

Jurisdictional Report – New Brunswick

Tuesday, June 16, 2009

Since the report of the NB Commission on Post-Secondary Education was released in September 2007: *Advantage New Brunswick – a Province Reaches to Fulfill Its Destiny*, many of the recommendations contained in that report have been put into action.

In June 2008, the Province released *Be Inspired. Be Ready. Be Prepared: The Action Plan to Transform Post-Secondary Education (PSE) in New Brunswick*. (See <http://www.gnb.ca/Promos/PSE/index-e.asp> for more details.) Work is underway to implement many of the 33 recommendations contained in that report.

In December 2008, the Province announced an investment of \$160 million over the next two years, which will include \$60 million for university infrastructure and over \$100 million in new construction and upgrades to the New Brunswick Community Colleges. This investment in capital reinforces the PSE Action Plan, supporting the co-location of university / universit  and New Brunswick Community College / coll ge communautaire (NBCC / CCNB) facilities in Edmundston and Saint John. In June 2009, as a result of \$4M in federal funding and \$11M in provincial funding, the government announced that a new NBCC campus will be built on the University of New Brunswick (UNB) campus in Fredericton, strategically located near both the UNB and Saint Thomas University (STU).

By co-locating university and community college facilities in Fredericton, Saint John and Edmundston, and by providing funding for universities and community colleges to encourage innovation and partnerships, the Province is working with universities and colleges and other stakeholders to create a more cohesive and collaborative PSE system that will benefit the institutions themselves, their students and the people of New Brunswick.

As called for in *The Action Plan*, five priority areas for immediate action have been established:

- increasing the number of international students in NB;
- making credit transfer easier between post-secondary institutions;
- improving and increasing graduate studies and research;
- improving collaboration between and among universities, community colleges, and communities; and
- improving accessibility to PSE, through initiatives such as the Futures to Discover program, by developing strategies to increase PSE participation by Aboriginal and other underrepresented groups, and by working with our colleagues in the K-12 sector to develop strategies and initiatives that better prepare students for post-secondary success.

To do this work, \$6 million has been allocated in this fiscal year to further advance *The Action Plan to transform Post-Secondary Education in New Brunswick* - \$3 million to improve

access and increase participation in post-secondary education and another \$3 million invested in the other four priority areas.

The PSE Action Plan has taken into account the need for a post-secondary education system where post-secondary institutions collaborate much more closely and regularly with each other.

Student mobility and transitions between secondary and post-secondary systems, and between post-secondary institutions, will be made easier and more efficient through system-wide cooperation and transfer agreements that ensure students who take equivalent courses at one institution will be granted credit at another to continue their education.

Also we will create more articulated and applied diploma/degree programs where students can learn core technical and professional skills earning a diploma at the College level, and then proceed to earn a university degree in that field. Laddering opportunities will exist so students can complete a certificate, diploma or degree at one institution and continue to the next level at another institution.

The Association of Atlantic Universities (AAU) and the Atlantic Provinces Community College Consortium (APCCC) are presently working on establishing an Atlantic Credit Transfer Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

To help address our skill shortages, the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour is working together with the Department of Education to develop dual enrolment opportunities where community colleges recognize high school credits in their programs. This collaboration will lead to high school students receiving credit for work done in trades-related high school courses. That, in turn, will lead to more students pursuing careers in the skilled trades.

Although there has been progress in recent years, the time has come to advance a more coordinated practice pertaining to Credit Transfer, Prior Learning and Foreign Credential Assessment and Recognition. The identification, assessment, and recognition of an individual's skills, competencies and knowledge acquired through formal, informal, non-formal, and experiential learning within the province, country or abroad, should be accurate and consistent within NB's Post-Secondary Education system.

At this time, New Brunswick does not have a provincial level council on admissions and transfers. However, recently, a project manager position has been established for the development of an operational structure, such as a council or agency for Credit Transfers and its link with prior learning and international credential and competency assessment and recognition. Such a structure will help facilitate and coordinate agreements amongst post-secondary institutions in NB.

We are working collaboratively with our PSE institutions to enhance PSE accessibility for New Brunswickers and to open doors for our adult and lifelong learners by increasing the portability of their learning experiences.