

# Be inspired. Be ready. Be better.

*A Summary of the Action Plan to Transform  
Post-Secondary Education in New Brunswick*



**Be inspired. Be ready. Be Better.**

A Summary of the Action Plan to Transform Post-Secondary Education in New Brunswick

2008.06

Province of New Brunswick

POB 6000

Fredericton NB E3B 5H1

CANADA

**[www.gnb.ca](http://www.gnb.ca)**

ISBN 978-1-55471-161-1

CNB 5453

# Introduction

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. The 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.

The Government of New Brunswick undertook extensive research and consultation to determine the best ways to create a stronger post-secondary education system in the province. This Action Plan is 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.

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. An energized, revitalized and integrated post-secondary education system will fuel our drive to self-sufficiency.

## **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.

# 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 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 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.

