part-time or extended training). Any shortcomings need to be examined and rectified. College counselors can serve as the resident experts in the field and provide helpful details regarding the areas requiring attention.

Note: The NBCC Foundation for scholarships and bursaries for College students has been a very positive initiative and should, in the next academic year (2007-08), be available to assist many students. Saint John Campus has raised approximately \$1M – the largest amount raised within the network – a testimony to the respect and support the surrounding community has for NBCC Saint John Campus programmes and services.

- b.) There is a need as well for consistent, quality student services in all colleges (and universities). Adult students have adult responsibilities, challenges and problems. They need ready access to qualified counsellors, graduate placement services, financial supports, support groups and library resources.
- c.) Transitioning from high school to the Engineering, Health, Information and Business Technologies has often been challenging and a problem for many students, instructors and counselors. This phenomenon is spreading into the Trades programmes. There continues to be a need for sound, meaningful, effective pre-technology and pre-trades training preparation programmes as well as for individual courses as needed to ensure the successful transition for many who either finished or left high school and who aspire to college programmes but are not academically prepared.
- d.) The inappropriate use of electronic media for cyber-bullying, infringement of academic integrity and disruption of training (e.g. YouTube, email, cell phones) is becoming more frequent and students do not always realize the seriousness of possible and potential related offences. All educational institutions need clearly defined and well promoted policies to alleviate this growing and worrying phenomenon.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, although the roles of community colleges and universities are quite distinct and the “cultures” very different, there are many opportunities, if sought, for the two different institutions to work more closely together for the primary purpose of enhancing the access to high quality learning opportunities and value-added career development of New Brunswickers and others “from away”.

The colleges and universities are to be commended for their achievements to date in this regard and look forward to more examples of effective partnering in the near future.

As published in the Telegraph Journal’s “Commentary” page on March 1, the N.B. Business Council seems to understand the importance of our Province’s post-secondary institutions as they stated the following: “We have a network of post-secondary institutions with established reputations. We can gain greater value from this resource by strengthening the quality of these institutions, enhancing their ability to carry out their individual roles and by maximizing linkages between colleges and universities”. Suggestions in this submission have been made in the context of encouraging and maximizing such linkages.

Let’s ensure that what can be done is done to ensure the wise, long-term investment in our colleges and universities. The New Brunswick Community College system must be a major catalyst in helping the Province address dramatic changes in the economy and in the lives of New Brunswick citizens. NBCCSJ Campus’s contributions to socio-economic development can be enhanced.

As part of any wise investment, the NBCC Saint John Campus is in need of and is overdue for a major financial investment to assist in developing the skilled human resources of this province and to help New Brunswick citizens to become more self-sufficient. Let there be no further delay.

Thank you for your attention to this submission. The citizens of New Brunswick look forward to the Commissions’ report to Government and to Government’s subsequent bold and visionary decisions, resulting in new directions for ensuring: accessible, quality, relevant, competitive, and sustainable post secondary institutions in New Brunswick.

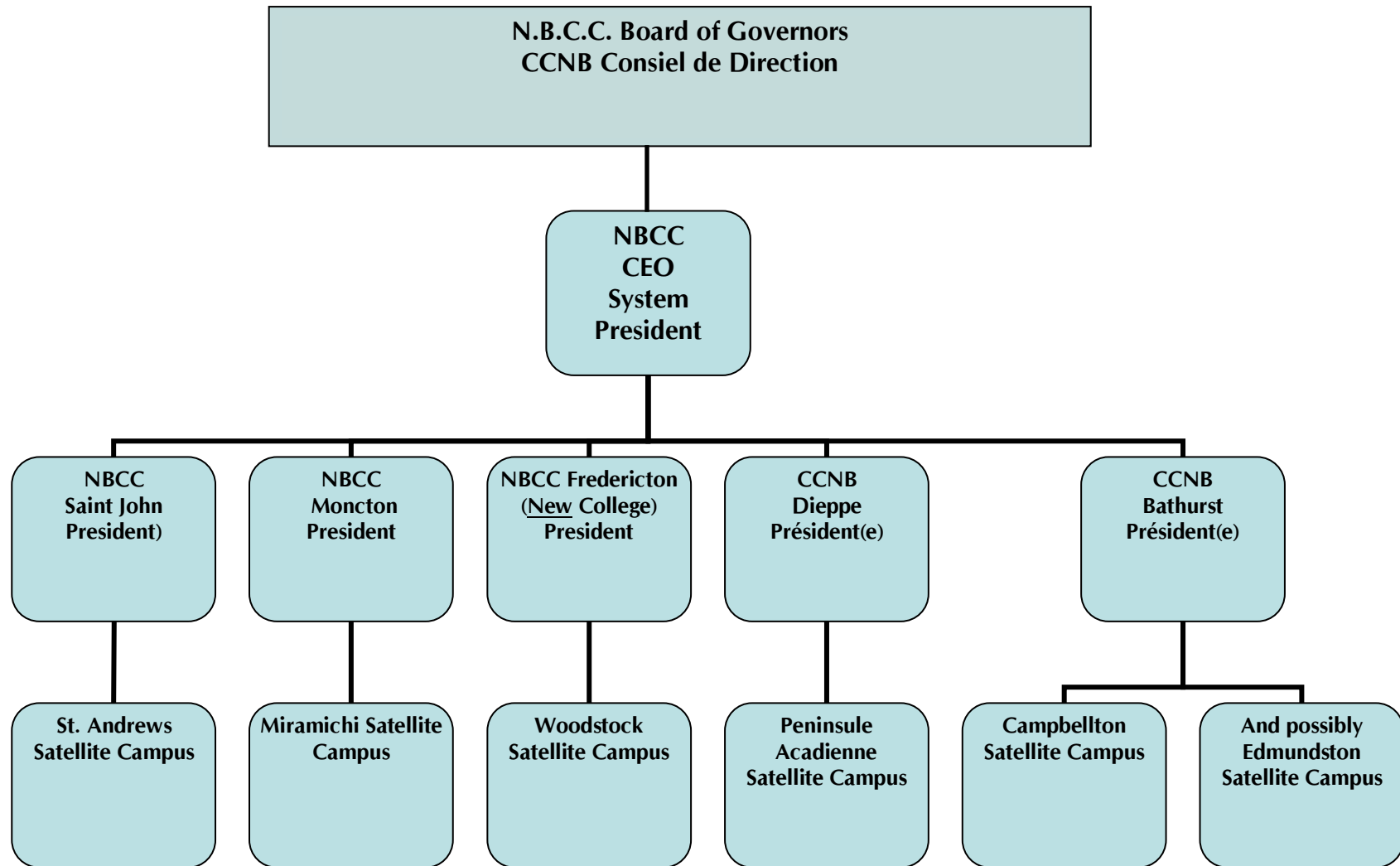


**APPENDIX A, 1**

**BILINGUAL NETWORK**

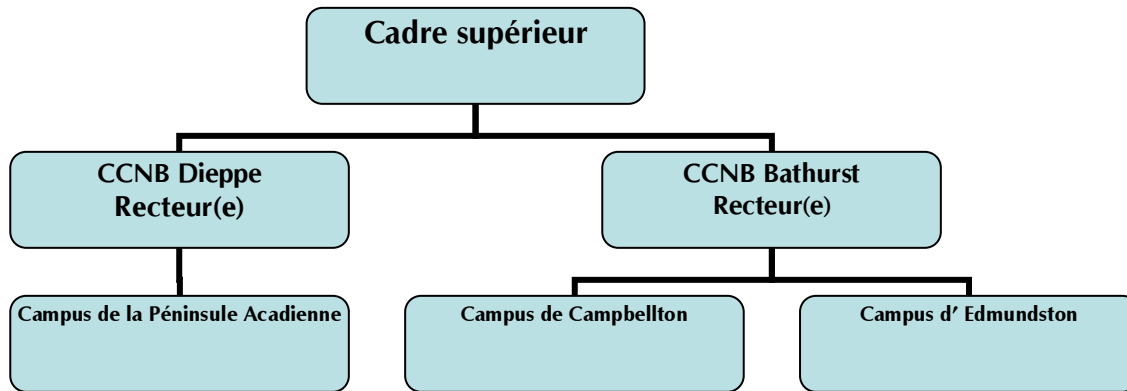
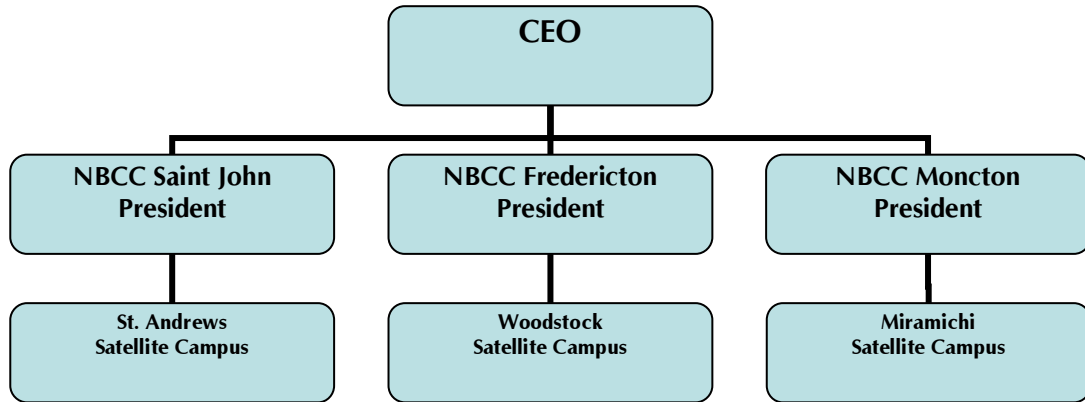
Note: If NBCCs return to a collaborative, bilingual network, see model below.

If NBCCs move to a duality framework, two separate Boards are needed, see next page.



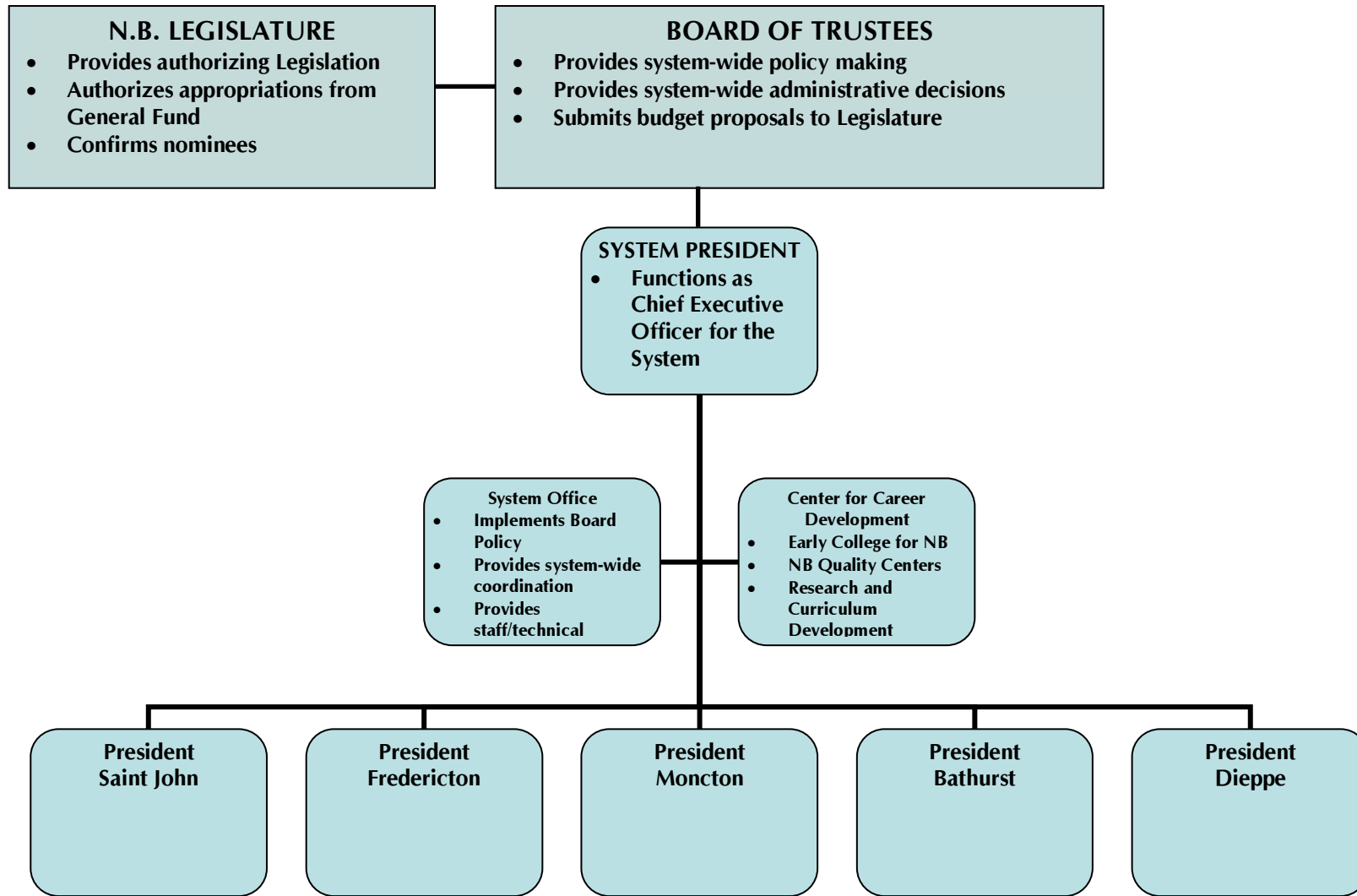
APPENDIX A, 2

DUALITY STRUCTURE

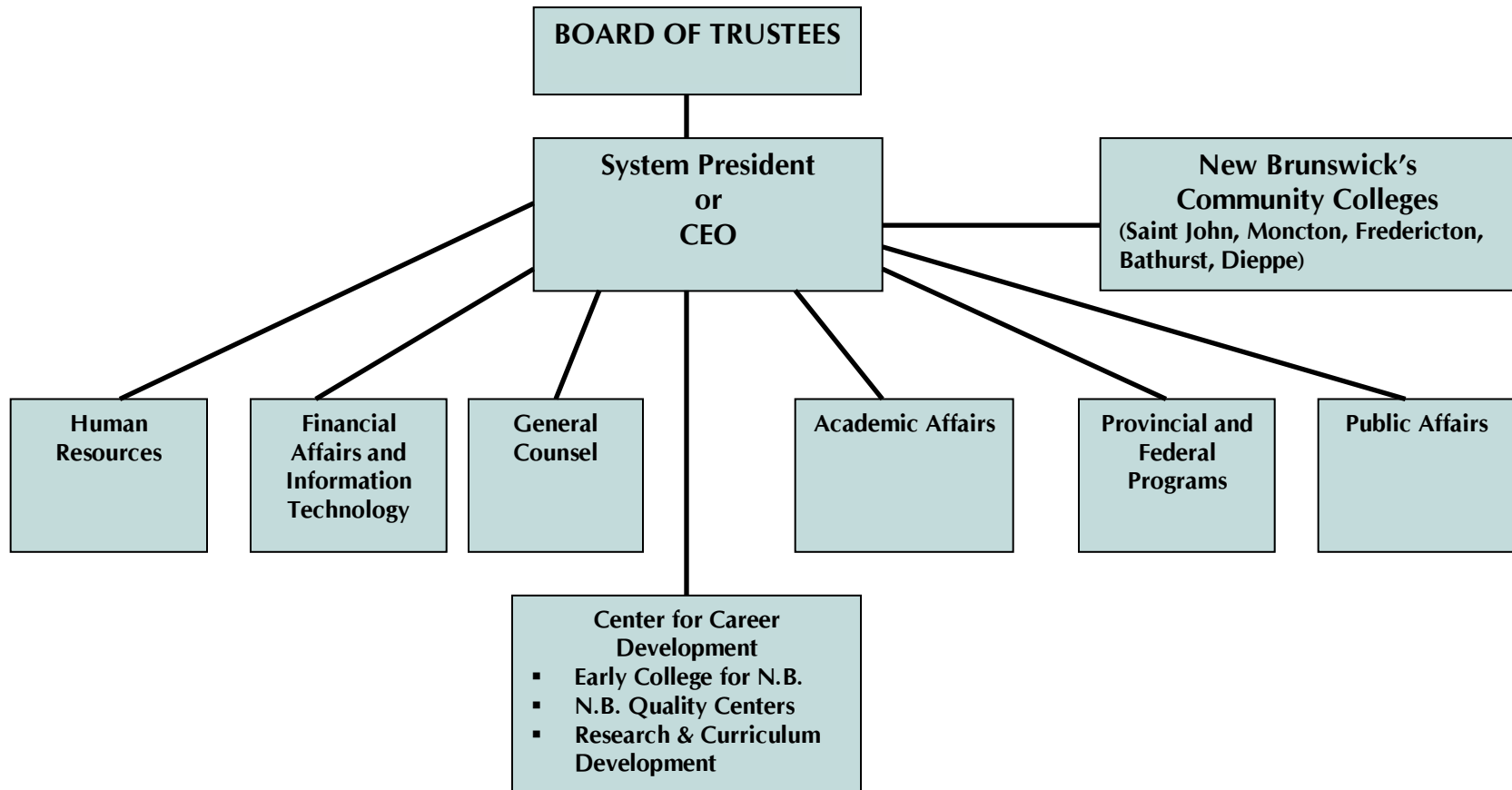


APPENDIX B, 1

NEW BRUNSWICK COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM  
Organizational and Governance Structure

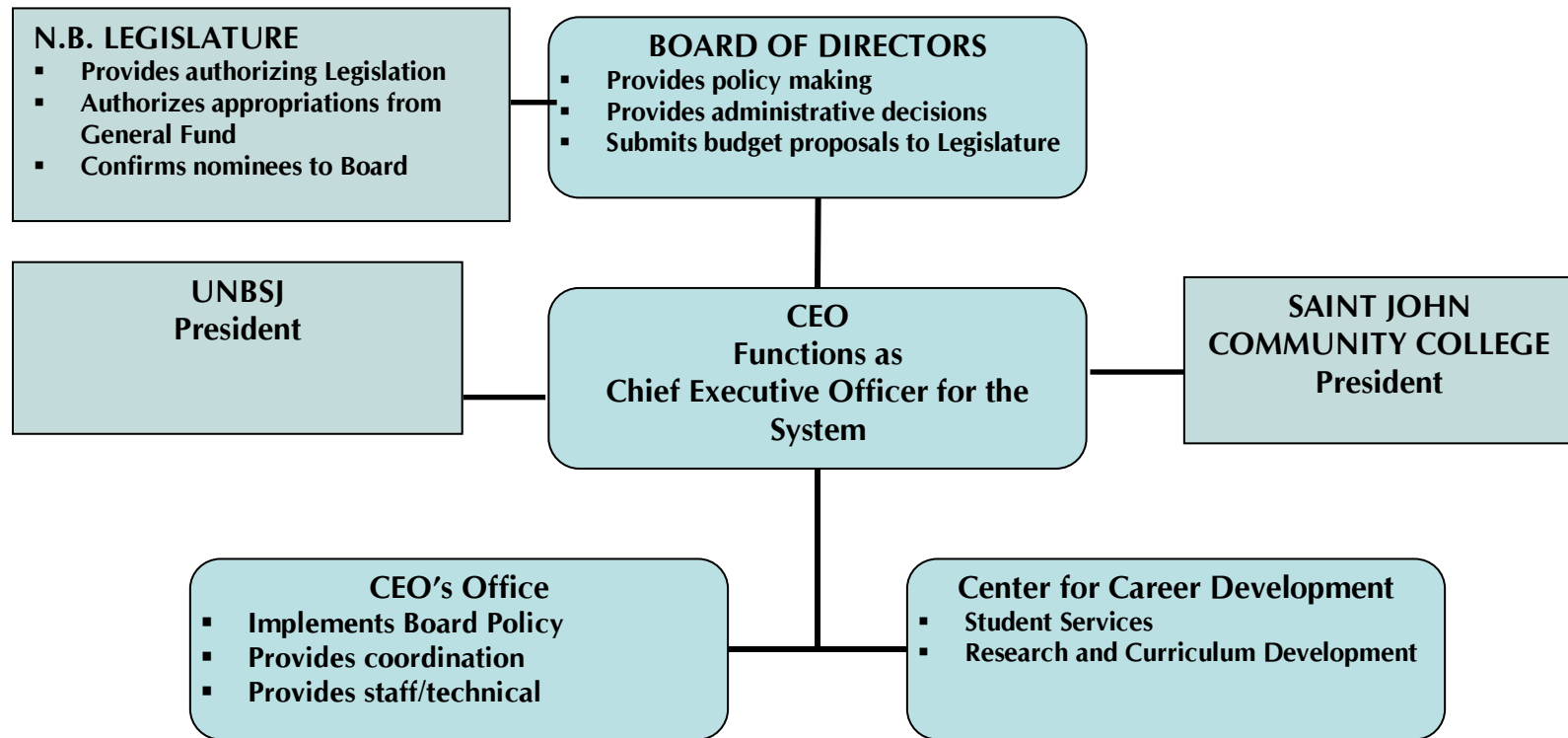


NEW BRUNSWICK COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM  
System Office Organizational Chart



APPENDIX C, 1

THE FUNDY POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION CORPORATION MODEL  
Organizational and Governance Structure



APPENDIX C, 2

POSSIBLE AREAS OF INTEGRATION

