

Public Consultations – Fredericton

Highlights

April 16, 2007

Presentation by Ms. Sandra Germain, Coordinator, *Mi'kmaq/Maliseet Bachelor of Social Work Program (MMBSW)*

(Full text on the Commission's website.)

Programs adapted for Aboriginal students

Sandra Germain came to argue in favour of implementing university programs adapted for Aboriginal students. She provided an overview of the MMBSW, its relevance, and its success with the Aboriginal community. Ms. Germain asked the commissioners to carefully examine the data and the current situation of the Mi'kmaq and Maliseets of New Brunswick. She recommended that the Commission seriously consider an affiliation agreement between UNB and STU to deliver undergraduate programs to Mi'kmaq and Maliseet students. Another of her recommendations had to do with recognition of training or credits obtained from other educational institutions for students who want to pursue university studies.

Presentation by the University of New Brunswick Graduate Student Association

(Full text on the Commission's website.)

A representative of the *University of New Brunswick Graduate Student Association*, Graham Cox, stated that his association is opposed to income contingent repayment loans (ICRL). The Association argued in favour of eliminating fee differentials imposed on international students. Ways must be found to encourage students to stay in the province, either by reducing tuition fees or by increasing bursaries and scholarships. According to Mr. Cox, care must be taken when raising the issue of commercialization of research. Wanting to commercialize research at all costs could lead to a stagnation of innovation.

Other topics raised during the evening:

Adult education

A UNB professor reminded the Commission that adults also form part of the university student clientele. We must move beyond the notion that university students are between 18 and 24 years old. She argued in favour of a mix of technologies in learning. It is necessary to look at the types of pedagogical models most suited to multi-generational learners.

International students

A student drew attention to the important role of international students for the future of postsecondary education in New Brunswick. She described the difficulty experienced by this group of students in accessing financial assistance. According to her, because of financial problems, many international students have to leave New Brunswick even if they would like to stay. Incentives should be put in place to retain international students.

Student poverty

Another student spoke out against the vulnerable position of students. Many students must hold down two or three part-time jobs in order to pay for their education, which means less time to devote to their studies. The current system perpetuates a socioeconomic split between students. There should be incentives for employers who hire students, who become mentors. University alumni could play a role in this area.

Economic development

One of the contributors spoke about the important impacts of postsecondary education on economic development. Regret was expressed about the lack of services offered by the New Brunswick Community College (NBCC) in the Fredericton area.

Status of apprentices

Are apprentices considered to be like students? The Commission was asked that question by one contributor. There are approximately 675 apprentices in the Fredericton area. Changes in the current apprenticeship certification structure are desired. Saskatchewan would be a good reference model.

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Presentation by Greg Allain, President of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT)

(Full text on the Commission's website.)

Accessibility

The CAUT is urging the government to increase basic funding and to freeze tuition fees. It is important to set up a financial assistance plan based on student need.

Cooperation, differentiation, and efficiency

The CAUT objects to the initiatives to amalgamate universities and colleges. Mr. Allain reminded those present that the two entities have different mandates and roles. The Association does recognize, however, that it is essential to improve both systems.

Accountability and governance

The CAUT believes that the collegial type governance model is the cornerstone of modern universities, and it is essential to maintain the academic senate to ensure rigour in decision making.

The *Canada Post-Secondary Education Act*

The CAUT advocates that the federal government take a more active role in reducing tuition fees and improving the quality of the post-secondary education system. The *Canada Post-Secondary Education Act*, inspired by the bill originally introduced by the CAUT, would establish a separate envelope for postsecondary education and would increase responsibility and transparency in managing federal funds allocated to postsecondary education.

Presentation by the Construction Association of New Brunswick

(Full text on the Commission's website.)

The president of the Construction Association of New Brunswick stated that New Brunswick is facing a shortage of construction workers and labourers. The CANB is urging the provincial government to reinvest in existing facilities and tools to meet the needs of the market. The CANB is calling for increased funding for apprenticeship training. It would also like to have a new system of selecting students. The Association recommends the establishment of a course to train those responsible for certifying apprentices.

Presentation by Miguel LeBlanc, Executive Director of the New Brunswick Association of Social Workers (NBASW)

(Full text on the Commission's website.)

The NBASW says it is open to the idea that the first and second years of the Bachelor of Social Work degree be offered at the Community College on the condition that a formal structure independent of the government be set up to facilitate the process. It is important for representatives of the social work, health, and social services sectors to be part of the structure. Furthermore, the NBASW hopes that a Master of Social Work program will be offered in New Brunswick for Anglophone students. The NBASW is calling for better representation of social workers and health workers on the Commission's advisory panel.

Presentation by the New Brunswick Association for Community Living (NBACL)

(Full text on the Commission's website.)

The NBACL maintains that any reform of the postsecondary education system calls for the development of a truly inclusive system. Providing access to postsecondary education for intellectually handicapped persons procures numerous advantages for society. Adequate training improves their chances of getting a job and of participating actively in the community. New Brunswick cannot afford to abandon this group of people.

Team Fredericton

(Full text on the Commission's website.)

Team Fredericton advocates closer cooperation between universities and colleges for the development of an economy characterized by innovation. Team Fredericton believes that the city is well positioned to become a key centre of the post-secondary education sector and is calling for the establishment of a Community College in Fredericton.

Other topics raised during the evening:

- The system governing apprentices in New Brunswick
- Lack of funding for research
- Better support of graduate students
- Lack of preparation of students for university studies