

Be inspired. Be ready. Be better.

*The Action Plan to Transform
Post-Secondary Education in New Brunswick*





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The Action Plan to Transform Post-Secondary Education in New Brunswick

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CANADA

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Message from Premier Shawn Graham

New Brunswick is on track to experience a period of historic growth and opportunity. But this transformation is not assured. It requires strategic planning and bold policy changes, all aimed at helping us reach our shared goal of self-sufficiency by 2026.

From the earliest years through adulthood, education is a key to reaching this better tomorrow. Our government has a bold plan for transforming education in New Brunswick to ensure our students succeed and our society prospers. To make this transformation, we must embrace change and innovation.

New Brunswick has a proud tradition of excellence in post-secondary education. We are home to four public universities, each known nationally and internationally for the quality of their instruction and research. Our community college system has been a vital part of our education system, providing local access to important skills and training and helping fuel our economic resurgence.

But despite the strengths of our post-secondary education system, we risk falling behind if we do not make the significant changes that will create an integrated, student-focused system. We must also embrace lifelong learning and ensure each New Brunswicker can pursue a post-secondary education, no matter where they live in our province.

The gaps that exist today are real and troubling. We see the pressing need for more applied programs and more formalized articulated programs that lead from the community college system to university. We see a community college system that has been chronically underfunded and perhaps undervalued. We see greater opportunities to create efficiencies in administration and sharing scarce resources, directing the savings to the delivery of enhanced research and teaching.



An energized, revitalized and integrated post-secondary education system will fuel our drive to self-sufficiency. We seek nothing less than to establish the best post-secondary education system in Canada, one that is affordable, accessible and reflective of our economy's needs while providing the people of this province with the understanding and skills needed to succeed right here at home.

Education is the way we will build a self-sufficient future for New Brunswick.

It begins now.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shawn Graham". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Premier of New Brunswick

Message from Minister Ed Doherty

Post-secondary education is vital to New Brunswick's future. It's vital for our province, our communities and our people to achieve our goal of self-sufficiency.

Our vision for our post-secondary education system is a system that is student-focused, integrated, accessible, affordable, relevant, responsive, efficient, of high quality and accountable. While our system has considerable strengths, there are significant opportunities and many areas for improvement.

New Brunswick's participation rate – the percentage of the population pursuing post-secondary education or training – lags behind the national average. Our post-secondary programs are not keeping pace with the evolving needs of New Brunswick's economy and the changing nature of our provincial workforce.

The Government of New Brunswick undertook extensive research and consultation to determine the best ways to address these issues and create a stronger post-secondary education system in the province. That began with the Commission on Post-Secondary Education in New Brunswick and its report, *Advantage New Brunswick: A Province Reaches to Fulfill Its Destiny*. I'd like to thank the commissioners, Jacques l'Écuyer and Rick Miner, for their hard work and valuable insights.

To further assess the future of our system, the government went directly to our post-secondary leaders and established the Working Group on Post-Secondary Education in New Brunswick, made up of the presidents of the province's four public universities as well as leaders of the community college system.

The Working Group's input was invaluable in developing this Action Plan, a comprehensive and dynamic strategy that will transform our post-secondary education system in New Brunswick and make it more student focused, collaborative, cohesive and responsive.



This Action Plan marks another starting point. There will be considerable work to be done to fundamentally transform our province's post-secondary education system to make it no less than the best in Canada. The Province will work closely with other stakeholders during this transformation.

The stakes are high. We must work together to ensure we create the post-secondary education system New Brunswick needs to prosper and achieve self-sufficiency.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Doherty'. The signature is stylized and cursive, written over a white background.

Minister of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour

Introduction:

Self-Sufficiency and Post-Secondary Education

Post-Secondary Education: Key to achieving self-sufficiency

We seek nothing less than to establish the best postsecondary education system in Canada, one that is affordable, accessible and reflective of our economy's needs while providing the people of this province with the knowledge, skills and training needed to succeed right here at home.

Education is a key element of attaining self-sufficiency. Our government has a bold plan for transforming education in New Brunswick to ensure our students succeed and our society prospers. We must embrace change and innovation.

A key area of achieving self-sufficiency is transforming our workforce to be better educated, healthier and better positioned for success. An energized post-secondary education system will help transform our workforce and fuel our drive to self-sufficiency.

Self-sufficiency for New Brunswick

New Brunswick is on track to experience a period of historic growth and opportunity. Such transformation requires strategic planning and bold policy changes, all aimed at helping us reach our shared goal of self-sufficiency by 2026.

The Government of New Brunswick is focusing its resources and efforts to achieve its goal of self-sufficiency through strategic initiatives in four key areas:



- **Transforming our workforce** to be better educated, healthier and better positioned for success.
- **Transforming our economy** to be more competitive and be more attractive for business, investment and people.
- **Transforming relationships** to be a partner with governments, communities and New Brunswickers in building a self-sufficient New Brunswick.
- **Transforming government** to be more open, accountable and responsive.

These transformations will enable us to retain and strengthen our core values, ensure continued growth and create the opportunities we need to fulfill our potential. By transforming our economy, our workforce, our relationships and our government, we will set the foundation for a better New Brunswick: a place of opportunity and hope for all. A New Brunswick that is truly a better place to be.

Executive Summary

I. The Urgent Need for Change

New Brunswick is part of an increasingly globalized, increasingly knowledge-based economy. Education is the key to ensuring our province and its people succeed and prosper in the global economy. New Brunswick requires a strong post-secondary education system to achieve success and to become self-sufficient, but post-secondary education in our province is experiencing a number of challenges. These include:

- A declining 18-24 age group relative to the overall population.
- Low participation rate at the community college level.
- Higher-than-national-average tuition costs leading to high student debt levels.
- Accessibility issues affecting the participation of Aboriginals, low-income earners and other underrepresented groups.
- Low rates of continuing education and lifelong learning.
- Too few applied or articulated education programs to meet demand for specialized skilled workers.
- Weak connection of our post-secondary education system to our province's changing labour market needs.
- The need to create stronger relationships between local communities and post-secondary education institutions.
- The need to boost New Brunswick's research and innovation capacity.

This Action Plan will address these issues and transform post-secondary education in the province over the next five years. It is a comprehensive and dynamic plan informed by the considerable research and consultation conducted over the past two years.

The Vision

The vision for our post-secondary education system is a system that is student focused, integrated, accessible, affordable, relevant, responsive, efficient, of high quality and accountable.

The Goal

In order to achieve the self-sufficiency we seek as a province, New Brunswick will produce the best-educated and most literate population in Canada.

The Guiding Principles of Change

Our post-secondary education system will provide education and training in the official language of the learner's choice, respecting the Province's commitment to preserve and promote the language and culture of the two official language communities, and continue to support institutional structures for post-secondary education that are respectful of each language community in New Brunswick.

The transformation of New Brunswick's post-secondary education system will be guided by the following principles:

- Student focused
- Respecting our official languages
- Accessibility and affordability
- Relevance and responsiveness
- Comprehensiveness
- Efficiency
- Quality
- Accountability
- Collaboration

II. The Action Plan for Change

A. A Student-Focused System

Addressing student financing

Addressing student financing is one of the most pressing issues facing post-secondary education. The government has put in place the following measures to help New Brunswick students finance their post-secondary education for 2008-2009:

- The freeze on tuition for New Brunswick universities and community colleges will be in place for the 2008-2009 school year.
- The \$10,000 New Brunswick Tuition Rebate for post-secondary graduates living in New Brunswick will continue.

- The \$2,000 Benefit for First-Time University Students will be maintained for 2008-2009.
- Students no longer have to consider parental or spousal income when applying for New Brunswick student loans as of August 2007.

The Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation Millennium Bursary program will continue for 2008-2009. This federal program, used by 2,600 high-need New Brunswick students, is being phased out in 2009-2010. The elimination of this program will result in a loss of up to \$7 million in funding for high-need New Brunswick students.

The Province will immediately begin discussions with the federal government to restore this vital source of funding for New Brunswick students. Subject to these discussions, further measures to enhance student financing outlined in this Action Plan will be announced for the 2009-2010 academic year and beyond.

Increasing participation of Aboriginals and other underrepresented groups

The Futures to Discover program will be supported. The program provides learning accounts to 1,000 students a year to attend a post-secondary institution following high school. This program provides support of \$2,500 per year which totals up to \$10,000 for four years to students from underrepresented groups.

New programs will be established to improve access and increase participation for Aboriginal students, low-income earners and other underrepresented groups.

Increasing the number of locations offering university courses

First- and second-year university courses leading to degrees will be offered throughout the province at community colleges in those communities with no university presence by 2011. Being able to access university courses close to home will encourage participation and help to reduce the cost of a post-secondary education to students.

Making credit transfer easier between post-secondary institutions

Student mobility and transition between secondary and post-secondary systems, and between post-secondary institutions, will be made easier and more efficient through system-wide cooperation and transfer agreements that ensure students who take equivalent courses at one institution will be granted credit at another to continue their education. Adequate spaces in an appropriate mix of programs will be available in the post-secondary system for qualified students. Laddering opportunities will exist so students can complete a certificate, diploma or degree at one institution and continue to the next level at another institution.

Increasing the number of graduate students within three years

The number of graduate students in New Brunswick will increase by 855 from 2,145 to 3,000 within three years, including at least 450 in PhD programs.

Establishing a Graduate Studies and Research Council of New Brunswick

A Graduate Studies and Research Council of New Brunswick will be created to leverage existing resources to increase both the quantity and quality of graduate work in the province. It will foster collaboration between universities by creating province-wide research networks and centres of excellence, facilitating cross-institution faculty appointments and providing funding for collaborative research initiatives.

Developing an e-Post-Secondary Education Strategy

An e-Post-Secondary Education Strategy will be developed to better connect post-secondary institutions, with students, high schools and research centres. The strategy will include a student information portal, e-learning and distance education, a common student identifier, the establishment of a virtual New Brunswick library and better data collection and analysis to better inform students, the public and decision-makers on post-secondary performance and to allow for greater accountability.

B. A Modern Community College System

Creating a modern, autonomous community college system

A transformation project to re-design and re-brand the community colleges will begin in 2008-2009. The community college system will be transformed to make it independent from government and become more student focused, better equipped, more entrepreneurial and more responsive to community and labour market needs. There will be an anglophone and a francophone community college, each headed by a president and each governed by a board of directors.

Establishing a new college campus in Fredericton and enhancing the College of Craft and Design

A new community college campus will be established in Fredericton and the College of Craft and Design will be enhanced and transformed into a centre for artistic and creative excellence.

Adding 12,000 spaces to the community college system

The capacity of the transformed community college system will be increased, with an additional 11,000 spaces created over the next five years and another 1,000 by 2017-2018. These spaces will be in the trades, allied health, engineering technologies and other emerging demand areas.

C. Enhanced Apprenticeship Training

Transforming the apprenticeship program

The apprenticeship program will be transformed and re-engineered in 2008-2009 to shorten the length of time to complete the program, simplify processes and ensure better integration of the program into the post-secondary education system.

Increasing apprenticeship program capacity

The apprenticeship program will increase in capacity by 2,570 from 3,630 to 6,200 apprentices by 2012-2013, putting more skilled workers into the New Brunswick workforce.

D. A More Collaborative University System

Increasing collaboration and cooperation between New Brunswick universities

Government will work with universities and other stakeholders to create a more cohesive and collaborative system that will benefit the institutions themselves, their students and the people of New Brunswick.

This would include program reviews to ensure maximum collaboration and minimum duplication of programs; articulation of roles, mission and mandates in legislation; co-location of universities and community college facilities where practical and efficient; and funding for universities and community colleges to encourage innovation and partnerships.

E. Increased Applied Learning Opportunities

Establishing formal partnerships to boost applied learning

Formal partnerships between universities, community colleges and communities will be established to develop new, applied and articulated programs. There will be two types of partnership vehicles: the Institute of Applied Learning and Training (IALT) and the Consortia of Applied Learning and Training (CALT). These collaborative mechanisms are a way to respond quickly to changing labour market needs and do more with existing education and training resources.

F. Greater Collaboration and Efficiencies

Establishing a Post-Secondary Education Agency

The Post-Secondary Education Agency will provide overall coordination, planning and governance for the transformation of the post-secondary system. The agency will be created within three years and will ensure that post-secondary institutions collaborate and form the partnerships necessary to achieve the gains needed in student experience, quality of instruction, expansion of research, and developing efficiencies and responsiveness to community and labour market needs.

Finding efficiencies through shared services

Opportunities will be identified to find efficiencies through back-office, administrative and support services, such as procurement, information technology, a centralized application system, and other relevant administrative areas. These common services will be delivered by the newly-formed Health Shared Services Agency.

Increasing the number of international students in New Brunswick

A strategy will be developed in collaboration with universities and community colleges to aggressively market New Brunswick as an education destination to international students.

Establishing a New Brunswick Post-Secondary Education Presidents' Council

A forum of university and community college presidents will be formed to be the key collaborative group linking post-secondary education institutions with government and to oversee progress of selected Action Plan initiatives.

G. More Accountability

Modernizing and replacing post-secondary education funding formulas

University and community college funding formulas will be modernized and replaced to reflect the complexity of institutional roles and to ensure public post-secondary institutions can effectively plan and manage their operations.

Requiring institutions to submit five-year strategic plans

Beginning in 2010-2011, each public institution will submit a five-year strategic plan, including an annual business plan, to government. These will be supported by performance-based contracts and indicators reflecting the strategic priorities of New Brunswick's Self-Sufficiency Action Plan.

Requiring each institution to appear annually before the Legislature

Each public university and community college will appear annually before the appropriate committee of the New Brunswick Legislature.

Establishing a Ministerial Advisory Committee on Post-Secondary Education

A ministerial advisory committee will be established to advise the minister of post-secondary education, training and labour on post-secondary education system planning and monitoring.

H. A High-Quality Post-Secondary Education System

Extending Quality Assurance reviews to select college programs

The Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) will extend its mandate to perform quality assurance of selected new community college programs and extend its quality assurance reviews to include private institutions governed under provincial legislation.

I. Support for Transformation

Investing in transformation

Projected financial investments of a minimum of \$90 million over five years will be made beginning in 2008-2009 to support the transformation of the post-secondary system.

A plan outlining necessary capital investments will be developed by the Presidents' Council in 2008-2009

J. Progress Measurement

Developing indicators to measure success

Performance indicators will be developed to measure the transformation of the post-secondary education system and report on progress based on certain factors, including post-secondary participation rates; enrolments; completion/graduation rates; tuition fees; student debt-load; the number of graduate students; research and innovation; and employment of post-secondary graduates within the province.



I: The Urgent Need for Change

We are living in a knowledge economy.

The majority of jobs today now require some form of advanced training or education. That trend is accelerating and the New Brunswick of tomorrow will be very different than the one that we live in today.

New Brunswick will become more progressive and prosperous. We will carve out a strong niche in the global marketplace, offering tremendous career opportunities for our people while preserving and enhancing the way of life that makes this a truly special place to be.

We will be self-sufficient, but only if we create a post-secondary education system that allows us to harness our potential.

That means change. Transformative change to fundamentally reshape the way we think about post-secondary education and the way we deliver it to the people of New Brunswick.

We begin this period of change from a position of strength. New Brunswick is home to four public universities, each recognized across Canada and around the world for the quality of their teaching, research and student experience.

Our community college system has been an important component of post-secondary education in New Brunswick. Closely connected to the communities in which they are located, they provide local access to important skills development and training.

We also benefit from a number of private community colleges and training institutes, each offering specialized education.

But the individual strength of these institutions is not enough. We face some very real challenges in our post-secondary education system. There is an urgent need for change.

Low Participation Rates

New Brunswick's overall post-secondary education participation rate (the percentage of the population pursuing some form of post-secondary education) is lower than the national average. While our university participation rate exceeds the national average, too few of those graduates end up staying in the province when they complete their studies.

// Our post-secondary participation rate is lower than the national average."

An added challenge is that our need to increase participation rates must also overcome a three-decade-long decline in the 18-24 age group. That demographic trend is expected to continue and we are already seeing evidence of its impact – enrolment in New Brunswick universities dropped by 4.2 per cent from 2005-2006 to 2006-2007. Left unchecked, university enrolments are projected to drop a further 20 per cent by 2026.

At the community college level, assuming the current participation levels remain the same, enrolment of students below age 30 is projected to decline 21 per cent by 2026.

We must address this. We clearly need more New Brunswickers pursuing a post-secondary education.

Addressing student financing

New Brunswick university students assume an average of \$8,000 more in debt to complete a university education than the national average. Tuition costs in the province are \$1,209 more than the national average for the 2007-2008 academic year, a disparity that will only accelerate, as other provinces are making the investments necessary to make tuition more affordable to students.

According to a 2007 study, 30 per cent of New Brunswick high school graduates from the Class of 2003 who did not pursue post-secondary education said it was due to a financial barrier, most often concerns about incurring too much debt.

As well, the elimination by the federal government of the Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation Millennium Bursary in 2009-2010 will result in a loss of \$7 million in grant money to New Brunswick students that would currently be applied to their outstanding provincial debt.

// 30 per cent of 2003 New Brunswick high school graduates who did not pursue post-secondary education said it was due to a financial barrier, most often concerns about incurring too much debt."

Accessibility

While tuition costs and student debt loads are important factors when considering the accessibility of post-secondary education, they are not the only ones. Accessibility also means that post-secondary education institutions must be located close to the people they serve.

There are also a range of socio-economic factors that influence participation in post-secondary education. In particular, more must be done to ensure greater participation by Aboriginal New Brunswickers, low-income earners and other underrepresented groups.

A Culture of Lifelong Learning

Post-secondary education can no longer be considered something that you only pursue in the first few years after completing high school. Our world has changed and so too has the need for continuing education and training. Technology advances at a rapid pace. Education cannot be static. New Brunswick's education system must reflect this fact and make ongoing education and training a core element.

More Applied Programs

New Brunswick's economy is changing significantly. Our education system has not kept pace. We are in urgent need of more applied programs that meet the needs of employers to keep our economy surging forward. Already, jobs go unfilled in our province, harming our productivity and competitiveness. To address the shortage in applied programs will require greater cooperation and sharing of resources between universities and community colleges.

// New Brunswick needs more applied learning programs to meet the needs of students, employers and communities."

Matching Programs to Needs

Our post-secondary education system too often operates with a weak connection to the needs of our economy. We need to be more strategic in understanding labour market demands in both the short- and long-term. Our system must be flexible and responsive to changing labour market demands, ensuring New Brunswick students have the skills and training needed to build strong careers here in New Brunswick.

Connecting to Communities

There is a tremendous opportunity to create much closer connections between post-secondary institutions and local communities. Communities – the private sector, the public sector, health care, arts and culture, community organizations – must become active partners in the system to help ensure that programming rapidly responds to local economic needs. Each community stands to benefit.

Enhancing Research Capacity

New Brunswick has not yet reached its research potential. Building New Brunswick's research capacity is a key element for achieving self-sufficiency. We need to foster an environment of innovation that encourages greater primary research and leverages funding dollars from national and international organizations as well as the private sector.

// *New Brunswick has not yet reached its research potential.*

Action Plan to Transform Post-Secondary Education

The Action Plan to Transform Post-Secondary Education in New Brunswick will enable our post-secondary education system to be an engine for social and economic progress. While New Brunswick has a number of well-respected post-secondary institutions, it is clear we have work to do to ensure the system as a whole reaches its full potential. There is urgency to this task. We must begin immediately.

This plan includes the major initiatives that will support this transformation, as well as the investment required and the ways we will measure success.



Moving Forward

As the Province of New Brunswick begins this period of transformative change in post-secondary education, it draws upon the consultations, research and insights of a number of groups and individuals. In particular, there is the work of the Commission on Post-Secondary Education in New Brunswick, in its report *Advantage New Brunswick: A Province Reaches to Fulfill Its Destiny* as well as the Working Group on Post-Secondary Education in New Brunswick, made up of the presidents of the province's four public universities as well as leaders of the college system.

The Commission and the Working Group offered a detailed set of recommendations on how to improve the post-secondary education system in our province. The government acknowledges their important contribution, much of which is reflected in the pages that follow.

The Vision

The vision for our post-secondary education system is a system that is student focused, integrated, accessible, affordable, relevant, responsive, efficient, of high quality and accountable.

The Goal

New Brunswick has established a clear, concise and bold goal for its post-secondary education system:

In order to achieve the self-sufficiency we seek as a province, New Brunswick will produce the best-educated and most literate population in Canada.

We won't reach that goal with tentative, incremental steps. Rather we must take the ambitious actions necessary to make our post-secondary education system the best in the nation.

The Guiding Principles of Change

Change must be grounded not only in a clear strategy and the quest for meaningful outcomes, it must be guided by a set of core principles.

To transform the post-secondary education system in our province, we will implement change based on the following principles:

- **Student focused** – our post-secondary education system must put the needs of students first and foremost.
 - **Respecting Official Languages** – our post-secondary education system will provide education and training in the official language of the learner’s choice, respecting the Province’s commitment to preserve and promote the language and culture of the two official language communities, and continue to support institutional structures for post-secondary education that are respectful of each language community in New Brunswick.
 - **Accessibility and Affordability** – our post-secondary education system must be structured to ensure that qualified and capable people from every socio-economic background have the opportunity to pursue education or training in every part of the province.
 - **Relevance and Responsiveness** – our post-secondary education system must provide students with learning opportunities that match the evolving needs of the province’s economy and labour market in order to ensure they can be successful.
 - **Comprehensiveness** – our post-secondary education system must offer a broad spectrum of programs, from degrees and diplomas to continuing education, which help meet the needs of students and our economy.
 - **Efficiency** – our post-secondary education must be highly efficient, eliminating program redundancies, seeking economies of scale and maximizing the shared use of facilities and infrastructure.
 - **Quality** – our post-secondary education system must strive to reach and exceed the highest standards for quality in teaching, research and the student experience.
- **Accountability** – our post-secondary education system must be accountable to the people of New Brunswick for the best use of taxpayers’ funds.
 - **Collaboration** – our post-secondary education system must ensure collaboration between institutions and with the private sector, not-for-profits, the arts and culture sector and local community organizations.



II: The Action Plan for Change

A. A Student-Focused System

The core of our education system must be the education and training of students, no matter the program, their age, location or what point they are at in their lives.

Our approach will create a more student-focused system that ensures the relevance of the programs available, the quality of the student experience, and accessibility and affordability.

Addressing student financing

Addressing student financing is one of the most pressing issues facing our post-secondary education system today. Higher-than-average tuition costs for New Brunswick's universities have led to large debts for many students and discouraged others from attending university. The situation is also troubling at the community college level.

The government has put in place the following measures to help New Brunswick students finance their post-secondary education for the 2008-2009 academic year:

- The freeze on tuition for New Brunswick universities and community colleges will be in place for the 2008-2009 school year.
- The \$10,000 New Brunswick Tuition Rebate for post-secondary graduates living in New Brunswick will continue. Post-secondary graduates who live and work in New Brunswick and pay New Brunswick personal income tax are eligible for a non-taxable rebate of 50 per cent of their tuition costs with a maximum lifetime rebate of \$10,000.
- The \$2,000 Benefit for First-Time University Students will be maintained for 2008-2009.
- Students no longer have to consider parental or spousal income when applying for New Brunswick student loans as of August 2007.

In addition, the Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation Millennium Bursary program will continue for 2008-2009. This federal program, used by 2,600 high-need New Brunswick students, is being phased out in 2009-2010. The elimination of this program will result in a loss of up to \$7 million in funding for high-need New Brunswick students.

The Province will immediately begin discussions with the federal government to restore this vital source of funding for New Brunswick students. Subject to these discussions with the federal government, further measures to enhance student financing outlined in this Action Plan will be announced for the 2009-2010 academic year and beyond.

Action #1: Freezing tuition for 2008-2009

A tuition freeze at 2007-2008 levels will be in place for the 2008-2009 year at New Brunswick's public universities and community colleges. This is being accomplished by way of another \$12 million in funding to those institutions.

Action #2: Maintaining the \$2,000 Benefit for First-Time University Students

The \$2,000 Benefit for First-Time University Students will be maintained for 2008-2009. Under this program, all New Brunswick students attending a provincially funded New Brunswick university for the first time are eligible for a one-time benefit of \$2,000.

Action #3: Supporting the "Futures to Discover" program

The Futures to Discover program will be supported. Futures to Discover is a series of enhanced career education components for students in grades 9-12 that raise awareness of the opportunities and economic and social benefits of pursuing post-secondary study. It includes a mentoring and role model component, information on post-secondary education and aims to improve high school students' exploration and decision-making about post-secondary education and career options.

The program provides learning accounts to 1,000 students a year to attend a post-secondary institution following high school. This program provides support of \$2,500 per year which totals up to \$10,000 for four years to students from underrepresented groups.

Encouraging participation of Aboriginal youth and other underrepresented New Brunswickers

A low participation rate is a pressing problem facing New Brunswick's post-secondary education system. An element of this is the lack of participation by certain groups in our province.

Action #4: Increasing participation of Aboriginals and other underrepresented groups

To address this, the Province will implement a new program to promote Aboriginal post-secondary education participation. Building on work already underway, this program will place a particular focus on working with students from grades 9–12. The goal of this program is to reach an Aboriginal participation rate equal to the overall provincial post-secondary participation rate by 2015.

Given its history in this area, St. Thomas University will be designated as the lead university in pursuing this initiative. St. Thomas University will work with the Université de Moncton on Francophone aboriginal participation issues.

Ensuring New Brunswick students are ready for post-secondary education

More can and must be done to help students pursue and succeed in post-secondary education. That begins during the K-12 school years.

// 38 per cent of those who did not enter a post-secondary program from the Class of 2003 said high school had not fully prepared them for making decisions about post-secondary education or their careers."

International studies show that New Brunswick students are lagging behind students in other parts of Canada, particularly in the areas of literacy, numeracy and science. For example, the 2006 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey scores illustrates that although Canadian 15-year-old students rank among the best in science, mathematics, and reading, New Brunswick ranked 10th in Canada in science, seventh in mathematics and ninth in reading. According to a 2003 Statistics Canada survey on literacy, New Brunswick ranks 11th in literacy and numeracy among Canadian provinces and territories.

According to the 2007 Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation study of the Class of 2003, 38 per cent of those who did not enter a post-secondary program said high school had not fully prepared them for making decisions about post-secondary education or their careers.

Action #5: Better preparing students for post-secondary success

To better connect the K-12 and post-secondary systems, the government will develop and implement a collaborative program beginning in 2009 between the departments of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour and Education to ensure there is a clear focus on preparing students for success in post-secondary education.

This collaboration will address the gaps evident in literacy, numeracy and science while developing new approaches to promote scientific and critical thinking. In addition, there would be a new emphasis on preparing students for post-secondary education by offering post-secondary-focused counselling and programs in time management, study skills and personal finance.

Maximizing Post-Secondary Education Opportunities in Communities

Action #6: Increasing the number of locations offering university courses

Ensuring that post-secondary education is accessible in as many parts of New Brunswick as possible is a priority. First- and second-year university courses leading to degrees will be offered at community college campuses in those areas without a university presence.

Action #7: Making credit transfer easier between post-secondary institutions

Student mobility and transition between secondary and post-secondary systems, and between post-secondary institutions, will be made easier through system-wide cooperation and transfer agreements that ensure students who take equivalent courses at one institution will be granted credit at another to continue their education. As well, adequate spaces in an appropriate mix of programs will be available in the post-secondary system for qualified students.

Improving Graduate Studies and Research

Creating a stronger research base is one of the top priorities for government. Growth in research will create new knowledge, skills and jobs that will lead us closer to self-sufficiency by 2026.

That growth will require additional graduate students in our province. Today, the University of New Brunswick and the Université de Moncton are the primary centres for graduate studies and research in New Brunswick. But more must be done.

Action #8: Increasing the number of graduate students within three years

A goal of the Graduate Studies and Research Council will be to increase the number of students in graduate programs in New Brunswick's public universities by 855 from 2,145 to 3,000 within three years, including at least 450 in PhD programs.

Action #9: Establishing a Graduate Studies and Research Council of New Brunswick

A Graduate Studies and Research Council of New Brunswick led by UNB and UdeM will be created. It will leverage existing resources to increase both the quantity and quality of graduate work in the province. The council will foster collaboration between the four public universities by creating province-wide research networks and centres of excellence, facilitating cross-institution faculty appointments and providing funding for collaborative research initiatives.

The council will bring together all four public universities to develop methods to maximize the use of infrastructure including labs, libraries, archival sources, and other teaching and research facilities.

It will also work to connect researchers with the private sector and seek funding from national and international sources. (In 2004-2005, New Brunswick received only 1.45 per cent of total national funding in federally sponsored research.)

Within the Graduate Studies and Research Council will be two graduate schools, an anglophone school led by the University of New Brunswick and a francophone school led by the Université de Moncton. These institutions will provide the academic centre where faculty members from all four public universities are able to offer graduate instruction, supervision and mentorship.

The council will develop a Student Research Mobility Plan that will allow graduate students to do research and access supervisors located on any of the province's university campuses. Direction will be given to ensure that graduate programs are delivered throughout the province, whether directly in the classroom, labs or through a variety of off-site or distance learning options.

A special priority of the council will be to integrate the transformed community college system into New Brunswick's research agenda. Expert faculty and researchers from the community college system and from the broader community will be encouraged to become actively involved in the Graduate Schools through collaborative research projects, adjunct appointments and so forth.

Leveraging Technology to Improve Education

New Brunswick has an established track record in leveraging new technologies to support and enhance public services. There are important opportunities to use information technologies to better operate and evaluate the province's education system.

Action #10: Developing an e-Post-Secondary Education Strategy

An e-Post-Secondary Education Strategy will be developed to better connect post-secondary institutions, with students, high schools and research centres. The strategy will include a student information portal, e-learning and distance education, a common student identifier, the establishment of a virtual New Brunswick library and better data collection and analysis to better inform students, the public and decision-makers on post-secondary performance and to allow for greater accountability.

B. A Modern Community College System

The New Brunswick Community College / Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick system has been an important component of post-secondary education in the province despite chronic challenges in funding. The community college system is a vital part of improving the participation rate in post-secondary education in our province.

Action #11: Creating a modern, autonomous community college system

The government will fundamentally transform the community college system to make it more modern, accessible and autonomous. Community colleges will be responsible for applied learning and campuses will be focused primarily, but not exclusively, on meeting local educational needs. They will also provide literacy and education remediation.

This will be the most comprehensive change since the community college system was first established. The transformation project to re-design and re-brand the community colleges will begin in 2008-2009.

The community college system will become independent from the Department of Post Secondary Education, Training and Labour and thus benefit from greater autonomy from government. This planning for this change will begin immediately and will be implemented in 2010.

A strategic planning exercise to design the structure, programming, and governance of the transformed community college system will happen in close collaboration with other post-secondary education stakeholders in 2008-2009. While the community college system does currently collaborate with universities, much more must be done to ensure greater cooperation in offering students and communities the types of programs and training that are required to take advantage of the opportunities for job creation and economic growth.

The overarching goal is to create a dynamic community college system with greater flexibility to rapidly respond to the changing needs in provincial and local labour markets. The independent community colleges will develop a greater number of applied, technical and vocational programs to prepare students for in-demand jobs.

In some cases, community colleges will develop and offer specialized courses that are driven by provincial needs, where there is critical mass and where the program supports the economic needs of the province.

The revamped community college system will be expected to forge beneficial relationships with universities, local communities and the private sector. It would also partner with universities and the private sector to expand its research capabilities.

Action #12: Maintaining an anglophone and a francophone community college with separate governance

Respecting our official languages and each language community in New Brunswick, there will be an anglophone and a francophone community college, each headed by a president and each governed by a board of directors. Each will operate in its own official language.

Action #13: Establishing a Fredericton community college campus

The Fredericton area, while home to two outstanding public universities, is currently under-served by the current community college system. A new community college campus will be established in the Fredericton area to serve that region. The first intake of students will be in 2011-2012.

Action #14: Enhancing the College of Craft and Design

The New Brunswick College of Craft and Design will be enhanced and rebranded to guarantee it has a distinct and appropriate identity as a centre for artistic and creative excellence. This will serve to attract a wider student population. As well, the College of Craft and Design will establish more formal relationships with public universities.

Action #15: Establishing a regional community college structure

The campuses of the community college system will be grouped into six regions to serve New Brunswick communities:

- NORTHEAST: Bathurst, Campbellton, and la Péninsule Acadienne and surrounding communities
- NORTHWEST: Edmundston, Saint-Quentin, Kedgwick, Grand Falls and surrounding communities
- CENTRAL: Woodstock, College of Craft and Design, Maritime College of Forest Technology, Miramichi, Fredericton and surrounding communities
- SOUTHEAST (Anglophone): Moncton and surrounding communities
- SOUTHEAST (Francophone): Dieppe and surrounding communities
- SOUTHWEST: Including Saint John and St. Andrews and surrounding communities

Action #16: Adding 12,000 spaces

Graduates of the community college system in New Brunswick are already much in demand. However, some programs do not have sufficient capacity to meet the demand from students or the labour market. Other programs that are needed may not yet exist.

As a key component of the creation of a modern community college system in New Brunswick, the government is committing to increase the capacity of community colleges by adding 11,000 spaces over the next five years and another 1,000 by 2017-2018. These spaces will be in the trades, allied health, engineering technologies and other emerging demand areas.

These additional spaces will help to drive New Brunswick's economic renewal by ensuring there are sufficient numbers of skilled workers to meet current and anticipated demands in the province.

This investment is significant relative to the many other worthwhile, pressing demands on the use of public funds. Yet, investing in education will yield a significant return to the province in the form of a more highly skilled workforce, greater economic activity and reduced out-migration. All of this will create additional tax revenue as a result of more people working at higher salaries in New Brunswick.

The transformed community college system – student focused, better equipped, more entrepreneurial and more responsive to community and labour market needs – will realize its potential and become an essential cornerstone of New Brunswick's post-secondary education system.

C. Enhanced Apprenticeship Training

Apprenticeship training is an important element in New Brunswick's post-secondary education portfolio. The current system requires significant change in order to become more responsive to the needs of both apprentices and the economy.

Action #17: Transforming the apprenticeship program

The government will develop and implement a new program that will ensure well-trained journeypersons enter the workforce more quickly. This includes a coordinated method to match workplaces to apprentices, a new credit system for training and a reduction in the amount of time required to complete apprenticeship training.

The apprenticeship program will be transformed and re-engineered in 2008-2009 to shorten the length of time to complete the program, simplify processes and ensure better integration of the program into the post-secondary education system. The new system will feature increased participation of industry and relevant unions.

Action #18 Increasing apprenticeship program capacity

To respond to the need for skilled tradespeople, the apprenticeship program will increase in capacity by 2,570 from 3,630 to 6,200 apprentices by 2012-2013, putting more skilled workers into the New Brunswick workforce.

D. A More Collaborative University System

New Brunswick is home to four outstanding public universities. Each has its areas of excellence and expertise. They have earned national and international recognition for the quality of their instruction, research and student experience. From this strong base, the government will work with universities and other stakeholders to create a more cohesive and collaborative system that will benefit the institutions themselves, their students and the people of New Brunswick.

As noted earlier, student accessibility to post-secondary education is a key priority. The government supports the continued role of the University of New Brunswick in Saint John and the Université de Moncton campuses in Edmundston and Shippagan within the context of a more collaborative and cohesive system.

The transformation of the community college system in New Brunswick will offer important opportunities for increased collaboration between community colleges and universities. This is necessary to create the type of skilled labour force our economy requires.

Action #19: Reviewing university programs

New Brunswick's universities have made some progress in both collaborative program delivery and streamlining administrative services. However, there are significant opportunities to collaborate further that will lead to a better education system in New Brunswick.

This would include program reviews to ensure maximum collaboration and minimum duplication of programs, maximizing the use of limited resources, facilitating the movement of students between institutions and collaborating on new programming, and better matching programs to the needs of the labour market.

Universities, in particular New Brunswick's comprehensive universities, should also seek opportunities to create centres of excellence in specific disciplines which will lead to increased academic and research opportunities while leveraging other sources of funding. Program review will begin in the areas of business, engineering, health and education.

Action #20: Articulating roles, missions and mandates of public universities

The Province will ensure clarity in the roles, missions and mandates of the province's four public universities by reviewing the private acts incorporating public universities.

Action #21: Increasing university and community college partnerships through an Innovation Fund

An Innovation Fund will be put in place for universities and community colleges to encourage innovation and partnerships in support of transforming post-secondary education, including:

- Matching dollars for research for provincial priorities.
- Re-investment in science and engineering programs and labs to be nationally competitive.
- Smart technology.
- Product development.
- Investment in priority areas such as engineering, graduate level business and other strategic niche areas.

Action #22: Co-locating university and community college facilities

Co-location of universities and community college facilities will be supported where practical and efficient. Consideration will be given to co-locating CCNB Edmundston with the Edmundston Campus of the Université de Moncton. As well, consideration will be given to co-locating NBCC Saint John and the University of New Brunswick in Saint John in program areas such as health sciences.

E. Increased Applied Learning Opportunities

Creating new or improved applied learning opportunities is necessary to meet the labour market demands of the province's growing economy and fuel New Brunswick's drive toward self-sufficiency.

One major outcome of a transformed post-secondary education system is the ability to respond quickly to changing employment opportunities. That means more applied or articulated degrees.

Applied degrees focus largely in advanced study in career or technical fields while articulated degrees are commonly defined as programs that may begin with two years of study at the community college level and conclude with two years of study at a university. As New Brunswick's economy grows and diversifies, there is a greater demand for employees with these types of advanced skills and hands-on technical abilities.

Creating a more robust range of applied learning opportunities will play a major role in increasing New Brunswick's participation rates in post-secondary education. These opportunities will further support the creation of a culture of lifelong learning and help workers enhance their skills and develop the new skills required to meet the changing labour market.

A stronger applied learning sector in New Brunswick complements the existing strength we have in vocational and career training, liberal arts and social science, health care, business and science. It creates a stronger system that will benefit each student and each resident of this province.

A hallmark of the transformed post-secondary education system is collaboration – between institutions, with communities and with the private sector. That defining principle must be embraced to create applied learning opportunities throughout New Brunswick. We will develop mechanisms to ensure this cooperation occurs in a timely manner and in response to student and community needs.

Action #23: Establishing formal partnerships to boost applied learning

The Province believes that given the modernization of the community college system and the willingness to formally collaborate demonstrated by the province's four public universities, there is no requirement to create a new type of "bricks and mortar" institution to address our collective applied learning needs.

Rather, existing institutions, facilities and intellectual capacity will be leveraged to respond to the challenge. This will happen through formal partnerships between universities, community colleges and communities. These formal partnerships will develop new, applied and articulated programs.

These formal partnerships will also engage other partners in the development and delivery of specialized education such as hospitals and other health care providers, energy, manufacturing, construction and other industrial stakeholders.

There will be two types of partnership vehicles. The first is the Institute of Applied Learning and Training. The second is the Consortia of Applied Learning and Training. The IALTs and CALTs are a way to respond quickly to changing labour market needs and do more with existing education and training resources.

These formal partnerships are a necessary – and vitally important – element in transforming New Brunswick's post-secondary education system by improving both the quantity and quality of applied learning opportunities.

Institutes of Applied Learning and Training

The IALTs will be incorporated entities owned jointly by the community college and university in each region. These institutes will be set up where there is a clear demand for a public university or community college campus to work together with members of the local community to develop in-demand programs.

The IALTs will be charged with identifying the demands and needs for new programs or courses within a defined region. It will assess whether a particular program or course should be delivered by the university or community college partner, either individually or collaboratively, and start developing the program. Its programs will complement and compete with existing programs and it will interface with business, industry and employers across all sectors to identify skills, training and educational needs. As required, IALTs will identify other channels to deliver the necessary programming.

Each institute will have a core staff (a CEO, academic and administrative support) and develop expertise in program development and marketing and quality assessment. It will work primarily through an extensive network of relationships with education and community stakeholders.

The institutes will be focused on skills upgrading needs within the province. Special attention will be given to shorter onsite courses and training opportunities, together with part-time advanced certificates and diplomas. Where appropriate, and with the support of the local universities and community colleges, the institutes may also offer applied degrees in selected areas. They will take full advantage of smart technology and web-based infrastructure to maximize the availability of online learning and training.

An anglophone and a francophone Institute of Applied Learning and Training will be established. The anglophone institute will be located in Saint John in partnership with UNB in Saint John and NBCC Saint John and the francophone institute will be located in the North in partnership with UdeM and CCNB.

Consortia of Applied Learning and Training

In areas that do not have the same pressing demands, a less formal collaborative mechanism known as the Consortia of Applied Learning and Training will be created. The CALT will first focus on building relationships and partnerships and will likely evolve into an IALT as new programs are developed to meet growing or changing needs.

The Consortia will encourage partnerships with appropriate community groups or agencies in the area, such as private companies or economic agencies and non-profit organizations. Each CALT will have an advisory board to provide insight and information on the emerging applied learning and training requirements of the region.

Working with its partners, the CALT - through its lead institution - will review the demands for new programs or courses. It will assess whether a particular program or course could be delivered effectively and in a timely fashion by the university or community college partner, either individually or collaboratively. If the CALT determines that this is not likely, it will work with its partners to devise a shared mechanism or process to develop and deliver the program or course.

Two Consortia of Applied Learning and Training will be created. The Southeast CALT will be located in Moncton, with the Université de Moncton as the lead institution working with Mount Allison University and the Moncton and Dieppe community college campuses. The Central CALT will be located in Fredericton, with UNB in Fredericton as the lead institution working with St. Thomas University, the Miramichi and Woodstock community college campuses, the College of Craft and Design, the Maritime College of Forest Technology, and the Fredericton community college campus. Given St. Thomas University's historic ties to the Miramichi, it will take a lead role in that area.

It is expected that each CALT will have a small staff, seconded from its partners. Like the IALTs, it will work primarily through an extensive network of relationships with education stakeholders. These collaborative mechanisms are a way to respond quickly to changing labour market needs and do more with existing education and training resources.

Initially, the institutes will be focused on skills upgrading needs within the province. Special attention will be given to shorter onsite courses and training opportunities, together with part-time advanced certificates and diplomas. Where appropriate, and with the support of the local universities and colleges, the institutes may also offer applied degrees in selected areas. They will take full advantage of smart technology and web-based infrastructure to maximize the availability of online learning and training.

These formal partnerships are a necessary – and vitally important – element in transforming New Brunswick's post-secondary education system by improving both the quantity and quality of applied learning opportunities.

F. Greater Collaboration and Efficiencies

The Province will work together with other post-secondary education stakeholders to develop a system of governance and administration that will make collaboration and partnership the defining element of a transformed post-secondary system.

Some of the new structures and processes will be transitional in nature, necessary only until the collaborative nature of the system is fully established. Others will be ongoing and help shape the post-secondary education system in the province well into the future.

Action #24: Establishing a Post-Secondary Education Agency

The Post-Secondary Education Agency will provide overall coordination, planning and governance for the transformation of the post-secondary system. The agency will be created within three years and will ensure that post-secondary institutions collaborate and form the partnerships necessary to achieve the gains needed in student experience, quality of instruction, expansion of research, and developing efficiencies and responsiveness to community and labour market needs.

Action #25: Finding efficiencies through shared services

While New Brunswick post-secondary institutions share certain services, there are other common services that could be delivered more innovatively to achieve even greater efficiencies.

Opportunities will be identified to find efficiencies through back-office, administrative and support services, such as procurement, information technology, a centralized application system, and other relevant administrative areas. These common services will be delivered by the newly-formed Health Shared Services Agency.

Properly implemented and managed, increased collaboration will create a better student experience and move institutions closer to an integrated system. It can also generate cost-savings that will be directed to areas of the system requiring additional investment.

Academic functions are not part of the shared services structure and would remain the responsibility of each individual institution.

Action #26: Increasing the number of international students in New Brunswick

New Brunswick has a long-established reputation for offering quality post-secondary education. The advantages of a New Brunswick education attract many students from other countries and other parts of Canada to the province. In fact, in 2006-2007, 29 per cent, or 2,299 university students in New Brunswick were from outside the province.

Yet international students remain something of an untapped resource for New Brunswick. A comprehensive marketing strategy will be developed in collaboration with universities and community colleges to aggressively market New Brunswick as an education destination to international students.

Increasing the number of international students in New Brunswick's post-secondary education institutions will bring important diversity to the educational experience. Many international students will choose to remain in New Brunswick and can help the province reach its population growth objectives.

While each post-secondary institution will remain responsible for student recruitment, the coordinated marketing strategy will launch its first international campaign in 2009-2010.

Action #27: Establishing a New Brunswick Presidents' Council

A forum of university and community college presidents and the deputy minister responsible for post-secondary education will be the key collaborative group linking post-secondary education institutions with government and to oversee progress of selected Action Plan initiatives.

The council will be chaired by the deputy minister of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour and will be made up of the presidents of the four public universities, the president of the francophone community college and the president of the anglophone community college.

The council will provide an annual work plan and report annually to the minister on its activities.

G. More Accountability

New Brunswick's post-secondary institutions receive significant levels of funding from the Province. As such they must be accountable to the people of the province for the effective use of public funds. Greater accountability measures are part of the post-secondary education transformation agenda.

Action #28: Modernizing and replacing post-secondary education funding formulas

University and community college funding formulas will be modernized and replaced to reflect the complexity of institutional roles and to ensure public post-secondary institutions can effectively plan and manage their operations in line with provincial priorities.

Action #29: Requiring institutions to submit five-year strategic plans

The government invests significantly in New Brunswick's public post-secondary education systems.

To ensure transparency and accountability in the use of public funds, and to ensure rapid progress on the necessary transformation of the system, each public institution will submit a five-year strategic plan, including an annual business plan, to government. These will be supported by performance-based contracts and indicators reflecting the strategic priorities of New Brunswick's Self-Sufficiency Action Plan.

Action #30: Requiring each institution to appear annually before the Legislature

As a further accountability measure, beginning in 2009 the government will require that each public university, the francophone and the anglophone community college appear annually before an appropriate committee of New Brunswick's Legislature to address their strategic plans and speak to the effective use of public funds.

Action #31: Establishing a Ministerial Advisory Committee on Post-Secondary Education

A ministerial advisory committee will be established to advise the minister of post-secondary education, training and labour on post-secondary education system planning and monitoring.

The committee will be composed of students, academics and community leaders.

H. A High-Quality Post-Secondary Education System

New Brunswick's students deserve the best possible post-secondary education system. As part of the creation of a truly integrated system, new methods to ensure accountability and quality will be established.

Action #32: Extending Quality Assurance reviews to select community college programs

The Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission approves new university programs and ensures a suitable level of academic quality in New Brunswick's universities.

The transformation of the community college system in New Brunswick is expected to result in a series of new applied, articulated and professional programs. The Province will request that the MPHEC extend its mandate to perform quality assurance on selected new programs in the community college system.

I: Support for Transformation

A transformation of New Brunswick's post-secondary education system requires considerable investment, particularly in the face of many worthwhile competing demands for scarce resources. However, the government firmly believes that a strong, responsive and modern post-secondary education system is a pre-requisite for success and for achieving self-sufficiency.

A transformed system will lead directly to a better educated population whose skills more closely reflect the needs of New Brunswick's growing economy. It will foster a stronger spirit of entrepreneurialism and innovation in the province while attracting new businesses and supporting the growth of existing businesses. Education will establish clusters of expertise and centres of excellence and will draw new people to build lives and careers here in New Brunswick.

A post-secondary education system is a powerful tool. It can create a "virtuous cycle" of opportunity and prosperity that will help each and every New Brunswicker.

Action #33: Investing in transformation

Projected financial investments of a minimum of \$90 million over five years will be made beginning in 2008-2009 to support the transformation of the post-secondary system.

A plan outlining necessary capital investments will be developed by the Presidents' Council in 2008-2009.

New Investments to support the Action Plan, 2008-2013*

	Budget (000s) 2008-2009	Projected Cost (000s) 2009-2010	2010-2013	Total
Student Focus	400	4,060	12,370	16,830
Community College/ Apprenticeship	1,420	11,551	14,422	27,393
Universities	625	19,250	21,964	41,839
Collaboration and Implementation	1,475	2,463	-	3,938
Total	3,920	37,324	48,756	90,000

* These amounts are incremental and over and above regular departmental funding for post-secondary education.



J. Progress Measurement

The Government of New Brunswick, after extensive consultation and research, has set out an ambitious agenda for change in the province's post-secondary education system.

As noted earlier, the goal for transforming post-secondary education is to produce the best-educated and most literate population in Canada. As we move toward this goal, performance indicators will be developed to measure and report on progress based on the factors outlined below:

- Post-secondary education participation rates (including universities, community colleges and apprenticeships) reach the national average by 2014 and then surpasses the highest provincial rate by 2018.
- The proportion of the population with post-secondary education credentials that reaches the national average by 2014 and surpasses the highest provincial rate by 2018.
- The cost of financing a post-secondary education for New Brunswick students.
- Annual growth in the number of articulated and applied programs in New Brunswick's post-secondary education system and in the number of students graduating from them.
- Annual growth in the number of graduate students in the New Brunswick system to reach 3,000 students in graduate programs (including at least 450 in PhD programs).
- Annual growth in basic and applied research (a) within universities and community colleges and (b) in partnership with the private sector.
- Movement of students between community college and university programs and vice versa.
- Rates of completion in post-secondary programs.
- Employment rates of post-secondary graduates and the extent to which they find employment in New Brunswick.
- The post-secondary education system's responsiveness to changing socio-economic conditions.
- Measurement of quality of programs and institutions through MPHEC and other accountability mechanisms.

Conclusion

Through this Action Plan, post-secondary education in New Brunswick will experience a significant transformation. The actions and investments laid out in this strategy will create a post-secondary education system that is integrated, accessible, affordable, relevant, responsive, efficient, of high-quality and accountable.

Participation rates will increase as new applied programs become available to meet the needs of our expanding economy. More people will have the skills and training needed to pursue great careers here at home in New Brunswick.

This Action Plan will help New Brunswick produce the most educated and most literate population in Canada. That in turn will move us much closer to our goal of self-sufficiency and make New Brunswick the best place to be.

