

President's Message

“The more elaborate our means of communication, the less we communicate.”

Joseph Priestley, 18th-century English educator

Although the 21st century has given us a multitude of ways to communicate with more people in more places, finding the time to actually set pen to paper (fingers to keyboard?) is still an issue. So I'm unplugging my phone, ignoring my e-mail, and devoting the next few minutes to preparing a long overdue update on the Federation's activities.

Election Questionnaire

In September, before New Brunswickers went to the polls in the provincial election, FNBFA sent a questionnaire to the four political parties and asked them whether their Party would:

- Support a fully adequate system of non-repayable student financial assistance;
- Increase universities' operational funding by a sufficient amount each year to keep pace with inflation and eliminate tuition fee hikes;
- Pass legislation to abolish mandatory retirement; and
- Create a plan to retain and recruit new faculty members for New Brunswick's universities to address increasing workload demands on the shrinking group of university faculty.

As expected, two of the Parties responded favourably in support of post-secondary education, although

neither would commit to increased funding. The New Democratic Party did not respond.

The responses to the questionnaire, and subsequent announcements from the New Brunswick Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour, reaffirm that the Federation must continue to press the distinction, in the eyes of government, between the university system and other post-secondary education groups. The community college system appears to be higher on the government's agenda than New Brunswick's four public universities. The \$2000 grant offered to first-year university students is certainly welcome news but more is required if New Brunswick is to achieve self-sufficiency and become home to “the best education system in Canada”.

Government Relations

In view of the above, the Federation is intensifying its government relations program to ensure our messages and issues receive the prominence and attention they deserve.

As this column goes to press, the Executive Director, Desmond Morley, and I have been invited to attend a meeting with Premier Shawn Graham; Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour Minister Ed Doherty; and other

stakeholders and interest groups. Complete details of the meeting will be published in the first FNBFA newsletter of 2007.

“The Bulletin” Becomes “The Educator”

With the new year just weeks away, FNBFA is also placing a renewed emphasis on increasing the Federation's visibility. A communications strategy has been developed and various recommendations are already being implemented. Member communications will soon be dramatically different-starting with The Bulletin. As of January, this format of the Bulletin will be replaced with a bolder, more dynamic newsletter entitled The Educator. It will be published on a more frequent basis and filled with feature stories, timely news items and, hopefully, more feedback from our members.

On behalf of the FNBFA Board, I look forward to ensuring the Federation remains the clear and relevant voice for New Brunswick's university faculty. I hope to count on your continued support as we move forward.

Wishing you and your loved ones a safe and memorable holiday season,

Jack Vanderlinde
President