



ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK TEACHERS

P.O. Box 4400, Fredericton, N. B. E3B 5A3 (506) 453 -4661 Fax: (506) 453 3514 aunbt@unb.ca

Higher Education in New Brunswick

AUNBT Submission to
The Commission on Post Secondary Education

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WHO ARE WE?

The Association of University of New Brunswick Teachers (AUNBT) welcomes this opportunity to present views on behalf of its members, 650 professors, instructors, librarians and other academic staff at Fredericton, Saint John, Bathurst, and Moncton. Since the 1950s AUNBT has been a recognized representative voice for faculty and their concerns. It became the certified bargaining agent for UNB's academic employees in 1979.

We commend the province's initiative in creating this commission on Post-Secondary Education and we accept the invitation to "challenge ... [the commission's] view of the issues, to suggest alternative interpretations and recommend appropriate courses of action." Many of our comments take as their frame of reference the 1962 *Report of the Royal Commission on Higher Education in New Brunswick*, known commonly as the *Deutsch Report*. Its recommendations transformed the face of higher education in New Brunswick in an unequivocally positive way. We hope that the final recommendations of this present commission will be of the same character.

Because the University of New Brunswick is this province's oldest, largest and most complex research institution of higher learning, we make no apology for framing our submission to the Commission mostly in "UNB" terms. It is informed by three recurrent themes:

- The indispensability of UNB's role as a national university to the development of the province's political economy and its social and cultural fabric
- The centrality of collegial governance and academic freedom to maintaining UNB as a credible national university
- The necessity of adequate provincial funding to sustain UNB's teacher/student ratio and its role as the province's hub of research.

THE NEW BRUNSWICK PUBLIC GOOD AND THE INDISPENSIBILITY OF UNB

Every province, every nation needs universities so that their citizens can be literate – in the broadest sense – and prepared for life in a fast-paced and globalizing culture, economy and society. Regions that have invested heavily in their university and other post-secondary institutions and made possible access for all of their citizens are prospering. If Ireland is the international example, Alberta and Ontario are the acknowledged Canadian exemplars.

Over the 1000 years that universities have existed in the West, their central task has been to support the learning relationship between professors and students. This remains the essence of university education. But it is also in the nature of universities to be adaptable in the face of crisis and social change, and this has been so in New Brunswick. Although the province entered the 21st century with four publicly funded universities, it has been UNB's role as a national, in some ways even international, comprehensive university that has contributed most conspicuously to New Brunswick culture, economy and society. These contributions include:

- the education of its young people in a wide range of fields
 - preparing them to be responsible and interested citizens engaged in productive professions
 - instilling in them a passion for lifelong learning
- providing a centre for continuing education
- acting as a resource for educators, government, business, and non-governmental organizations
- constituting the single most important centre for research and innovation in a wide range of fields, from the humanities to the social sciences to business to the life sciences, physical sciences, engineering, and technology
- nurturing a culture of innovation and creative thinking

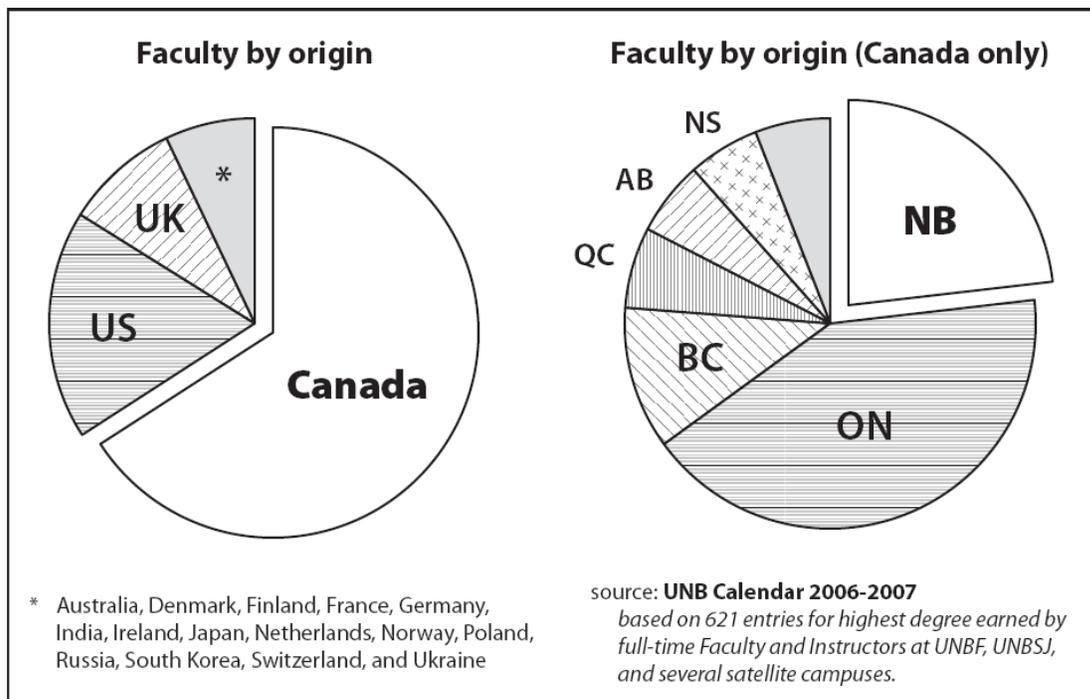
UNB has had a direct hand in the development of both the provincial mining and forestry industries. Yet we also led and continue to lead the shift to a knowledge-based economy. For example, UNB was among the province's first internet users and providers, promoting it to government, business and the public.

UNB's role as the foremost institution of higher learning in contemporary New Brunswick is no recent development. After the Legislature transformed King's College into a non-denominational "University" of New Brunswick in 1859, UNB was always characterized by both government and in the press as *the* "provincial" university. It was "provincial" in a double sense. Alone among colleges and universities it received annual legislative funding. UNB was also "provincial" in the obvious sense that it was the university attended by most English-speaking New Brunswickers.

Any reader of the *Deutsch Report* will be struck by the fact that in 1962 UNB could still be referred to as New Brunswick's "Provincial" university without apology or qualification. But while UNB was provincial in the sense that it was, even in 1962, our only non-denominational institution and still received the lion's share of higher education funding, it had transcended being merely provincial in the composition of its student body. In the year of the *Deutsch Report* only 49% of UNB students were actually from New Brunswick, although the university hoped

to raise that percentage to 65.¹ Already then, nearly a half century ago, UNB was, in this most basic sense, more than a “Provincial” institution. In terms of student body it had become something of a national university.

Today New Brunswick’s largest university remains relevant nationally and internationally. In the academic year 2006-2007, 71% of UNB students are from New Brunswick, but 19% are from other parts of Canada, and an impressive 10% from the rest of the world.² Slightly more than 15% of UNB full-time faculty and instructors have obtained their highest degree from a New Brunswick university, but 50% obtained it in another Canadian province, and 35% from abroad.³ In this sense, also, UNB is far from a “provincial” university.



Finally, it is important to acknowledge that many UNB-educated graduates, no matter where they originated, pursue careers elsewhere. In 1962 the *Deutsch Report* found that nearly two-thirds of UNB graduates resided *outside* the province. Today the statistic for New Brunswick residence is higher (53%). Nevertheless, 38% of all living UNB graduates make their home in other provinces and a further 9% reside abroad.⁴

The reality, then, is that for decades New Brunswick has been home to an academy that serves more than a local constituency, with some claim to be called a “national” or even “international” university. In supporting UNB, provincial governments of the past made the decision to spend New Brunswick dollars educating not just New Brunswick students but many from outside the province. They did so knowing that a great many UNB-educated students, no matter where they originated, would make their careers elsewhere. This situation will continue until:

- either New Brunswick employers are able to pay the wages and offer the career opportunities that will retain UNB graduates locally, or

- the provincial government decides that it is willing to support New Brunswick universities only to the extent that they educate New Brunswick students.

The first of these alternatives offers a vision in keeping with the direction of the government's Self Sufficiency Commission. The second offers a narrow vision certain to rebuff potential immigrants and drive away New Brunswickers.

The *Deutsch Report* suggests that in the early 1960s, the point when fewer than half of UNB students were from New Brunswick, there was a fear of governmental reluctance to subsidize their education. Even today there is no provincial grant funding for undergraduate students from outside Canada.⁵ On the whole, however, the government has conformed to the prevailing Canadian policy that provinces do not discriminate against students from other provinces. Moreover, some of those students from elsewhere attracted to New Brunswick for their higher education remain in the province, and to that extent we benefit.

The Discussion Paper's focus on how the publicly-supported universities can serve New Brunswick better will suggest to some that the province's scarce dollars should be spent funding universities only to the extent that they educate students of New Brunswick origin. On the contrary, we believe maintaining a "national" and "international" university is sufficiently a public good that the province should fund UNB accordingly. The Discussion Paper suggests that the current balance between students from outside New Brunswick who come here for education and students from New Brunswick who choose to be educated elsewhere is "reasonable". Yet it is troubling that the Discussion Paper implies that New Brunswick is the loser in this process.

We believe that UNB's primary educational mission is to serve the people of New Brunswick *but* that students of New Brunswick origin are served best by funding UNB at a level that allows it to award academic degrees that are credible in the national (and international) context. A strictly provincial university could not attract the best teaching scholars, who would shun such a limited vision. A strictly provincial university would not be able to offer New Brunswick students one of the great benefits of a current UNB education: interaction with students and teachers of diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, religions and perspectives. Nor would the best and brightest New Brunswickers accept that their education should be circumscribed by such a narrow experience; they would go elsewhere. A mutually enriching experience would all but disappear if UNB were funded in a way that forced it to charge discriminatory tuition to students from other Canadian provinces. Those students (and their tuition dollars) would not come. Like the Commission, we believe that the citizens of New Brunswick are entitled to expect an education "as good as any anywhere."

The possibility that the provincial government might opt not to fund UNB's national presence was acknowledged even at the time of the *Deutsch Report*. UNB president Colin Mackay responded as follows: "[W]e maintain that the increasingly cosmopolitan make-up of our student body has been a good thing for all our students and has made the institution a better university".⁶ We agree. Accordingly, a threshold question for this Commission must be whether it is sufficiently in New Brunswick's interest to be home to one truly national university that it will recommend a commensurate level of government support. At the present level of funding UNB's role as a national university is unsustainable. Already UNB's administrators have concluded that, absent significant new funding, the faculty complement

will be allowed to fall dramatically. Bright, capable young people will go elsewhere both to work and study. Without sufficient support to its public universities, the province's political economy, society and cultural fabric will be eroded.

RELEVANCE AND RESPONSIVENESS: THE CENTRALITY OF COLLEGIAL GOVERNANCE

Under the heading "Relevance and Responsiveness," the Discussion Paper asks "...whether the traditional role of senates and governing boards, especially since faculty interests are now protected by unionized collective bargaining, still meets the needs of contemporary society." It suggests that collegial governance will "serve to retard responsiveness and restrain innovation."

The very framing of this question suggests a misunderstanding of the distinct and important purposes served by senates, governing boards, and unions.

Senates, consisting of a majority of academics deal with academic matters, such as curriculum review and academic planning. Boards of governors, consisting of members of the broader community, university administrators, and a small minority of faculty members and students represent the public interest and "exercise ultimate fiscal responsibility" for the university.⁷ Faculty unions, such as AUNBT, represent their members as employees in such matters as terms and conditions of employment. A faculty union does not participate in decisions regarding academic matters, which are better made by the collective wisdom of faculty members in faculty councils and senates. It does, however, serve the important role of protecting faculty members' rights to participate in collegial governance. Particularly is this so at UNB, where a guarantee of collegial governance is affirmed not only in the *UNB Act* but also in the collective agreement.⁸

By questioning whether the traditional role of senates and governing boards "meets the needs of contemporary society" or "retards responsiveness and restrains innovation," the Discussion Paper overlooks not only the value of collegial governance, but the persistent, recurring recognition of the structures which support such governance.

In 1966 Sir James Duff and Professor Robert O. Berdahl, at the behest of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) and Canadian Association of Universities Teachers (CAUT), provided recommendations for the reform of Canadian university governance that were widely adopted. Duff and Berdahl suggested that it was "... crucial for the Senate to become the central education forum of the university...."⁹ "Rather than having to accept purely *ad hoc* decisions, it would be far better for the faculty to evolve a consensus which reflects its own values and long-range goals."¹⁰ Their recommendations applied to both administrators and faculty. "On the one hand, the President should use the Senate and its committees as a principal source of advice on academic policies. On the other, departments and Faculties must transmit to Senate for review many of their decisions on internal affairs."¹¹

The Discussion Paper seems also to imply that, because of unionization, senates may no longer be necessary. In setting in motion the recommendations that brought changes to the roles of senates, the Duff-Berdahl report cautioned against regarding faculty associations as the "body from which faculty actions in university government should emerge...." It preferred the

senate “because it embraces, by representative principle, the entire tenured staff...”¹² Although the Duff Berdahl report predates most unionization or certification of faculty associations, the need for a separate academic body such as a senate continues to be valued today. As recently as 2005 the AUCC required as a criterion of accreditation that an institution have:

governance and an administrative structure appropriate to a university, including:
Authority vested in academic staff for decisions affecting academic programs including admissions, content, graduation requirements/standards, and related policies and procedures through membership on an elected academic senate or other appropriate elected body representative of academic staff.¹³

In considering matters of university governance, the Duff-Berdahl report recognized rightly the interest that provincial governments have in universities. However, it observed that, while government does have an interest in “satisfying itself that every field of study which ought to be cultivated is in fact being adequately cultivated...this does not mean that universities must slavishly accept every governmental suggestion.”¹⁴

We draw this to the Commission’s attention because the Discussion Paper declares that “the public interest must trump the interests of the institutions themselves.” This reflects an assumption that, because universities now receive significant government funding, they have become public amenities, and as such can be remodeled to meet the perceived public needs of the moment in much the same way as departments of government. Without denying the financial reality underlying this assumption, we believe that the public interest is best served when universities function autonomously. This is also the view of such national and international bodies as CAUT and UNESCO.

For example, the CAUT policy statement on university governance recognizes that universities serve a variety of societal needs, and that in order to fulfill these needs, universities must be bastions of collegial governance and academic freedom.¹⁵ Scholars in all academic disciplines must be allowed to pursue their scholarly endeavours without “fear of reprisal from powerful interests within or outside the university.”¹⁶ Accordingly, CAUT recognizes that academic freedom and collegial governance go hand in hand.

Similarly, in 1997 the UNESCO General Council approved a “Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel.” It emphasized that while there must be institutional accountability, this accountability is nested between institutional autonomy and the rights and freedoms of higher education. The Recommendation links as interdependent the ideas of self-governance, collegiality and academic freedom. Specifically:

17. The proper enjoyment of academic freedom and compliance with the duties and responsibilities listed below require the autonomy of institutions of higher education. Autonomy is that degree of self-governance necessary for effective decision making by institutions of higher education regarding their academic work, standards, management and related activities consistent with systems of public accountability, especially in respect of funding provided by the state, and respect for academic freedom and human rights. ...

And

32. The principles of collegiality include academic freedom, shared responsibility, the policy of participation of all concerned in internal decision making structures and practices, and the development of consultative mechanisms. Collegial decision-making should encompass decisions regarding the administration and determination of policies of higher education, curricula, research, extension work, the allocation of resources and other related activities, in order to improve academic excellence and quality for the benefit of society at large.¹⁷

The local perspective is consonant with that of these national and international bodies. In 1990, Thomas Kuttner, a member of UNB's Faculty of Law, wrote of the university that:

Ours is a community of inquiry comprised of teachers and students engaged in ongoing dialogue about that society from which we have distanced ourselves but to which we remain linked in important ways. We call on others to join us, at least for a time, in our inquiry - hence the rotation of students in the community of scholars - and bid them return to the larger world to commence their adult life enriched by several years of potentially intense dialogue, challenged to integrate the insights gained into the new life now begun.¹⁸

Kuttner's description affirms the unique purpose of a university not merely to meet the immediate needs of contemporary society, but to provide students with the knowledge required to meet society's longer term needs. In this way universities promote, rather than retard, responsiveness and innovation.

For these reasons AUNBT encourages the Commission to recognize that, whatever changes to post-secondary education may be called for, the essential purpose of the university, academic freedom and the structure of collegial governance that supports that purpose must remain intact. Collegial governance and academic freedom are central to maintaining UNB as credible national university

QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Several concerns that the Discussion Paper raises under this heading merit special consideration.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Should the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission's (MPHEC) mandate to report on quality assurance mechanisms in place at public universities be supplemented or replaced by a new layer of bureaucracy? We suggest that some time be allowed to gauge the effectiveness of the MPHEC approach before spending education dollars in order to duplicate what may already be in place. It is far from clear that there would be a significant benefit to introducing a specific New Brunswick agency for quality assurance when our universities compete regionally and nationally.

EFFECTIVE TEACHING

AUNBT agrees with the Discussion Paper that among the elements necessary "in order

to improve academic excellence and quality for society at large” are paying attention to teaching how to teach, monitoring teaching effectiveness, supporting programs to bring teaching quality to the highest level possible and involving students in evaluating the quality of teaching.

Faculty associations, including AUNBT recognize that quality teaching is a cornerstone of academic competence. In practice, at public universities, including UNB the quality of a faculty member’s teaching is assessed on an ongoing basis through student opinion surveys and as an essential part of the process for reappointment, promotion, and tenure. Faculty members regularly update their courses based on feedback from students, peers, their own research and up-to-date scholarship in their disciplines. At UNB, commitment to high quality teaching is also evidenced by a Joint AUNBT/UNB Committee on the Assessment of Teaching Competence. This committee consults broadly with students and faculty members, as well as experts in teaching and in the assessment of teaching, in order to recommend the most fair and accurate forms of evidence for assessment of effective teaching. Supporting this development is the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning on the Fredericton campus and the Vice President’s Excellence in Teaching Committee in Saint John. AUNBT endorses the work of both of these bodies and encourages greater investment to maintain excellence in teaching. Public universities require no external pressure to persuade them to pay significant attention to teaching.

THE RESEARCH/EFFECTIVE TEACHING CONNECTION

As the *Deutsch Report* recognized and articulated many decades ago, the complexity and rapid change associated with a high degree of specialization in an advanced economy and the relationships with other activities inherent in such specialization require that students receive the education necessary to prepare them for a world of advancing technology. Traditionally, and certainly in New Brunswick, it has been the public university, with its community of scholars and scientists “...which has been the focal point for research into the unknown and fountainhead of intellectual and material progress.”¹⁹

The distinguishing feature of a public university, setting it apart from other institutions of higher learning, is integration of teaching with research. University research covers a wide field of activity; for example, investigation, creativity, and experimentation in the Arts, Engineering, Humanities, Sciences and Social Sciences. Universities “... perform two major tasks: the discovery and application of new knowledge through research and the preservation and dissemination of knowledge through teaching.”²⁰

In New Brunswick, as in other provinces, it is the public universities that have taken a leadership role in research and development. This endeavour serves all parties well. The university gains a national reputation from the publications, presentations and technological developments that result, and may receive funds from overhead charges on research contracts or patent licensing. Through these activities faculty members meet their contractual obligations for tenure and promotion, and success often begets additional funding and other rewards.

Often the results of current research and unresolved issues in a discipline are introduced in senior undergraduate lectures. Through such open discussion, students are engaged in critical thinking and problem solving. While this experience engages students and leads to a

more thorough understanding of a discipline than rote memorization, the discussion can also result in discovery of a new approach to a question or the realization of a new topic of research.

Graduate students are commonly involved in faculty research, through which they develop expertise and some recognition of their own potential. This experience often energizes the students' thinking and exposes them to new possibilities as well as building self-confidence.

What distinguishes a university education from that available at community colleges is this active engagement in critical enquiry and research, both of which contribute to the teaching and learning mission. At universities, such inquiry is achieved through open discussion between faculty and students and among students, who continue the dialogue outside of the classroom setting. Exchange of dialogue through point and counter-point is fundamental to the development of an inquiring mind. For this reason, except where essential to program delivery, distance education should be used sparingly, in order to preserve the essential quality of a university education. While AUNBT does recognize the utility of distance and e-learning courses, it is important to retain for students the experience of the university community. Direct personal access to instructors enhances greatly the quality of education, while group learning and teamwork are cornerstones of both academic and professional post-secondary education. A university degree should distinguish the bearer as having attained a certain level of inquiry and critical judgement.

As the foremost university in the province, UNB must struggle constantly to achieve an effective faculty/student ratio and offer up-to-date academic programs. This goal requires that UNB be supported financially at the level required to compete nationally and internationally in academic (and student) recruitment and retention. This requires both

- a long-term funding strategy to attract new faculty, and
- a mechanism to retain its best teachers and researchers.

As long as New Brunswick remains one of the last jurisdictions in North America to cling to mandatory retirement, the province will lose high quality faculty, some of whom are in their most productive years. At an increasing cost in loss of expertise, other provinces and the United States will win in the competition for highly-trained educators and researchers regardless of age.

We take it as common knowledge that much of the research contributing to R&D in New Brunswick is carried out under the direction of faculty at UNB. Today, this research is driven by greater reliance on industrial sponsorship rather than the traditional knowledge-based government funding programs of the past. This is in part because of inadequate core funding that has failed to keep pace with the needs of society.

Industrial sponsorship has built stronger ties between university research faculty and industry, which facilitates commercialization of research. However, AUNBT, along with national bodies such as CAUT and international organizations such as UNESCO cautions that this *can* undermine the quality and integrity of research and can de-emphasize the value of discovery in areas that have no immediate or apparent commercial value.²¹ In industry-sponsored research, contractual or ethical questions arise that can be at odds with the interests

of the university, researcher, funding source, or public.²² In such instances faculty associations like AUNBT are particularly important in guaranteeing fair process in dispute resolution.

Co-funding requirements, at the heart of most government and industry shared programs, have contributed to the widening inequities between institutions and between various regions of the country. Non-peer reviewed funding tends to be skewed toward the richer and more populous provinces and large urban centres. This bias is reflected in the discrepancy between the proportions of faculty in Atlantic Canada, representing 12% of Canadian full-time faculty, who have received less than 4% of all Canadian Foundation for Innovation grants.²³ For this reason it is necessary that the Province establish its own grant funding programs to ensure continued health of research and creativity, directed towards future cultural and technological needs of New Brunswick.

EXTERNAL PRESSURES

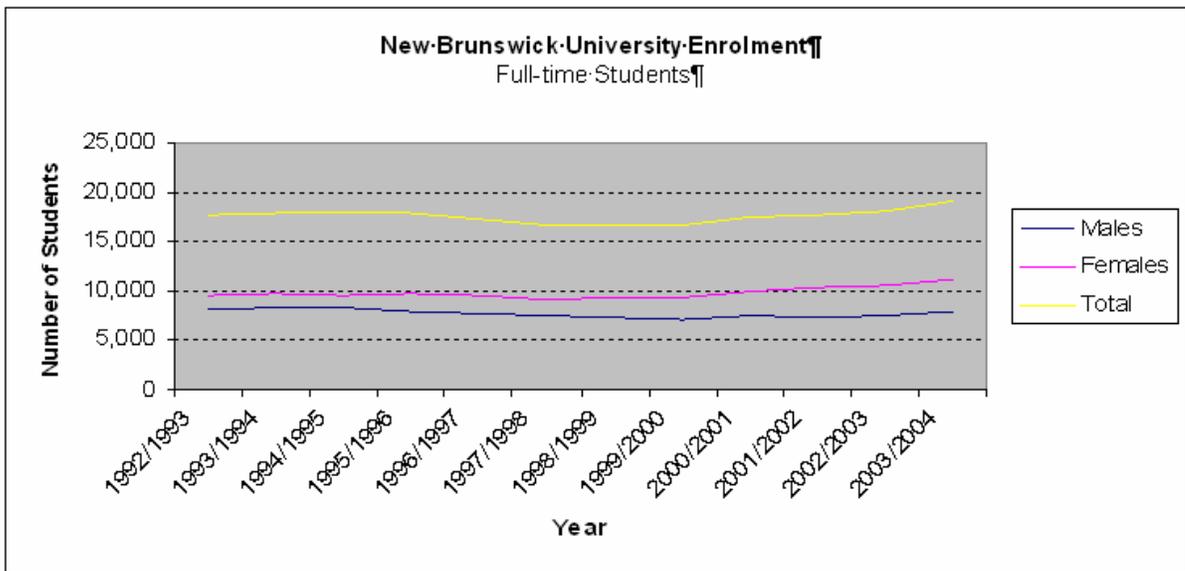
Of the external pressures impinging on New Brunswick public universities in the immediate future, we will comment on three:

- Demographic changes and enrolment projections
- Public universities in relation to others institutions
- The increasing cost of education.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES AND ENROLMENT PROJECTIONS

Of these external pressures, the issue that seems to have created almost a sense of panic among administrators and policy makers is the perception that changing demographics will lead to a dramatic decline in university enrolment. That the province's population is stagnant (though *not* in actual decline) is not in question. Likewise, we acknowledge projections that our school-aged numbers will decline. However, this does not *necessarily* mean there will be a corresponding decline in university enrolment. It would be closer to the truth to say that enrolment is determined by *both* potential high school populations and their participation rates which, in turn, can be influenced by public policy. We explain.

Grade 12 enrolment data do not tell the whole story. The data that the Discussion Paper draws on in Figure 1 show actual and projected decline in numbers of New Brunswick Anglophone students in grade 12 from 1993 to 2014. But the data also reveal that the decline in this population group projected for the period between 2007 and 2014 is at roughly the same rate as that between 1993 and 2000. In other words, such a moderate decline would be nothing new. The figure below shows that in the same period as the 1993 to 2000 decline in potential post-secondary education students, full-time university total enrolment decreased insignificantly, from 17,935 to 17,435.

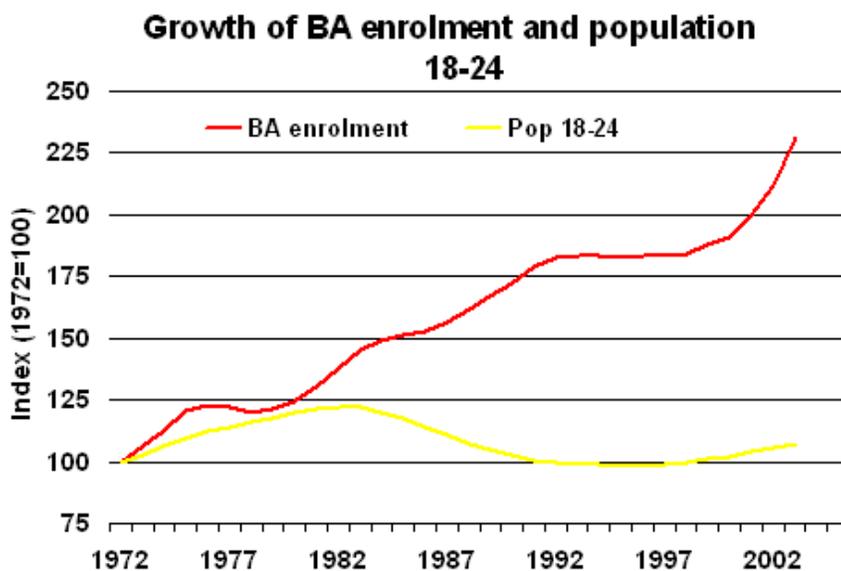


Source: Statistics Canada CANSIM Table 477-0013

Given this experience, we question why the Discussion Paper is so quick to link the 2007 to 2014 projected number of post-secondary students enrolment to a precipitous decline in university enrolment.

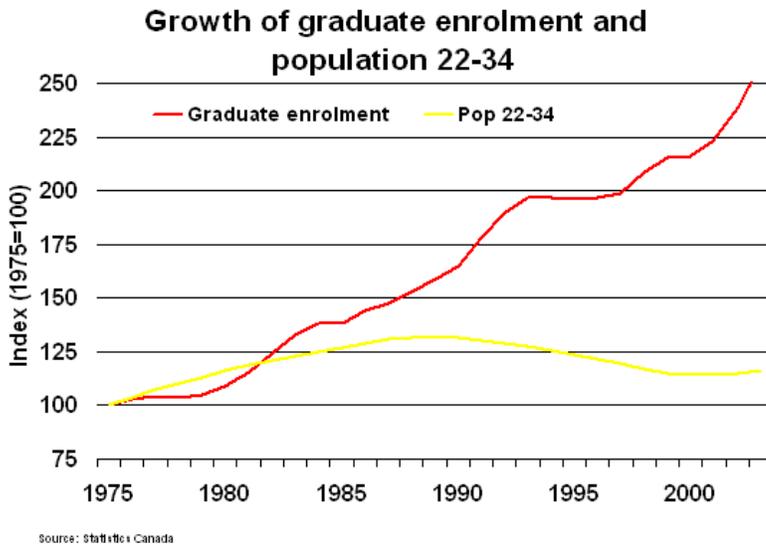
In the Discussion Paper, Figure 2 shows that the university participation rate in New Brunswick increased steadily from 1996 to 2003, typically about 6 percentage points higher than the Canadian average. This suggests that it is the combination of the participation rate and the potential post-secondary student population that affects enrolment. While we do not deny that concern is warranted and that measures should be taken to increase participation, we emphasize that demographic decline alone does not warrant panic over enrolment.

The dominant role of the participation rate in driving university enrolment in Canada has been shown clearly in a recent study by Mathieu Grenier.

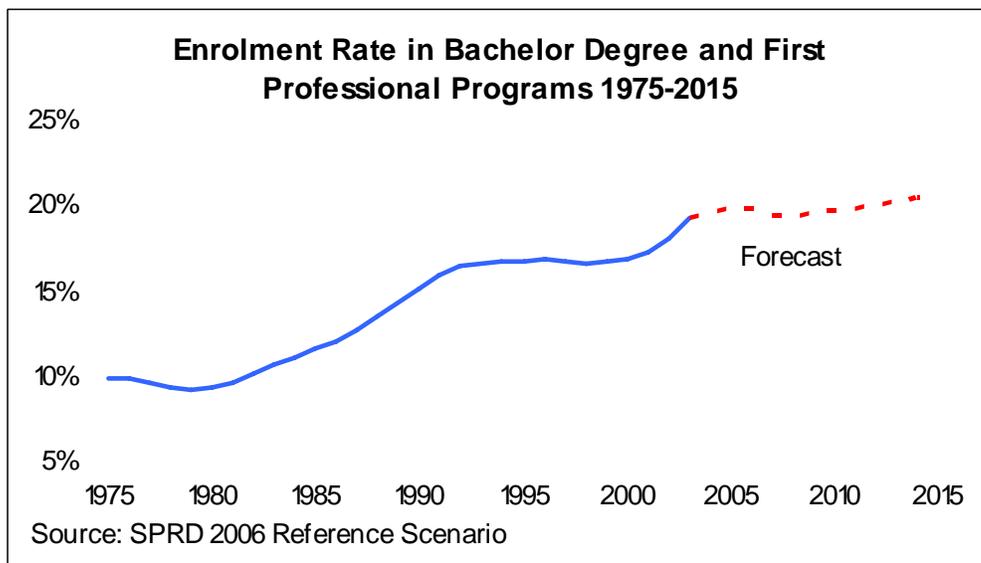


Source: Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSD) reported at the February 2007 annual conference of the Canadian Occupational Projection System (COPS).

The figure above shows that between 1972 and 2002 enrolment in bachelor's programs grew at more than twice the rate of the population. This same pattern is repeated for enrolment in graduate programs as can be seen in the next figure.



In the same study, the HRSD Strategic Policy Research Directorate (SPRD) preliminary projections for bachelor's enrolment from 2005 to 2015 show slow growth.



Although preliminary, the study projects that over the next decade, university enrolment in Canada will continue to grow due to an increase in the participation rate decoupled from demographic changes. For New Brunswick a reasonable argument can be made that university participation rates higher than the Canadian average offset the enrolment impact of population growth below the national average.

New Brunswick can further affect enrolment by developing public policy which changes both the participation rates and the potential PSE student populations. Among the factors having an impact on enrolments at universities and at UNB in particular are:

- That Universities are increasingly attracting students from outside the traditional 18 to 24 age cohort as a culture of life long learning develops,
- That Ontario and western Canada universities are currently overcrowded, and their system will not ease for some time,
- That the Self-Sufficiency Task Force has made recommendations for population increases,
- That there are significant numbers of potential students among under-represented groups

It is public policy, along with investment, which can both increase the accessibility of post-secondary education, and decrease the financial, physical or other barriers to attendance for everyone. New Brunswick could be positioned to take advantage such factors by providing world class learning in a more conducive environment.

In summary, enrolment in university is determined by both potential PSE student populations and their participations rates which in turn can be influenced by public policy. Changes to the structure of New Brunswick universities using projections of university enrolment based solely on demographic trend could be damaging and counterproductive in the long run. Public policy can do much to improve the outlook.

PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN RELATION TO PRIVATE, FOR-PROFIT INSTITUTIONS AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES

In a world of unstable enrolments and increased competition for post-secondary students it is difficult to justify an increase in the number of degree-granting institutions in the province. A common misperception is that private universities add capacity to the educational system without the expenditure of additional public dollars. While this aim may be so in some cases, many private schools do come to request government funding, charging high rates for questionable, often non-accredited programs. As the Ontario Council of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) warned in 1989:

Whatever the protestations to the contrary, and however solemn the self-denying the ordinances might be, given the extraordinary costs associated with high quality university education, freestanding institutions will almost certainly request public assistance²⁴

In this connection we note with interest that Yorkville University's submission to this commission contains an offer to "deliver online and manage curriculum taught by faculty of a public institution."²⁵ Such an indirect play for public support should be assessed in the light of MPHEC's rejection of Yorkville's application for a Master in Education program.²⁶

In many respects the success of a public post-secondary institution lies in its reputation for excellence built up over many years and measured by the success of its graduates. As

graduates become employed, they contribute in general to the public good. However, Ontario's Ministry of Colleges and Universities reports an alarming rate of student default in loan repayment where the student is a graduate of a private institution.²⁷ In some cases this is because employers have not accepted that the private academic certification is meaningful or in any way equivalent to a degree from a public institution. This is not because employers have what the Discussion Paper dismisses as a "silos mentality" or are afflicted by "academic snobbery". It is because experience has made them cautious. Moreover, when students in such for-profit programs complain in the media about lack of value in their training or resulting credential, the school can simply close its doors, with little recourse for the student.

Finally, we caution against the unrealistic supposition that public universities can grant block credit for work done in community or private colleges or that post-secondary education New Brunswick can be "seamless" in that sense. As we have noted, public universities offer credentials that meet closely-monitored requirements and expectations and do so in an environment where teachers undertaking original research seek to instill in their students a sense of critical judgment. UNB programs, for example, are accredited nationally by scholarly and professional bodies. The result is a 'brand name' degree that the world accepts as representing high achievement. While public universities have many mechanisms to guarantee academic achievement (Senates, assessment processes, student opinion surveys, MPHEC-mandated quality assurance reviews), the same is not true of community colleges, to say nothing of for-profit academies. For this reason it would be impossible for a public university to award credit for every course taken at most non-public institutions. It is true that this is done occasionally (for example, UNB accepts credentials generally from Atlantic Baptist University). But in almost all other cases UNB finds that it can accept courses from community colleges for credit towards academic programs only selectively. Public universities must guard the credibility of their degree. They cannot accept the automatic equivalency of credits granted by institutions that lack an earned reputation for rigour and critical content or a mechanism for quality oversight.

THE INCREASING COST OF EDUCATION

AUNBT concurs with the Discussion Paper's position that the high cost of post-secondary education must be addressed, specifically that ". . .the principal objective must surely be that all New Brunswickers are assured of the means to pursue a post-secondary education at a cost they can reasonably afford." To that end we would suggest New Brunswick create funding to encourage graduate studies on a basis similar to that available in Alberta and Ontario. Additionally, qualified students at all post-secondary institutions should be assisted through a more robust program of scholarships and bursaries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the interests of the citizens of New Brunswick and the development of a sustainable economy, we urge the Commission to recommend to the provincial government that:

- a) UNB be provided with funding sufficient to maintain and increase its standing as a national comprehensive university;
- b) New Brunswick create funding to encourage graduate studies on a basis similar to that of other provinces;
- c) qualified students at all PSE institutions be assisted through a more robust program of scholarships and bursaries;
- d) all inappropriately discriminatory legislation in the Human Rights Code, such as that used to enforce mandatory retirement, be removed.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Deutsch, John, *Report of the Royal Commission on Higher Education in New Brunswick* (1962), p. 21. The situation at Mount Allison was more dramatic still. In the year of the Deutsch Report on 25% of the students were New Brunswickers. In the entire previous history of Mount Allison New Brunswick enrolment had never exceeded 50%: *Deutsch Report*, p. 28-29.
- ² UNB Registrar's Office (registrations as of Dec. 1, 2006, data provided to AUNBT April 10, 2007)
- ³ Based on count of 621 full-time faculty and instructors as listed in UNB Calendar 2006-2007
- ⁴ *Deutsch Report*, 20. Statistics for today were supplied by the UNB Alumni Office. They are drawn from the 52,000 living graduates for whom an address is known. The remaining 10,000, of unknown address, are disproportionately likely to live outside NB, so the actual number of UNB graduates living in NB today is likely to be under 50%, as it was already in 1962.
- ⁵ *Deutsch Report*, p. 77; and Robak, Ted, *Universities and Provincial Self-Sufficiency*, Submission to the New Brunswick Self-Sufficiency Task Force, <http://www.gnb.ca/2026/BriefPDF/EnglishPDFBrief/UNBInternational.pdf>, p. 5
- ⁶ *Deutsch Report*, p. 22
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