



FNBFA President's Report

To the Plenary and AGM, Thursday, May 8, 2025

Dear colleagues,

For members who do not know the Federation of New Brunswick Faculty Associations (FNBFA) or as a reminder, the FNBFA was founded in 1970 **by and for** the province's public university faculty associations and incorporated in 1981.

The federation is bilingual and ensures that this fact is reflected in all its activities and communications.

Decisions (design, plan, direction, funding, etc.) concerning post-secondary education fall under provincial jurisdiction. The more faculty associations present a united front to provincial decision-makers, the more they are likely to be listened to. We are stronger together and this is why the FNBFA exists.

The federation's main activity is the promotion of the province's public university sector with the government, the media, other PSE stakeholders and unions, as well as the public.

The FNBFA essentially depends on the volunteerism of members to conduct its work. It has one full-time staff member: the Executive Director. Therefore, the contributions of individual faculty, whether on the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, or the various committees, are invaluable.

Always on the lookout for new opportunities to promote and defend the interests of member associations and public post-secondary education in New Brunswick, the Federation monitors many sources of information, writes press releases and commentaries, maintains a presence on social networks, and publishes information on the Federation's website.

The FNBFA is also open to opportunities for collaboration and seeks to work with other associations and unions in New Brunswick. The federation welcomes petitions, requests for letters of support or invitation to protests issues of common interests and where faculty would be welcomed. Thus, member associations can expect to be invited to answer calls to action in such instances.

The following is a summary of the work conducted by your federation since the report submitted to the last Plenary and AGM, held May 9, 2024.

It was decided at the last Plenary and AGM, that the following topics or issues were to be addressed during the current year:

- Faculty indigenization
- Revision of the document on performance-based funding of public universities
- Creation of a position paper on university funding
- Redesigning of FNBFA's website

- Pursuing the study on university administrations to support advocacy on public university funding
- Improving the FNBFA website in regards to potential cybersecurity threats
- Presentation on cybersecurity issues at the next AGM
- Education of members for the electoral period as another key aspect

However, most of these goals had to be put aside when it became necessary immediately after the plenary and AGM that the FNBFA revise its operations and structures.

Restructuring the FNBFA

The restructuring of the FNBFA became the main priority over the past year when, on May 9, 2024, the AUNBT gave notice to the FNBFA Board of Directors that the AUNBT Executive Committee wanted to initiate the withdrawal process due to financial concerns.

As a result, the process for the withdrawal of a member association, as stated in article 6 of the [FNBFA By-laws](#), was set in motion. Numerous meetings were held between the FNBFA Executive Committee and members of the AUNBT Executive Committee and there was an exchange of letters and emails between each president. There were also meetings of the FNBFA Executive Committee as well as of the FNBFA Board of Directors called to deal with the situation. Everybody worked together to explore ways in which the FNBFA could significantly decrease its operating costs and lower membership dues. Here, I want to thank Carol Pomare who analyzed the numbers and came up with viable scenarios, one of which the FNBFA Board of Directors voted to approve at its February 22, 2025, meeting.

During these exchanges, we also attempted to bring back the ABPPUM (the faculty association for the Moncton campus of U de M) within the federation. The FNBFA's case was made by pointing out that they are sorely missed around the federation's table along with the prospect of a significant reduction of the dues. However, ABPPUM declined the offer to rejoin as a paying member association, insisting that they remain in solidarity with their colleagues at all other New Brunswick faculty associations in public universities.

On April 13, 2025, I was informed by the AUNBT President, Viqar Husain, that the AUNBT Executive agreed to the new financial terms and dues thereof.

Of significant note with regards to the restructuring of the FNBFA, and the cost saving measures it implies, is the retirement of our Executive Director, Lise Robichaud, on December 31, 2025, as well as the closure of the physical office of the Federation in the coming months. The ED position will not be filled going forward as of 2026. The Federation will transition to a new model, inspired from the one adopted by the Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations (CAFA). The FNBFA Executive Committee, its Board of Directors, with the precious help of our Executive Director, will ensure the smoothest transition possible to the new model during the remainder of the year. Regular updates will be provided to member associations.

Legal Assistance Fund for Member Associations

The FNBFA has a legal assistance fund to which member associations can apply once a year to receive up to \$10,000 towards "... legal costs pertaining to arbitration, court action, or action before the Labour and Employment Board or any other governmental agencies such as, but not exclusive to, the Human Rights Commission and the Access to Information and Privacy Commissioner." This year, upon the recommendations of the FNBFA Legal Assistance Fund Committee to the FNBFA Board of Directors, MAFA and FAUST respectively received \$3,000 and \$7,000.

Lobbying and Public Relations

- **Fair employment week from October 21 – 25, 2024.** Messages were posted on social media about the adverse working conditions of CAEs and how important it is to make it fair for all of them. Similar messages were posted in anticipation of the October 21, 2024, provincial elections.
- On December 11, 2024, I gave an **interview to a Toronto-based journalist**, MtA graduate Carly Penrose from the Investigative Journalism Foundation. The result was a paragraph in a roundup article the next day for their weekly newsletter (subscription required) with the lead "University Faculty wants the Government of New Brunswick to make getting a post-secondary education in the province more accessible for young people." A communications officer in the New Brunswick Department of Post-secondary Education, Training and Labour is reported to have responded by email saying that PETL "... is committed to making a university education more accessible, and it will continue to provide provincial student loans interest-free, and it's committed to exploring additional grants for students studying to work in high-priority fields, such as the trades." The communications officer added it will consult with faculty at universities and that any funding decisions will be made during annual budget deliberations."
- **Fairness for International Students**
Upon invitation from the Madhu Verma Migrant Justice Centre to support International Students, the FNBFA agreed to be on the list of organizations supporting the declaration. On International Migrants Day, held December 18, 2024, the FNBFA published a [press release](#) to that effect with postings on social media. As a result, there was an article in the Brunswick News/Postmedia the next day where the FNBFA and member associations were listed among the organizations supporting the declaration.
- **New Brunswick Provincial Elections, October 21, 2024**
The FNBFA, with the assistance of the CAUT Organizing Officer and the CAUT Policy and Government Relations Officer, prepared and executed the Federation's bilingual campaign for the October 21, 2024, New Brunswick provincial elections. There were four weekly blogs and numerous postings on social media as well as a template letter to each party leader.
- **FNBFA's contribution to the prebudget consultations for the 2025-2026 provincial budget**
The main point of the [letter the FNBFA submitted](#) to the NB Minister of Finance and Treasury Board was how a well-thought-out and well-funded university education is an essential part of the solution to the province's various problems (health, demographics, development), especially with the current geopolitical situation.

The 2025-2026 provincial budget was tabled March 18, 2025. Stakeholders, including the FNBFA, were invited to participate in the annual stakeholders' lock-in presentation before the budget was officially tabled. Funding for public university operations will be increased in 2025-2026 by 1%. Of course the FNBFA was disappointed and communicated that fact in strong terms with a [press release](#) as well as on social media. Parts of this press release were quoted in the Telegraph Journal, Academica Top Ten in Higher Education and in a presentation by the Higher Education Strategy Associates (HESA) about post-secondary education institutions in Canada.

- **Bill 12 in Nova Scotia - *An Act Respecting Advanced Education and Research***

Bill 12, first introduced on February 19, 2025, gives the Nova Scotia Minister of Advanced Education complete authority to direct research priorities, restructure university boards and appoint up to 50% of its members, as well as force a university into a revitalization plan at their will. You can read more about the threats posed to NS universities by Bill 12 here: <https://www.ansut.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Bill-12-Briefing-Document.pdf>. A letter-writing campaign and social media campaign were coordinated by ANSUT (Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers) and CAUT to stop Bill 12. The bill received Royal Assent on March 26, 2025.

- **Bill 8 in New Brunswick - *An Act Respecting the Degree Granting Act***

Introduced March 19, 2025, Bill 8 reached second reading (i.e., sent to the [Standing Committee on Economic Policy who will review it in May](#)) on March 25. While it is not explicit in the wording of the Bill, if it receives royal assent, it will give to the NB Minister of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour the authority to approve new programs at private universities and for these private universities to advertise these new programs, **both pending** a positive recommendation of the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC). As it is, it's the Cabinet in government who has the final word upon receiving the MPHEC's recommendations on whether or not a new program is to be approved. This was confirmed to the federation in a meeting the ED and I had on April 15, 2025, with the MPHEC's CEO. This item is covered on the 2025 AGM's agenda.

This is also one of the items for which we wish to speak to the Interim Minister of Post-secondary education, Training and Labour, Jean-Claude D'Amours when we meet him on May 16.

- **2025 Federal Elections**

The FNBFA was fully engaged in the CAUT Campaign "Unlock Education" in anticipation of the April 28, 2025, federal elections which provided template letters to politicians and social media posts.

- We keep the lines of communication with **student unions/associations** open throughout the year. For instance, we held virtual meetings with representatives of the New Brunswick Student Association (NBSA) on March 12, 2025, and with representatives of the University of New Brunswick Student Union (UNBSU) on the Fredericton Campus on February 3 as well as on March 20, 2025. The students in the NB public universities are concerned about access to public transportation, housing, food security, mental health services, and summer jobs.
- On April 9, I was contacted by a journalist/researcher for the daily Radio Canada radio show "L'heure de pointe Acadie" to speak on concerns about university professors traveling to the U.S. for research or conference, on U.S. professors' immigration to Canada to teach at our universities and Bill 12 in Nova Scotia as mentioned earlier in this report.

- On April 15, 2025, I was contacted again for the daily Radio Canada radio show “L’heure de pointe Acadie”. This time it was about the students at U de M who were angry upon hearing about the Board’s decision to increase tuition by 3% for a second year in a row. The student federation on the Moncton Campus then suggested that instead of increasing their tuition to balance the budget there could be savings if there was a reduction of the number of course releases to professors who hold administrative positions.

I basically explained the reasons for course releases in any university, how they are attributed and who pays for them, and I pointed to chronic underfunding of public universities as the root of the problem.

Acknowledgements

In conclusion, I would like to thank the following people:

- the Executive Director, Lise Robichaud, for her unwavering support of my role as President and her contribution to the activities, smooth operation, and initiatives of the Federation;
- my colleagues on the Executive Committee for their unwavering support, Lacina Coulibaly (APPUMCE), Julien Massicotte (APPUMCE) Carol Pomare (MAFA), and Gemma Porter (FAUST);
- the members of the Board of Directors and the various committees for their invaluable contribution to the smooth running of the Federation's activities.

Many thanks also to member associations who invited me to your general meetings. I am grateful for the opportunities to share with you the work of your federation and to learn more about what is important to my colleagues.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Sauvageau

May 8, 2025