
Government Response to the Report of the Working Group on Accessibility to Post-Secondary Education in New Brunswick

May 2001

Background on the Report of the Working Group on Accessibility to Post-Secondary Education

On June 8, 2000, Premier Lord announced the creation of the Working Group on Accessibility to Post-Secondary Education in New Brunswick. This Working Group brought together individuals from a broad cross-section of post-secondary perspectives, including representatives of the NB Student Alliance, universities, community colleges, high schools, private training institutions and members of the public.

The Working Group's task was to make recommendations that would:

- improve current financial assistance programs;
- ease transitions from secondary school to the post-secondary level and into the workforce;
- promote awareness of the value of post-secondary education and
- encourage graduates to stay in New Brunswick.

The Group made 18 recommendations which included recommendations on the development and implementation of a promotional strategy; increasing financial assistance for students; enhancing career information and information on job opportunities; and enhancing retention and recruitment strategies for areas of critical skill shortage.

Government Response to each Recommendation of the Working Group

Recommendations of Working Group	Government Response
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>Government take the initiative to work with institutions to develop strategies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicize the lifelong advantages that post-secondary education brings in terms of career options, income, health and personal satisfaction. • Publicize the importance of post secondary education to New Brunswick's socio-economic wellbeing. • Inform middle school and high school students about the value of and variety of post-secondary education options and the importance of the choices they make. 	<p>The Province of New Brunswick will develop a promotional strategy to encourage students to pursue their studies at the post-secondary education level. The strategy will focus on the importance and value of post-secondary education and will pay special attention to those New Brunswickers who are least likely to choose post-secondary education as an option.</p> <p>In conjunction with the promotional strategy a comprehensive post-secondary education (PSE) web site will be developed and will include information on the value and importance of PSE; career opportunities in NB; costs of PSE; sources of funding for PSE; interactive programs to help students make good career choices and information on universities, community colleges and other PSE institutions, etc.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>Government continue to work with partners to design and implement outreach programs specifically targeted to "high risk" K-12 students.</p> <p><i>Note: In the Report, "high-risk" students are defined as those students, who for various reasons are least likely to go on to post-secondary education.</i></p>	<p>Post-secondary institutions already have a number of general and specific promotion programs ranging from high school recruitment fairs to sponsoring and organizing annual provincial Science, Mathematics, and Geography contests.</p> <p>The promotional strategy and the post-secondary education web site will be aimed at these students.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>Government and appropriate partners develop and implement communications campaigns to provide parents and students in K-12 information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-secondary education costs; • Financial options; • Registered Education Savings Plans (RESPs); • Financial planning, and • Money management. 	<p>The promotional strategy will include information to adult learners and parents.</p>																				
<p>Recommendation 4</p> <p>Invest significant new money in student assistance, and focus primarily on bursaries targeted to New Brunswick students most in need.</p>	<p>The government will redirect and invest \$5.1 million in increased student financial assistance through enhanced student bursaries. The increase will benefit approximately 3,400 students who are most in need. Increase in bursaries over a three year period will double the amount of the provincial bursary presently available to students with dependents and increase amounts for all other eligible students by 80%.</p> <p>Average Increase in Provincial Bursary per Student</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="778 1384 1321 1868"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>\$/Week/student</th> <th>\$/year/student</th> <th>Costs</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2001-2002</td> <td>\$25</td> <td>\$875</td> <td>\$2.7M</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2002-2003</td> <td>\$30 (25 + 5)</td> <td>\$1050 (875 + 175)</td> <td>\$0.9M</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2003-2004</td> <td>\$40 (30 + 10)</td> <td>\$1400 (1050 + 350)</td> <td>\$1.5M</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>\$5.1M</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Bursaries are available only to those who have received the maximum student loan and who demonstrates additional unmet financial need.</p>	Year	\$/Week/student	\$/year/student	Costs	2001-2002	\$25	\$875	\$2.7M	2002-2003	\$30 (25 + 5)	\$1050 (875 + 175)	\$0.9M	2003-2004	\$40 (30 + 10)	\$1400 (1050 + 350)	\$1.5M	Total			\$5.1M
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<p>Recommendation 5</p> <p>Request federal government re-examine current needs assessment criteria and formulas for student aid to more accurately reflect the true costs of post-secondary education.</p>	<p>The Department of Education is presently participating on a national working group on student financial assistance. The Province has brought this issue to the national group which will be addressing them.</p> <p><i>Note: The Province currently uses the federal needs assessment criteria and could not change these criteria unilaterally.</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 6</p> <p>Examine the efficacy of existing student assistance programs, including such elements as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debt levels • Interest rate levels • RESPs • Bursaries • Subsidies, and • Financial arrangements in the repayment of student loans. 	<p>The Department of Education has identified these concerns with the national working group which will be addressing them.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7</p> <p>Develop an aggressive strategy to strengthen New Brunswick's representations to the Government of Canada for increased post-secondary funding.</p>	<p>The Province is working diligently with other provinces to encourage the federal government to provide increased funding to the Province's for post-secondary education. The Province is working with the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC), post-secondary institutions and other Atlantic Provinces to develop a coordinated approach to access more federal funding.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 8</p> <p>Make timely interventions during the development of federal and other post-secondary funding programs.</p>	<p>The Province will seize every opportunity to be proactive in making representations to the federal government to treat all provinces equitably when developing criteria to ensure that less affluent provinces are not financially disadvantaged.</p>						
<p>Recommendation 9</p> <p>Establish a fund to match monies institutions raise for need-based bursaries.</p>	<p>The Province will establish a \$1M Fund to match funds from private sector foundations to provide scholarships to publicly funded universities and NBCC for students most in need. Funding will begin in 2002-2003 with a contribution of \$500,000. In 2003-2004, the contribution will be 1 million. This will allow one year for universities and community colleges to prepare appropriate strategies to approach the private sector.</p> <p>Matching with the private sector funding sources could double and even triple the amount of money made available from government under this Fund. These scholarships will be available to New Brunswick students in financial need who are attending New Brunswick publicly funded universities and the NBCC. This will also help NB Institutions to attract more NB students.</p> <p>\$1M Matching Scholarship Fund Financial Details</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="778 1570 1321 1767"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="778 1570 946 1632">Year</th> <th data-bbox="946 1570 1321 1632">\$ to match with private sector \$</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="778 1632 946 1700">2002-03</td> <td data-bbox="946 1632 1321 1700">\$500,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="778 1700 946 1767">2003-04</td> <td data-bbox="946 1700 1321 1767">\$1M</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	\$ to match with private sector \$	2002-03	\$500,000	2003-04	\$1M
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<p>Recommendation 10</p> <p>Develop a policy to encourage companies to invest in mutually beneficial employee learning.</p>	<p>Literacy New Brunswick, Business New Brunswick, Training and Employment Development and Investment and Exports will continue to work with employers to encourage employee learning.</p>
<p>Recommendation 11</p> <p>Institute partial loan forgiveness programs for students who choose to work in New Brunswick during their loan repayment period.</p>	<p>Government will continue to investigate this option.</p>
<p>Recommendation 12</p> <p>Give the Department of Education the responsibility to work with the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons to propose measures to improve the access to post-secondary education for people with disabilities.</p>	<p>The government agrees that the participation rates for persons with disabilities needs to be increased and the Premier's Council on the Status of the Disabled Persons will work more closely with the Department of Education, the Department of Training and Employment Development and post-secondary institutions to develop strategies to address these needs.</p>
<p>Recommendation 13</p> <p>Government improve the quality and use of post-secondary data for student accessibility, mobility, retention trends and factors.</p>	<p>The Departments of Education and Training and Employment Development believe that data is important in developing policy on post-secondary education and students need better information to make better academic choices.</p> <p>Both Departments will work with the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission to explore possible methods to improve data collection. This includes data on student statistics as well as student satisfaction with post-secondary institutions and success of employability of graduates etc.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 14</p> <p>Be responsible for organizing and following up on the recommendations of periodic cooperative roundtables, each addressing specific transition issues with representation from universities, colleges, private sector institutions, employers, government and K-12.</p>	<p>The Department of Education will invite major stakeholders to participate in discussions to find solutions to common challenges and to take advantage of opportunities facing the post-secondary education sector.</p>
<p>Recommendation 15</p> <p>Urge post-secondary institutions to renew their efforts to support students' transitions.</p>	<p>Post-secondary education institutions will be encouraged to support student transitions among secondary and post-secondary institutions as well as to the work place.</p> <p>Government will encourage post-secondary institutions to enhance current mechanisms and practices to support learner transitions. (ex: Credit Transfer, Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition, Co-op Programs, etc.)</p>
<p>Recommendation 16</p> <p>Government, institutions and industry partners expand sources of accessible information to students to help them make informed career decisions.</p>	<p>The Province is expanding its Labour Market Information & Labour Market Profiling.</p> <p>This will also be an important component of the post-secondary education promotional strategy and web site.</p>
<p>Recommendation 17</p> <p>Government and institutions further develop curriculum and programs incorporating career skills and career experiences.</p>	<p>The Department of Education will enhance career information and career skills in K – 12 education program; and along with the Department of Training and Employment Development encourage post-secondary institutions to further incorporate career skills experiences within their programs.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 18</p> <p>Government, institutions and industry partners develop further recruitment /retention strategies for areas of critical skill shortages.</p>	<p>Government will enhance its strategies to retain and recruit graduates in key areas. Government believes that the best way to retain graduates is to promote a climate for the creation of new jobs and will do so through its Economic Growth Agenda.</p>

Total investment in new Post-Secondary Education Access Measures by the Government

The total investment in new Post-Secondary Education Access Measures by the Government, which will be provided in response to the Report of the Working Group on Accessibility to Post-Secondary Education, is:

Year 1 (2001-2002)	\$2.70M
Year 2 (2002-2003)	\$1.38M
Year 3 (2003-2004)	<u>\$2.06M</u>

Total \$6.14M