

1973

Our 30th Anniversary!

2003

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thirty Years of Service: A Brief Retrospective

Thirty years ago this year, the Federation of New Brunswick Faculty Associations / la Fédération des Associations de professeures et professeurs d'université du Nouveau-Brunswick (FNBFA/FAPPUNB) was formed, with l'Association des bibliothécaires, professeures et professeurs de l'Université de Moncton (ABPPUM), the Association of the University of New Brunswick Teachers (AUNBT), and the Mount Allison Faculty Association (MAFA), as its founding members. The first meeting of FNBFA/FAPPUNB, early in 1973, was held in Moncton and it has been protecting and promoting the interests of New Brunswick university faculty since then. The Federation was subsequently joined by the Faculty Association of the University of St. Thomas (FAUST) and – at the time under different names - by l'Association des bibliothécaires, professeures et professeurs de l'Université de Moncton - campus d'Edmundston (ABPPUMCE) and l'Association des professeures et professeurs de l'Université de Moncton à Shippagan (APPUMAS). It was formally incorporated in 1981 as a not-for-profit organization.

It is impossible to document, in a brief report, all the benefits the Federation has been able to generate for its members over the last thirty years. However, the following are some of the highlights of its activities:

In 1991, the Federation was solely responsible for having a section, which applied specifically to New Brunswick university faculty, of the Regulations to the **Expenditure Management Act** repealed. Under this unprecedented and draconian piece of legislation, the universities' unionized personnel would have been deemed to be provincial public servants and, therefore, subject to a one-year salary freeze, regardless of the provisions of their respective collective agreements. Despite this massive incursion into university autonomy and governance, the university administrations of the day remained silent, no doubt because this government-sponsored salary freeze would have saved each of them a large amount of money. They seemed not to realize that, unopposed, this could have been the first step on a short path towards government dictating how the universities should operate.

In addition, then, to the financial advantages which ultimately flowed, in varying degrees, to all of our members as a result of the successful intervention of the Federation in this matter, it undoubtedly was the most important step in the protection of university autonomy ever taken in this province.

In 1997, with the assistance of the New Brunswick Department of Education, Human Resources Development Canada, Cable 2000 TV, and the administrations of all four of the province's universities, the Federation produced a half-hour information video in both official languages which showed the current and projected relationships between post-secondary education and the economic outlook. The video was distributed to each high school in New Brunswick, and was aired at least once per week on both the French and English Channels of Cable 2000 TV for several months. The information graphics in the video were posted on the web site of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) and laid the groundwork for CAUT's subsequent national public awareness initiatives.

We firmly believe, in fact, that it was primarily the concerted efforts of FNBFA/FAPPUNB throughout the 1990's which convinced our provincial government of the value of the universities in the province's economic growth. We also believe that, as a result, this caused successive New Brunswick governments to refrain from subjecting our universities to drastic cutbacks similar to those imposed in other provinces, when funding education for its own sake fell out of favour with them, and the current government to have increased their operating funding over the next three years by 10% instead of by the 6% to which we lately have had to become accustomed.

In the last two years, the Federation has had 26 editorials, on various topics of concern to its members, published in the province's daily newspapers. A bound portfolio of these articles was presented to all members of the Legislature earlier this year, and we are confident that the Federation's high public profile has had a positive influence on the effectiveness of its lobbying for more government funding.

We are also confident that the presentation by FNBFA/FAPPUNB representatives to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance in Halifax in October, 2001 contributed to a considerable degree to \$200 Million being allocated by the federal government to smaller universities for research support.

In February, 2002 representatives of the Federation met with the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) in Moncton to urge that a special fund of at least \$50 Million be set up to help the three campuses of l'Université de Moncton to offset the additional costs of fulfilling their unique mandate. Though this suggestion has not yet been followed, FNBFA/FAPPUNB took this initiative with the unanimous support of its members, and continues to lobby for its implementation.

In the last few months, the Federation has distributed a bilingual, attractive promotional bookmark through the major bookstores; and, as well, a bilingual public information pamphlet on the state of university education as an insert in the provincial editions of l'Acadie Nouvelle and the Telegraph Journal.

In closing, I would add that the credibility of the Federation in the eyes of our provincial government was strongly acknowledged at the end of 2002 through the appointment of the Executive Director, Desmond Morley, to the New Brunswick Department of Education's **External Advisory Group on Post-Secondary Education and Training Opportunities**.

Be assured that the Federation will continue in the coming years to safeguard the interests of faculty throughout the province.

I trust that you and your loved ones enjoyed a happy and healthy holiday season, and offer best wishes for 2003.

Claude Dionne
President

STUDENT LOAN ELIGIBILITY FORMULA NEEDS FIXING

[Published in the Telegraph Journal November 9, 2002]

The "Guest Column" is a regular feature on the editorial page. Today's contributor is Desmond Morley, Executive Director of the Federation of New Brunswick Faculty Associations.

Having lost, by only a slender margin, his bid to give significant tax-relief to university students, through a private member's bill he introduced in Parliament earlier this year, Fundy-Royal M.P. John Herron has recently introduced yet another private member's initiative to help them.

This time, Mr. Herron is proposing that the "parental contribution" which the federal government deems some applicants for government loans will receive from their parents – whether they do or not – should be eliminated from the eligibility formula.

Successive federal governments seem to have been blind to the fact that many parents either cannot afford, or simply do not feel it is their job, to remain financially responsible for their children after they have reached – ironically, again by federal standards - the age of majority.

There once was a time when governments funded post-secondary education for its own sake, on the pretext that the presence of individuals in society who possessed a higher-than-average level of education would improve the social environment just by their mere presence.

Unfortunately, the cutbacks caused by governments finally coming to grips with their debt and deficits have put an end to this "a-rising-tide-raises-all-boats" philosophy. Now, except in health care and only a handful of other areas, "how many jobs will this money create or preserve?" has become the major criterion for the loosening of governments' purse-strings.

Nevertheless, even against this background of new-found pragmatism, the following statistics loom large:

- The average employment income of a Canadian university graduate in only the first year of employment is higher than the average annual income of all wage earners combined, regardless of how many years the latter have been employed.

- One in every four new jobs created between 1999 and 2004 will require a university degree.

- The unemployment rate for university graduates in New Brunswick fell by 20 per cent between 1998 and 2001.

- University tuition fees in New Brunswick in 2002 are almost twice what they were in 1992.

- The average New Brunswick student with a study-related debt load, who graduated with a Bachelor's degree in 2001, owed almost \$30,000.00 at graduation.

The financial obstacles to university accessibility still being placed in the path of aspiring students by archaic and draconian federal standards of measuring their borrowing needs are all the more ridiculous when one considers that the vast majority of individuals with higher-than-average incomes pay considerably more in taxes as well. Government would not only quickly recover the relatively miniscule cost of abandoning the “parental contribution” portion of the formula, but in the long term would as well profit handsomely from thereby stimulating university attendance.

Governments who profess to have no money – even as they are posting healthy surpluses, sometimes in the billions of dollars – have an irritating habit of “deeming” us to have more personal resources, or less need, than is really the case. Mr. Herron is, therefore, to be applauded, if only because of the growing economic importance of the universities in our everyday lives. He is on the right track in attempting to have this particularly regressive deeming provision removed, and deserves the full support in this endeavour of his parliamentary colleagues on all sides of the House.

UNIVERSITIES HOPE FOR SUSTAINED FUNDING BREEZE

[Published in the Telegraph Journal December 14, 2002]

The “Guest Column” is a regular feature on the editorial page. Today’s contributor is Dr. Claude Dionne, a full professor at l’Université de Moncton and president of the Federation of New Brunswick Faculty Associations.

If its recent Budget is anything to go by, at long last the province of New Brunswick has a government which is willing to acknowledge, with tangible financial resources rather than mere lip-service, the notion that its universities are critically important to its future economic success.

Since 1976 the demand in the full-time labour force for university graduates has doubled for both males and females, and has continued to grow exponentially. One out of every four jobs created between 1999 and 2004, whether full-time or part-time, will require a university degree.

Even after allowing for inflation, university tuition fees are now twice what they were only 10 years ago, as a corresponding shortfall of government funding has been thrust onto the pocketbooks of half a generation of hapless students and, in many cases, their parents.

Consequently, the announcement in Tuesday’s Budget that there will be an overall increase in the coming fiscal year of 3.4% in the basic operating funding for the province’s universities, as part of a funding commitment totalling 10% over the next three years, is a breath of fresh air in the mildewing climate of government support for them which has prevailed during the last several years.

Premier Bernard Lord’s government is to be praised for its enlightenment concerning the imperatives of post-secondary education, as is the Premier himself for having kept the promise, made to university faculty earlier this year, that he would increase university funding by as much as his government could afford. Obviously, he meant what he said.

Regrettably, our congratulations must be tempered by the fact that the total annual operating funding allocations to New Brunswick's four universities fell by 8.6% (again after allowing for inflation) over the last decade, and that most of the announced increase will simply allow the universities to recover lost ground over the next three years. They will not be getting ahead of the game, by any means.

Nevertheless, the foregoing caveat is not intended to damn this funding breakthrough on the part of the Lord government with faint praise. As a former student leader, with siblings who are university faculty members, the Premier knows – probably better than any of his predecessors - the dire financial situation into which the universities have been plunged through years of chronic underfunding. Apparently, he also is more acutely aware of the universities' fundamental socio-economic role, and intends to act accordingly.

Let us hope, then, that this realistic approach to funding them survives more than one Budget, and that this breath of fresh air develops at least into a sustained breeze from now on.

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

The Communications Committee has been very busy since the October Bulletin. Below is a list of our more noteworthy achievements:

- We continue to have advertisements placed in both the Telegraph Journal and L'Acadie Nouvelle every Friday (examples of advertisements have been reproduced in this Bulletin).
- We have successfully wrapped up our "bookmark campaign", having distributed all 5,000 bookmarks from bookstores throughout New Brunswick.
- We have also successfully completed the "pamphlet campaign". As you are aware, the pamphlet (from which the weekly "Did you know...?" information for the advertisements in the Telegraph Journal and L'Acadie Nouvelle is derived) was distributed throughout the province in the aforementioned papers as well as being sent to MLAs, New Brunswick MPs and the four university presidents. The few that are left are being sent to influential university players, eg. MPHEC, CAUT, and other Provincial Faculty Associations.
- The latest of our campaigns we are calling "The Anniversary Campaign". As you are now aware FNBFA is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. At minimal cost we have purchased a specially-designed anniversary sticker, which will be placed on all correspondence alerting everyone to the fact that we are one of the 'oldest kids on the block'. As players on the university scene have come and gone, we remain as one of the few potent, stable, and – above all – credible, forces.
- FNBFA has also had two editorials published in the Telegraph Journal since our last Bulletin, (on November 9, 2002 and December 14, 2002, respectively) the first entitled: "**Student Loan Eligibility Formula Needs Fixing**", and the second entitled: "**Universities Hope For Sustained Funding Breeze**".

- The number of hits on the website continues to increase. In November, for example, there were **7,162** visits to the website which accounted for **34,116** hits over the entire site. The median visit length was **4 minutes 15 seconds**. Every part of the website was extensively utilized. There appears to be a growing interest in our Federation!

I hope all of you enjoyed the Holiday Season and wish everyone a prosperous New Year.

Ian Fraser, Chair.

FNBF A ADVERTISEMENTS

Below are samples of the advertisements which have been appearing frequently in l'Acadie Nouvelle and the Telegraph Journal.

fnbfa
fappunb
Federation of New Brunswick
Faculty Associations
"Did you know that one in every four new jobs created in Canada between
1999 and 2004 will require a university degree?"
www.fnbfa.ca 052718

fnbfa
fappunb
Federation of New Brunswick
Faculty Associations
"Did you know that the ratio of university students to faculty in
Canada in 1971 was only 23-to-one, but in 2001 was 39-to-one?"
www.fnbfa.ca 052718

fappunb
fnbfa
Fédération des associations
de professeures et professeurs
d'université du Nouveau-Brunswick.
SAVEZ-VOUS...
« Qu'au Nouveau-Brunswick, les frais des
études universitaires seront presque deux
fois plus élevés en 2002 qu'en 1992? »
Pour toute information,
visitez le : www.fappunb.ca 52934a-1

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