

REPORT TO
WHITE PAPER ON PUBLIC POST- SECONDARY EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DR. WAYNE LUDLOW, COMMISSIONER
MR. CYRIL FARRELL, ADVISOR

FROM
Ad Hoc* COMMITTEE ON THE *WHITE PAPER
BOARD OF REGENTS
MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND
OCTOBER 2004

Ad Hoc COMMITTEE ON THE WHITE PAPER

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MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND

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Mr. Hayward Blake, Harbour Grace

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Mr. Calvin Butt, Bay Roberts

Mr. Earl Ludlow, Alberta

Ms. Andrea Quinlan, Paradise

[one position vacant]

STUDENT MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL

Ms. Roxana Vernescu, St. John's

[one position vacant]

ABOUT THE BOARD OF REGENTS

Memorial University has achieved a position of prominence in the community of Canadian universities and plays an important role in the proper and orderly development of our Province.

The *Memorial University Act* vests authority in the Board of Regents for the "management, administration and control of the property, revenue, business and affairs of the university". The responsibilities and mandate of the Board are outlined in the *Memorial University Act* (Articles 33, 34). Broadly speaking, the Board is concerned with the governance of the university; that is, it establishes policy and provides a structure and means for policy implementation.

The day-to-day administration and management of the university is the responsibility of the President. In addition, the President provides leadership and guidance to the Board with respect to policy development and all other matters which fall under the jurisdiction of the Board.

Although the Board itself has limited involvement with policy initiation and development, individual Regents may assist through service on one or more of the following seven standing committees: Appointments, Campus Planning and Development, Employee Benefits, Executive Compensation, Finance, Labour Relations, Pensions and Separately Incorporated Entities.

The *Memorial University Act* states that the "Senate shall have general charge of all matters of an academic nature" although the Board must approve any regulation of the Senate to give it effect.

I. INTRODUCTION: STEWARDS OF THE TRUST

The Board of Regents of Memorial University of Newfoundland is pleased to respond to the Commission on Public Post-Secondary Education.

As the governing body of the province's only university, the Board plays an important and formative role in the evolution and delivery of university education in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Board is comprised of community, alumni and student representatives from all over the province. As such, its members bring to the university the insight and perspective of citizens from rural and urban, coastal and insular, northern and southern, eastern, central and western regions.

The Board members represent a mélange of professions, experiences and knowledge. They bring to the university the perspective of business and unions, government and industry, volunteer and professional, community leader and taxpaying citizen, student and graduate all engaged in important work in the world both inside and outside the walls of Memorial University.

Board members share an interest in and a passion for higher education, and particularly in Memorial University. They recognize that Memorial has been and must continue to be vitally important to Newfoundland and Labrador.

With the help of the university's team of professional administrators and academic leaders, the Board shapes Memorial to meet the demands and expectations that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians place on the institution. Those are recognized to include:

- ✍ top quality university education that is accessible to all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians;
- ✍ research that is important, relevant and useful to the province;
- ✍ a university that both serves and reflects the community within which it resides;
- ✍ a university that responds actively and energetically to the needs of that community.

II. MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

Memorial is the only university in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is this more by design than by

circumstance. The university's founders in 1925 desired to build an institution within which university-level education could be acquired in Newfoundland and Labrador. The resources available to them, including a considerable private contribution from the Carnegie Foundation of New York, made it possible to establish a single institution, Memorial University College.

Those who created the larger, degree-granting university Joseph Smallwood and his government in 1949 recognized that it was necessary to put as much resources as available into the one pool to maximize the ability of a university based in Newfoundland and Labrador to compete nationally and globally. Mr. Smallwood even deigned to suggest that the government not hesitate to spend recklessly in its support.

There is no reason why, if we have the vision and if we have the courage and if we have sufficient recklessness in the spending of money on that type of thing, the University of Newfoundland for its size should not be the most distinguished university in the whole world.

So, if there was to be university education in Newfoundland and Labrador, it would best and most efficiently be delivered through one university, Memorial University. That notion is as true today as it was in 1925 and 1949.

As a consequence, the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador now boasts the largest university in Atlantic Canada in terms of student enrolment (17,500), infrastructure, land mass and scope.

Memorial delivers university education to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador through a combination of on-campus learning at various sites, and distance education to the far-reaches of the province and beyond.

The campus facilities include:

✍ **St. John's campus (Elizabeth Avenue and Prince Philip Parkway)**

The St. John's campus is the largest of the university's campuses with over 15,000 students, including all of the graduate students and graduate programs. The campus features the Queen Elizabeth II Library, the province's largest library and the largest and principal research library at the university. The majority of research undertaken at Memorial is undertaken by faculty on the St. John's campus. This is also the administrative centre of Memorial University of Newfoundland. The President and Senior Executive Committee of the university are headquartered here.

✍ **Marine Institute (MI), St. John's**

The MI joined with Memorial in 1992 in an effort to consolidate the strengths of two of the province's critical institutions of higher learning. The MI is Canada's leading centre of fisheries and marine training with about 1,000 students. It has two schools: the

School of Fisheries and the School of Maritime Studies. Through the university it offers bachelors and masters degrees. It also offers one-year advanced diplomas, two- and three-year diplomas, certificates and vocational programs. It also has a number of centres and units involved in applied research and technology transfer as well as training located in St. John's and at other sites around the province (e.g. SERT in Stephenville).

✍ **Sir Wilfred Grenfell College (SWGC), Corner Brook**

Sir Wilfred Grenfell College is a small, liberal arts and science campus with developed expertise in the fine arts and environmental programming. It offers students a personalized education while exposing them to a realm of interdisciplinary experiences. Grenfell offers 12 degree programs in the areas of Arts, Sciences, Fine Arts and Nursing. About 1,300 students attend Grenfell, 10 per cent of which are from outside the province.

✍ **Harlow, England**

Harlow Campus provides residential programs for students from Memorial University to spend a semester studying in England. In recent years programs (including work terms and internships) have been organized at Harlow by Business, Education, Pharmacy, Social Work, Psychology, Computer Science, History, English, Folklore, Geography and Medieval Studies from the St. John's campus, and the Fine Arts department of Sir Wilfred Grenfell College. Harlow is a popular program with students who enthusiastically combine in-class instruction with the experience of living in close proximity to London and traveling throughout Europe during their term.

✍ **Labrador Institute, Happy Valley-Goose Bay**

The Labrador Institute is the main contact point for the university in Labrador. It facilitates and co-ordinates the activity of personnel at the university as they undertake cultural, research and educational activities in Labrador. The Institute develops access programs for people desiring a university experience with courses offered in co-operation with the College of the North Atlantic and off-campus. The Institute matches research with the economic and employment needs of regions within Labrador. It maintains communications with aboriginal and community groups and sponsors cultural activities.

Memorial University also includes other learning and research centres throughout the province that are operated individually or in co-operation with other organizations. (e.g. Centre for Nursing Studies, Bonne Bay Marine Station, Ocean Sciences Centre and others).

Memorial University, by housing all these intellectual and physical resources under the one administrative roof, provides the province a distinct advantage. The cost of providing university-level education is mitigated by the economies-of-scale afforded by Memorial's unified administrative model.

III. MEMORIAL'S CONTRIBUTION

The founders of Memorial University College in 1925 and those who advanced it to degree-granting status in 1949 shared a common expectation for the institution. They built a university that would educate the youth of Newfoundland and Labrador and one that would be an engine of economic growth. By those particular measures, Memorial University has been a success.

- ✍ Memorial University graduates close to 2,500 students every year and has over 50,000 alumni. More than 70 per cent of its graduates are living and working in the province. These alumni are contributing to prosperity and the quality of life in every region. Entrepreneurs and business people, teachers, doctors and nurses, engineers, public servants, politicians, community leaders, artists and writers B there is not an area of public and private life in the province that has not been impacted positively by the graduates of Memorial University.
- ✍ Enrolment at Memorial has increased from 15,000 in 1999 to 17,500 in 2004 this despite the shrinking population base and changing demographics. The university has been able to grow enrolment through an aggressive effort to attract more university-eligible students from Newfoundland and Labrador and to attract more students from elsewhere in Canada and internationally. In 2004, Memorial attracted about 2,400 out-of-province students (13.5 per cent of total student population). The university is actively increasing recruitment of students from other parts of Canada and from other countries.
- ✍ Through its research program, Memorial has played a significant role in solving major problems that matter to the province and the world. Memorial attracted \$73.9 million in external funding in support of research and development in 2004. Much of this research funding is spent on purchases of local goods and services. The research effort involves over 600 full-time equivalent jobs. A further 1,000 people are employed in support of research as technical assistants, student assistants and other highly qualified staff.
- ✍ On an annual basis, Memorial is responsible for some \$300 million worth of economic activity and provides approximately 5,500 direct jobs.
- ✍ Memorial's students represent a significant economic force. Their spending supports businesses throughout the communities where the university's facilities are located. The estimated per capita spending on average by students (accommodations, food, local transportation and other living expenses, but excluding tuition costs) is between \$150-\$200 per week during the semester. Increases in student enrolment have a significant positive benefit on the local economy.

One of the cornerstones of Memorial University's mandate has been to engage in activity that

is responsive to the needs of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and that reflects and preserves the unique culture and traditions of this special place. The university has played a major role in the development of key components of the province's society and economy in a variety of areas:

- ✍ **Education** Memorial educates the educators. Preparing students for teaching careers has been at the heart of Memorial since its founding. Most every teacher in Newfoundland and Labrador today is a graduate of Memorial University. The Faculty of Education is also engaged actively in research, curriculum development and the professional development of active teachers. As well, The School of Human Kinetics is the centre of physical education and the training, teaching and research that support it in the province.
- ✍ **Health** Memorial educates the physicians, nurses and pharmacists who provide medical leadership in all the province's health centres. The Faculty of Medicine is home to the senior specialists who serve the province's major medical centres. The university's medical researchers and geneticists are working on problems that are direct relevance to the people of the province.
- ✍ **Heritage and history** Memorial is a repository for much of the province's history and heritage. The Archaeology Unit has been instrumental in discovering and interpreting for current and future generations important aspects of Newfoundland and Labrador's ancient and recent past. This seminal work has led to economic opportunity through tourism development in places like Ferryland, Port au Choix, Boyd's Cove and Red Bay, among others. The Queen Elizabeth II Library, and more particularly its Centre for Newfoundland Studies, has become an important repository for the recorded history of Newfoundland and Labrador, and provides a critical complement to the work of the Provincial Archives in this regard.
- ✍ **Culture** Memorial has had a remarkable impact on the culture of Newfoundland and Labrador. The preservation of tradition and folklore has been facilitated through units such as the Folklore and Language Archive. The very words we speak have been collected and preserved through outstanding scholarly work such as *The Encyclopedia of Newfoundland English*. In music, theatre, literature and the visual arts, Memorial plays a role in nurturing, honing craft and skill-set and providing inspiration for the more creative interpretations of Newfoundland and Labrador as a place and as an idea. Memorial is also formative in the creation of new art and culture.
- ✍ **Entrepreneurship and expertise** Memorial University represents a brain trust for the province. Its faculty and professional staff provide expertise across a wide range of disciplines that is otherwise unavailable in the province. The university actively promotes entrepreneurship through its Faculty of Business and associated units.

Memorial's Genesis Centre serves as an incubator for new business ideas and a technology transfer centre in bridging the discoveries of the university to the real world of commerce. Similarly, the new Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Development and Policy is working to bridge the expertise available within Memorial with the real and practical needs of communities province-wide in economic development.

- ✍ **Offshore development** Memorial is a key component in the strategy to make Newfoundland and Labrador the eastern Canadian centre for the petroleum industry. This effort has been significantly enhanced by the creation of the university's Oil and Gas Development Partnership. This comprehensive educational and research initiative is transforming Newfoundland and Labrador into an internationally recognized leader in education, training, research and development related to all facets of the oil and gas industry, with emphasis on offshore production in ice-prone waters.
- ✍ **Aquaculture** Memorial's Ocean Sciences Centre and Marine Institute are actively engaged in research and practical activity designed to promote successful aquaculture of a variety of species, most particularly ground fish like cod and halibut.
- ✍ **External linkages** Memorial represents a link to the province for external agencies. The university is the partner for a number of Atlantic initiatives that are designed to enhance development across the region (e.g. Atlantic Innovation Fund, Petroleum Research Atlantic Canada). Without a strong university, with a strong research focus in strategic areas the opportunities and millions of dollars in funding that these initiatives bring into the province would not exist.
- ✍ **Internal linkages** Memorial serves to link agencies within the province with a focus on educational, research and economic development issues. Memorial's work with the College of the North Atlantic (CNA) includes transfer programs that enable rural students to undertake first- and second-year university courses closer to their homes at CNA's regional campuses. The College Transfer Program serves as a comfortable bridge for rural students into the challenges of university.

Through all its activities, Memorial University seeks to connect with the essential needs of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, particularly with the rural areas of the province. Located as it is in the major urban centres (St. John's and Corner Brook), the university recognizes the imperative to serve rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

IV. MANAGING MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND

Memorial University presents unique and interesting challenges in its management and governance given its size, complexity and geographic spread.

Significantly, the Board of Regents is of one mind in its belief that Memorial is one of the best run public institutions in the province. This is not simply self-affirmation of the Board's good work; it is a reflection of the broad recognition by the public and by organizations that are engaged in measuring such things. These perceptions are endorsed in the recent *Community Relations Study 2004* conducted for the university by Omnifacts Bristol Research [the study was included as an appendix in the submission to the White Paper Commission from the university's Senior Executive Committee].

The bi-cameral nature of governance at Memorial is similar to that in place in all other Canadian universities and the best universities in the world. The Board of Regents is ultimately responsible for all decisions with financial implications. The university's Senate deliberates on and determines the academic direction. It works well at Memorial and has worked well in the service of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Discussions are all-inclusive, open and intense. Decisions are made prudently and effectively. Action is taken efficiently and accountably.

The existing administrative structure of the university has served the institution well. Academic Units report to the Board through the President and the senior officer for academics (Vice-President, Academic). Administrative Units report to the Board through the President and the senior administrative officer (Vice-President, Administration and Finance). The Office of Research and the university's research program come under the aegis of the President and the Vice-President, Research.

Memorial also operates a number of Separately Incorporated Entities (SIE). These include the Botanical Garden, the Memorial University Recreation Complex Inc. (The Works), the Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation (CCFI), the Canadian Centre for Marine Communication (CCMC), the Genesis Centre and C-CORE. The Art Gallery of Newfoundland and Labrador was an SIE prior to the transfer of its ownership from the university to that of the province. The SIE model involves volunteer governing boards that include and involve considerable participation from the public. It serves to engage the broader community in the active management of units of Memorial University that serve the public as part of their broader mandate.

Membership on the Board

The chairperson of the Board of Regents and the vast majority of members (17) of the Board are appointed by the provincial cabinet (of the remaining members six are elected by the Alumni Association and two selected as student representatives). As a consequence, the provincial government of the day has a significant role in shaping the governing body of

Memorial University.

Appropriately, the government has always maintained an arms-length relationship in regard to the management and administration of Memorial University, entrusting the Board of Regents to be stewards of the peoples' interest in the institution. The Board makes the ultimate decisions regarding the university, and develops, with the help of the university's management team, the annual budget for the institution. The Board is also singularly responsible for the setting of all fees at Memorial, including tuition fees.

Significant financial and performance accountability mechanisms exist. The Administration of the university reports through the Board to the Minister of Education and the Minister reports for the university to the House of Assembly, including the Public Accounts Committee.

The arms-length relationship between government and the university works extremely well. The university is granted the autonomy necessary to make decision in matters in which it is most qualified, namely academics. It remains accountable, through the Board of Regents, for the public monies it spends.

V. MEMORIAL'S FUTURE

The Board of Regents fully endorses the vision for the future of Memorial as outlined in the Report to the Commission on Public Post-Secondary Education from the university's Senior Executive Committee. Memorial University must grow. Making Memorial stronger and better for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador will require that it expand its perspective.

- ✍ **Enrolment** must increase. All Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who desire to attend a world-class university must be afforded that opportunity. Memorial has achieved this status, but it would be at risk if the university were not allowed to grow. Given the province's changing demographics, it is inevitable that the ratio of students from this province to those from elsewhere in Canada and from abroad will decline, at least in the immediate term. But the quality of the education will not decline if the university can maintain a growing critical mass. And every eligible Newfoundlander and Labradorian will be assured a place in a university whose programs and degrees are first rate.
- ✍ **Research**, especially in areas of strategic and specific interest to Newfoundland and Labrador, must continue to be pursued and built upon. Similarly, by providing solutions to local problems that have global applications, the university enhances the province's ability to attract investment and build economic opportunity.

In addressing the future of the university the Board of Regents must grapple with many challenges, all of which have one primary source – funding for the institution.

The Board is charged with operating the university on a balanced budget. This is a good thing

and a prescient principle. It has enabled Memorial to grow and develop without a significant debt burden. Operationally, it has enabled the Board to utilize most every dollar on the primary mission of the university.

Achieving the balance is not an easy task, and it is one that becomes that much more difficult in an environment of economic uncertainty.

There are two main sources of funding available. The grant to the university is determined by the government. This leaves the Board with only one source of revenue that it controls – tuition fees.

In recent years, government policy regarding tuition fees has *de facto* taken this control out of the hands of the Board, leaving the Board with no mechanism through which it can make up any budgetary shortfall necessary to maintain the quality of the institution.

Without an appropriate government grant, or the mechanism through which revenue can be generated (tuition fees), the Board is frustrated in its decision making. Without sufficient resources, the impact is mostly felt on academic instruction and reduced choice for students. An example is the impact on the Queen Elizabeth II Library, which, as the province's premiere research library must remain current and relevant if Memorial is to maintain its quality and become globally competitive. This is made increasing difficult in times of fiscal restraint.

Inadequate capital funding in the area of deferred maintenance related to the aging campus in St. John's is forcing the Board to make tough choices that could negatively impact on the quality of education Newfoundlanders and Labradorians demand from Memorial. While government has provided additional funding to address this problem over the past two years, simply put, there is an urgent need to deploy reliable additional funding. There is also a pressing need for new facilities and infrastructure, specifically in the sciences and in the university's residence complex.

It is important to note that the student representatives on the Board of Regents have expressed strong desires to maintain affordable tuition fees and access to the university for the financially disadvantaged. These are goals shared by all Board members.

In preparing this report to the Commission, the Board *ad hoc* committee met with leaders from all student groups at Memorial University (MUNSU, GSU, MI Students' Union, SWGC Students' Union). The student leaders expressed concerns regarding tuition fees and student debt loads and the impact both have on students' decisions to attend university in the first place and then to pursue graduate studies upon successful completion of undergraduate work.

They also echoed the Board's concerns regarding the need to maintain the efficacy of the library and for infrastructure maintenance and improvements.

The Board shares the general views of the student leadership regarding higher education, namely:

1. University education should be accessible to all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who have the academic ability and the interest to attend Memorial. The financial ability of a student should not be a deterrent to participation in university education.
2. Memorial University requires stable and predictable funding from the provincial government.
3. Memorial University must continue to provide a high quality of university education to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. The university should also work to enhance the quality it is able to offer.

The matter of how to resolve the financial challenges facing the university and, at the same time, continue to ensure broad accessibility will continue to guide the Board in its decision making. The Board feels the issue of student debt load is one that both levels of government should examine closely and review the mechanisms through which aid is provided to students.

VI. CONCLUSION

The people of Newfoundland and Labrador place great trust in Memorial University. They expect it to educate their children to a world standard. They expect it to provide hope and opportunity. They expect it to reflect them in the best light to the rest of the country and the world.

Memorial has done all this and more. However, if the university is to continue to meet the demands of the people of this province:

- ✍ It must maintain its autonomy to determine its academic programs based on need, interest and demand.
- ✍ It must continue to prudently govern its operations.
- ✍ It must maintain the governance and administrative structures that have served the people of the province so well to ensure the continued prudent management of the university.
- ✍ It must grow.
- ✍ It must play a positive role in the economic and social development of the province.

Above all else, Memorial University must meet the needs of students from Newfoundland and Labrador.

The *Memorial University Act* is working satisfactorily and enabling the Board to operate at peak efficiency. At this moment, the Board does not perceive a reason for reviewing it in any elaborate sense.

However, it is understood that government is considering reviewing the provisions regarding student representation on the Board of Regents. Similarly, there may be some interest in reviewing some aspects of the *Act* relating to nomenclature, and the Board would support such discussions.

Should the government decide to review the *Act* in more detail, the Board would appreciate the opportunity to be consulted directly.