

## 2018 Provincial Elections

### **University Education – The Federation of New Brunswick Faculty Associations reports on the political parties' response to its university education survey**

(Fredericton, September 12, 2018) The Federation of New Brunswick University Faculty Associations (FNBFA) sent its questionnaire to political party leaders on April 19, 2018 asking parties to respond by August 24 at the latest.

The Green Party, the Liberal Party and the Progressive Conservative Party sent their responses to the Federation. At the time of this release, the People's Alliance of New Brunswick and the New Democratic Party (NDP) had not yet submitted their responses.

The following preamble preceded the six questions: "A government formed by my party will make the following commitments with respect to university education."

The first question asked the parties to hold a provincial summit on the issue of university education in the first year of their term. "The responding parties did not specifically commit to the Summit; the Liberal Party agrees to consider the summit, and the other two parties recognize the need to consult and work with faculty on matters relating to the university sector", affirms Professor Mary Lou Babineau, President of the FNBFA.

The answers to the second question regarding the commitment to guarantee annual increases in the university education budget for the duration of the term can be summarized as follows, states Dr. Babineau "the Green Party and Liberal Party would be prepared to commit to funding predictability, and the Liberal Party points out that they have already achieved this in the recently signed MoUs with universities".

With regard to the third question, which dealt with measures to achieve universal access to university education by eliminating tuition fees altogether, the FNBFA President notices that "while all three parties express their commitment to accessibility to quality post-secondary education, only the Green Party and Liberal Party outline the specific measures that they would take (or have already taken) to reach this goal, and these measures are indeed very positive".

The Federation then asked the parties whether they would fully respect the collective bargaining rights of Faculty Associations. "The Liberal Party commits to modernizing and respecting the Industrial Relations Act, however, only the Green Party explicitly recognizes that 'the right to strike without interference is a fundamental right of all workers.' This recognition of workers' rights is absolutely fundamental in our Province's leadership", states Professor Babineau. "The Progressive Conservative Party appears to have missed this question, as they provided no response" continues Babineau.

With regard to ensuring that faculty members are included in all committees related to university education, “the Green Party agrees, and the Progressive Conservative Party explicitly recognizes the importance of dialogue with all different levels of our university sector”, says Babineau. “However, the response of the Liberal Party is more qualified, saying they are ‘willing to consult the FNBFA as appropriate’ and reminding faculty members that we already have representation on university Senates and Boards. This, in our opinion, is concerning and misses the point”, affirms Dr. Babineau.

The sixth and final question was about the importance of a commitment to act, as part of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, to ensure the integration of Aboriginal people into the academic community as well as learning the languages, history and culture of New Brunswick's Aboriginal communities. “The Green Party commits to fully implementing the Calls to Action of the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the Liberal Party states that it “takes Truth and Reconciliation very seriously” and would “work collaboratively with First Nations communities to strengthen relationships, and with other institutions and levels of government to respond appropriately to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Progressive Conservative Party provided a more general response, committing to “fully support the integration of Aboriginal people into the academic community and the learning of the languages, history and culture of Aboriginal communities in New Brunswick” but without outlining the specific mechanisms that they would implement” concludes Professor Babineau.

- 30 -

About the FNBFA: The Federation of New Brunswick Faculty Associations promotes the interests of approximately 1,800 professors, contract academics, professional librarians and researchers in New Brunswick's four public universities. It advocates for the advancements of the standards of their professions and seeks to improve the quality of higher education in the province.

Contact:

Mary Lou Babineau, FNBFA President

Cell: 506.260.2950; email: [maryloub@stu.ca](mailto:maryloub@stu.ca)

or

Lise Robichaud, FNBFA Executive Director

Cell.: 506.238.0676; email: [robichaud\\_fnbfa@outlook.com](mailto:robichaud_fnbfa@outlook.com)