

## **Students, Staff and Faculty create a coalition for the promotion of post-secondary public education in New Brunswick**

(Fredericton, NB, July 7, 2020) Unions and organizations representing students, staff and faculty in New Brunswick colleges and universities recently formed a coalition to draw the attention of all New Brunswickers and our governments on the state of post-secondary education in the province. As stakeholder organizations in public post-secondary education in New Brunswick, concerned about the increasing post-secondary educational gap of our province, they published an open letter stressing how their sector is an important and essential part of the solution for a prosperous New Brunswick, during and post-Covid pandemic. The full version of the open letter is available at : <https://tinyurl.com/ycpdmul5>. The following are the highlights of our letter.

- **Post-secondary educational institutions are part of the solution to revive New Brunswick** – The social, human and economic development of New Brunswick is largely based on knowledge from post-secondary education and research. Making the best decisions for our collective future and developing structuring innovations require constant and consistent support from the state.
- **Education is a source of development and a guarantee of resilience in the face of crises** – With the lowest percentage of the population having a post-secondary diploma in the country, New Brunswick has suffered from a university and college education deficit for several decades and despite repeated calls to successive governments, the situation has only gotten worse. Increasing the access to post-secondary education for all young New-Brunswickers through the elimination of tuition fees and student debt is a wise investment in our common future.
- **International Students in the Province further the development of the province** – The ability to attract and retain international students in New Brunswick is key to our province’s demographics and future, as often expressed by our government. Unfortunately, for now with Covid-19, international students have been overlooked and Minister Holder’s statement on June 6, 2020 that he will be “open” to considering financial support for international students if the need arises is a clear demonstration that international students are left behind.
- **Advanced education and training for citizens helps us to prevent crises and respond to them more effectively** – The wide range of expertise found in colleges and universities contribute to the understanding and solutions to the difficulties and adverse phenomena experienced by our society. Also, a well-educated and well-trained population through the leadership of our colleges and universities will be indispensable for our economic development and recovery of our province.

Post-secondary education does offer hope for the economic development and recovery from crisis. Let’s have the vision and the courage to invest in our future by making it easier for young people in our province to access post-secondary education. The cost of such a venture would be

more than offset by a strong return on investment in the medium to long term for the benefit of New Brunswickers and a stronger economy. This is the time to invest in post-secondary education before it is too late.

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*About the Coalition for the Promotion of Public Post-Secondary Education in New Brunswick:*

The coalition was created so that we may face together an especially uncertain future in public post-secondary education in NB during the COVID-19 crisis. The list of unions and organizations that signed the open letter can be found at the bottom of the full version of the open letter at : <https://tinyurl.com/ycpdmul5>.