



# THE NEW BRUNSWICK STUDENT ALLIANCE

## PROVINCIAL PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION

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### OUR STORY

The New Brunswick Student Alliance (NBSA) is the largest student organization in New Brunswick, representing over 12,000 post-secondary students across four member campuses. We advocate for a post-secondary education system where any qualified student can attain a high-quality education while enjoying an exceptional quality of life. The NBSA is governed by a Board of Directors made up of student leaders from the student associations of Mount Allison University, St. Thomas University, and the University of New Brunswick's Fredericton and Saint John campuses. We conduct research and draft evidence-based policy to form recommendations to the government. We work to keep student issues at the forefront of public discussion and to make students' priorities a reality.



### OUR MISSION & VISION

**Mission:** The New Brunswick Student Alliance will conduct effective advocacy informed by evidence-based policy, build relations with decision-makers to advance the collective agenda of its members, and provide opportunities for students to lead its efforts to create an accessible, affordable, high-quality postsecondary education system in New Brunswick.

**Vision:** A postsecondary education system in New Brunswick where any qualified student can attain a high-quality education while enjoying an exceptional quality of life.

# LETTER FROM OUR CHAIR & VICE CHAIR

## Breaking Barriers to Postsecondary Education in New Brunswick

This past year has been the most unprecedented year in our history as a province and so many have been impacted as a result of the pandemic, including thousands of students in New Brunswick. By investing in students, we will be investing in the future of our province and investing in the ideas and solutions that will redesign New Brunswick and prepare it for whatever may lie ahead. The recommendations that you will read in this document represent some of the current needs and challenges facing our students and your support will have lasting impacts on the future of our province.

Students and our post-secondary institutions are currently adapting to a new way of learning, teaching, researching and working. Challenges continue to present themselves and many are feeling isolated and disconnected. We've heard from so many students who are considering not returning to university or are returning home to look for better opportunities elsewhere.

In order to best support the future of New Brunswick and continually allow a cohort of greatly educated, skilled, and diverse young adults to maximize their education and apply their talents to the province, we implore you to strongly consider the recommendations presented in the document. Addressing the recommendations presented in this document are integral to improving the post-secondary education experience in New Brunswick.



## **PRIORITIZING INVESTMENT THROUGH E-MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS**

**Recommendation: \$225,000 in funding for evidence-driven, technology-based intervention programs that would improve the wellbeing of postsecondary students in New Brunswick and \$25,000 to develop and implement strategies to advertise these technology-based intervention programs to ensure that they are effectively used.**

Mental health difficulties affect our province as a whole. However, the student life cycle during any academic year includes a variety of difficulties and stressors unique to postsecondary students, which thus require special attention and targeted funding. With almost 19,000 students attending publicly funded universities in the province, the cost of a suite of technology based intervention programs would be a worthwhile investment that would provide the support to students that is difficult to access on campus.



# **PRIORITIZING INVESTMENT THROUGH TRAUMA-INFORMED SUPPORT SERVICES FOR POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED TRAUMA PRIOR TO THEIR UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE AND/OR DURING THEIR UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE**

**Recommendation: Long term funding, or directly fund, specific trauma-informed support services on all public postsecondary campuses at a cost of approximately \$115,000 a year to expand current services or \$230,000 to directly fund these services.**

In 2019, Nova Scotia has announced \$400,000 in support of seven initiatives aimed at helping to prevent sexual violence on university campuses. Among the initiatives receiving funding are student liaison positions at each campus and a program to create evaluation techniques for measuring progress in changing attitudes around sexual violence. Institutions need monetary support to ensure that students have equal access to these resources regardless of which institution they attend. This support would ensure that all institutions can develop specific trauma informed services to address the needs of their students.



# MAXIMIZING VALUE OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION IN NEW BRUNSWICK THROUGH OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

**Recommendation: Invest \$250,000 for 125 New Brunswick Based Open Educational Resources (OERs), hosted through the AtlanticOER with the Council of Atlantic University Libraries - Conseil des bibliothèques universitaires de l'Atlantique (CAUL-CBUA) and with funds being matched by home institutions.**

Canadian students expect to pay between \$800 to \$1,000 per year on textbooks. Consequently, students often opt to not purchase their textbooks since, rightfully so, prioritize living costs and paying off university fees. Not having textbooks for your course results in academic penalty in that one does not have access to all the necessary resources to facilitate their holistic learning. 54% of British Columbia (BC) students reported never buying their textbooks due to cost, while 30% reported their grades suffered as a result.



# DECOLONIZING POST SECONDARY EDUCATION IN NEW BRUNSWICK THROUGH TRUTH & RECONCILIATION INITIATIVES

**Recommendation: Implement \$1.5 million into a “Reconciliation through Postsecondary Education” fund to support reconciliation initiatives and programming at postsecondary institutions across the province.**

To date, significant barriers remain in accessing post-secondary education for Indigenous peoples. Only 48.4% of Indigenous peoples had a post-secondary credential, compared to 64.7% of non-Indigenous people. The funding provided by the provincial government would be used to support the efforts of institutions to decolonize their classrooms, increase student, faculty and staff knowledge on Indigenous culture and history as well as provide vital on-campus support for Indigenous students.



# RETENTION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN NEW BRUNSWICK THROUGH FINANCIAL SUPPORT DURING COVID-19

**Recommendation: Implement a New Brunswick COVID-19 International Student Financial Relief Package to support international students bearing the financial burden of COVID-19.**

International student funding has been established in other provinces, such as in PrinceEdward Island where a Special Situation Fund will be implemented this year looking to specifically aid international students who were not eligible for the federal relief programs. In order for International Students to be more inclined to study and stay in New Brunswick during the pandemic, a better financial aid system should be made available to them. Not only will this help boost the economy of the province but will also indicate that the Government of New Brunswick is listening and cares about the international community



# INVESTING IN NEW BRUNSWICK'S FUTURE GENERATION THROUGH RELIEF FROM THE FINANCIAL BURDEN OF STUDENT LOANS

## Recommendation: Eliminate interest on the provincial portion of student loans.

Students desperately need relief from the financial burden of student loans so they can start reinvesting in our province, whether it's supporting local businesses, purchasing a home, staying in the province for work or starting a family. Many provinces are now eliminating interest on their portion of student loans, including Nova Scotia, Newfoundland & Labrador, Prince Edward Island and Manitoba. It is important that New Brunswick continue to be a leader in Post-Secondary Education and communicate to students that the province has their back, especially during these difficult times.





# OUR MEMBERS

