

1973

Our 30th Anniversary!

2003

President's Message

It is extremely rare for a newspaper to acknowledge the source of its editorial content. Print media "in-house" editorials invariably are published anonymously, and also usually leave the reader knowing only that the ideas and philosophies advanced in them are endorsed by the publication in which they appear.

Federation members were pleasantly surprised, therefore, to see that a newspaper as prestigious as the Fredericton Daily Gleaner, which on June 4, 2003 had published a letter-to-the-editor entitled "Don't Tamper With Universities" submitted by the Chair of our Communications

Committee, Prof. Ian Fraser, followed it on June 9, 2003 with an in-depth editorial exploration. "**Don't Interfere With Universities**" of the topics he had raised. Several excerpts from Prof. Fraser's letter were quoted with approval, and the points he had made were amplified. [Both the letter and the editorial are reproduced elsewhere in this issue – see pages 3 and 4 - **Ed.**]

This is clear and undeniable affirmation that the voice of the Federation is being heard, and that its arguments for the advancement of post-secondary education in New Brunswick are being taken seriously in the province's most influential circles.

Unfortunately, it is infrequently - if ever - that proof comes in such tangible form that the Federation's contribution to the debate is so effective. Consequently, on your behalf I wish to congratulate our Executive Director, Desmond Morley, and Prof. Fraser on the successful public awareness campaign they have orchestrated over the last several months. I believe it is paying large dividends, and I am convinced that The Daily Gleaner editorial is only 5% tip of an iceberg of less visible, but equally significant, public awareness accomplishments.

Claude Dionne,
President

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

The Communications Committee has been extremely busy over the last two months conducting our election strategy. The strategy consisted of a four pronged attack: 1) a questionnaire was sent to the three political parties asking them for their respective positions on post-secondary education, 2) a pamphlet [enclosed with this issue – Ed.] was handed out to the public during the run up to the election and then to all elected incumbents after the election, 3) a series of articles and a letter-to-the-editor were published in the daily newspapers reminding the public to keep post-secondary education in mind when they went to the polls and 4) advertisements were placed in the French and English provincial papers reminding the public to "Vote For The Party That Supports

Post-Secondary Education!".

The strategy surpassed even my expectations:

Questionnaire to the Three Political Parties

The Conservative and Liberal parties both answered the questionnaire on Post-Secondary Education. The results of the questionnaire were immediately sent out to all Local Associations as well as the provincial media. As a result, the Executive Director was interviewed by the Daily Gleaner for an article which was published on June 9th, 2003, the day of the election.

Pamphlet

The Executive Director sought the support of the New Brunswick Student Alliance, and the University of New Brunswick and the University of Moncton Student As-

sociations, for help in distributing the pamphlet. As a result the pamphlet was distributed widely on the last two weekends leading up to the election at both the Fredericton and Moncton weekend "farmers' markets." The Pamphlet was also distributed to all the MLA's after the election.

Series of Articles

It was hoped that during the election we would be able to get an article published in one of the provincial dailies. We realized that, during the election, space would be at a premium. I am therefore delighted to report that the Federation had four articles and one letter-to-the-editor published during the election campaign: **Human Resources: Are We Investing Enough** in the Telegraph Journal, **Don't Tamper**

(continued on page 3)

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

(continued from page 2)

With Universities and Universities Must Keep A Solid Grip on Autonomy, in The Daily Gleaner and the Telegraph Journal respectively, **Stem The Rising Tide Of Tuition Fees** in the Telegraph Journal, and **Universities Merit More**, in the Times and Transcript.

Our letter-to-the-editor entitled: **Don't Tamper With Universities** led to a lengthy editorial, **Don't Interfere With Universities** in the "Our Opinion" section of

The Daily Gleaner, in which it was frequently quoted. [See pages 3 and 4 of this issue – Ed.]

Advertisements

The advertisements were successfully published in both the L'Acadie Nouvelle and the Telegraph Journal through the weeks leading up to the election.

All in all, as you can see, we have had a very busy and successful election period. We will keep the pressure on as the new

MLAs get to the task of running the province.

I particularly wish to thank the Executive Director – who, as you know, wrote all the articles mentioned above, even though they were published under different names – for the quality and effectiveness of his work under a great deal of pressure.

Ian H. Fraser,
Chair.

Don't Tamper With Universities

[Published in The Daily Gleaner June 4, 2003.]

"Letters to the Editor" is a regular feature on the Editorial Page. Today's contributor is Prof. Ian Fraser is Chair of the Psychology Department at St. Thomas University and the Chair of the Communications Committee of the Federation of New Brunswick Faculty Associations.

Dear Editor:

Bernard Lord announced that, if re-elected, his government would increase university funding by 3.25 per cent each year for the next four years.

That's strange, because last year he committed his government to giving a 10 per cent increase over three years, and we

still have two years left to go at 3.3 per cent per year on that one. As a result, we're actually going to lose on that deal in the first two years of the new four-year commitment.

Later, Mr. Lord also made it clear that the universities will now have to come before a committee of the legislature to account for their use of taxpayers' dollars.

This would be fair enough, if the elimination of wasteful practices were the only goal. Unfortunately, though, too many members of the legislature feel that the universities should be nothing more than sophisticated trade schools teaching high-end "marketable" skills.

As a result, any such insistence on "accountability" before the legislature is to open the door to the "we pay for them, so we should say what they do" group.

If this were to happen, in the name of meeting current economic imperatives successive governments would feel free to undo, or tinker at will with, the curriculum changes imposed by their predecessors.

The result would be chaos. Our universities, therefore, must maintain their autonomy and I will be voting for the party I feel is most likely to guarantee that they do.

Don't Interfere with Universities

"Our opinion" is a regular feature on the Editorial Page and is reproduced from The Daily Gleaner published on June 9, 2003.

Last week, we took a look at what the political parties were promising for education in New Brunswick.

The scenario runs the gamut from kindergarten through post-secondary schooling.

It is, however, a list that deserves revisiting, especially as it relates to university education. There are some issues that must be clarified because university administrators, students, and others have genuine concerns.

Both the Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives are promising to initiate legislation that will require universities to appear before a select committee to defend their accountability. The Liberals are even promising to develop a recruitment plan to deal with what they call "looming university faculty shortages."

How involved should government be in the organization, administration, and decisions by universities?

It is understandable that if government is providing public money to the institutions of higher learning, then there should be an accounting of where that money goes. Gov-

ernment involvement, however, must end there.

A letter writer to The Daily Gleaner suggests the appearance before a legislature committee "would be fair enough if the elimination of wasteful practices were the only goal."

Ian H. Fraser, says, though, it is unfortunate that "too many MLAs feel that the universities should be nothing more than sophisticated trade schools teaching high-end marketable skills."

Mr. Fraser also suggests such thought could lead government to impose curriculum changes and other undesirable and unnecessary corollaries. If this happens, he says the results "would be chaos," so universities, therefore, "must maintain their autonomy."

We definitely agree with the letter writer. The university by its very structure and purpose needs to have an autonomy and not be subject to the whim of each government that takes power in the province.

The university needs to have a role to play in developing the mind and the body without the interference of government or be strapped by unnecessary legislative restrictions.

Dr. Daniel O'Brien, president of St. Thomas University, says universities in Canada "have en-

joyed an enormous amount of privilege from the public which they haven't abused."

We know of no instance where any abuse of public funding to universities has been identified. It (the public funding) has been a trust between government (taxpayers) and the institutions, which have taken such funding with great respect and appreciation.

Mr. Fraser refers to "wasteful practices" in universities. There may be some, but we are confident that the sincerity of university administrations in New Brunswick has focused on the best possible education for its students with the amount of money they have to work with.

It is important, therefore, that the political parties set out clearly their intention in having universities appear before government committees. Such exercises usually have a purpose of defining a parameter and ultimately of seeing that such is carried out with government supervision.

If the political parties have an agenda to take responsibility for how a university operates, what it teaches, who teaches, and why certain procedures will be required, then chaos will certainly be the end result. It is not needed in New Brunswick.

(continued on page 5)

Don't Interfere with Universities

(Continued from page 4)

May we suggest that John Henry Newman's Idea of University (1852) still has relevance and may provide sound reading for our politicians and would-be politicians. "A University training," he says "is the great ordinary means to a great but ordinary end."

The learned 19th-century churchman saw university education a "raising the intellectual tone of society." It is not a mill through which government produces products of its own choosing, but an institution that gives all who attend a "clear, conscious view of their own opinions and judgements."

To do this universities require autonomy.

We hope the new government will put reason ahead of petty control and give universities the privilege to do what they do well without interference.

Winner of Prix Nicole Raymond Award



FNBFA President Claude Dionne stands on a chair to present the Prix Nicole Raymond Award for 2003 to six-foot, seven-and-five-eighths inch Prof. Ian Fraser, a Past-president of the Federation and presently Chair of its Communications Committee.

PART-TIME FACULTY

Several of our member-associations are presently dealing, at various levels, with the issue of the unionization of part-time faculty members.

At the request of some of our member-associations, we had intended to address this topic in this issue of the **Bulletin**, through the publication of articles obtained from those of them that are presently concerned with the representation of their part-time colleagues.

However, we have subsequently been able to arrange for a seminar to be hosted by CAUT at the next Council meeting in Ottawa, at which our members' representatives will have the opportunity to discuss the issue first hand with experts in the field. They will also be able to compare notes with their counterparts from across Canada who have had similar experiences.

Consequently, we have decided to postpone an examination this topic until a synopsis of the forthcoming debate in Ottawa is available.

Claude Dionne,

President

WEB SITE UPDATE

In May and June, the number of hits on the web site was 59,167 and 61,968 respectively. This is up by 20,000 hits since the last time these figures were published.

The word is getting out!

If you have not already visited www.fnbfa.ca, we hope you will do so.

Ian H. Fraser

Chair,
Communications Committee

Winner of Scholarship



FNBFA Executive Director Desmond Morley presents the 2003-2004 Semeluk Scholarship to Martha Eggenberger at Saint John High School at its graduation ceremonies on Monday, June 23, 2003.

Summary . . .

President's Message	2
Communications Committee Report.....	2
Don't Tamper with Universities.....	3
Don' Interfere with Universities.....	4
Winner of PNRA.....	5
Winner of Scholarship.....	6
Part Time Faculty.....	6
Website Update.....	6

Notice

Board Meeting

10:30 am, September 4, 2003
Main Board Room
Ground Floor
Victoria Health Centre
Brunswick Street,
Fredericton

All FNBFA Board meetings are open to individual faculty members, and an invitation to attend is extended to anyone wishing to do so.

YOUR OPINIONS ARE WELCOMED

A special invitation is extended to those members of local associations who are interested in commenting upon university life in general. Readers are invited to send their opinions and/or comments, in writing, to:

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Opinions expressed in the Bulletin are not necessarily those of the Executive and/or Board of FNBFA/FAPPUNB

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