



NBSA
AENB

Investing in a Sustainable Future for the Leaders of Tomorrow

ADVOCACY
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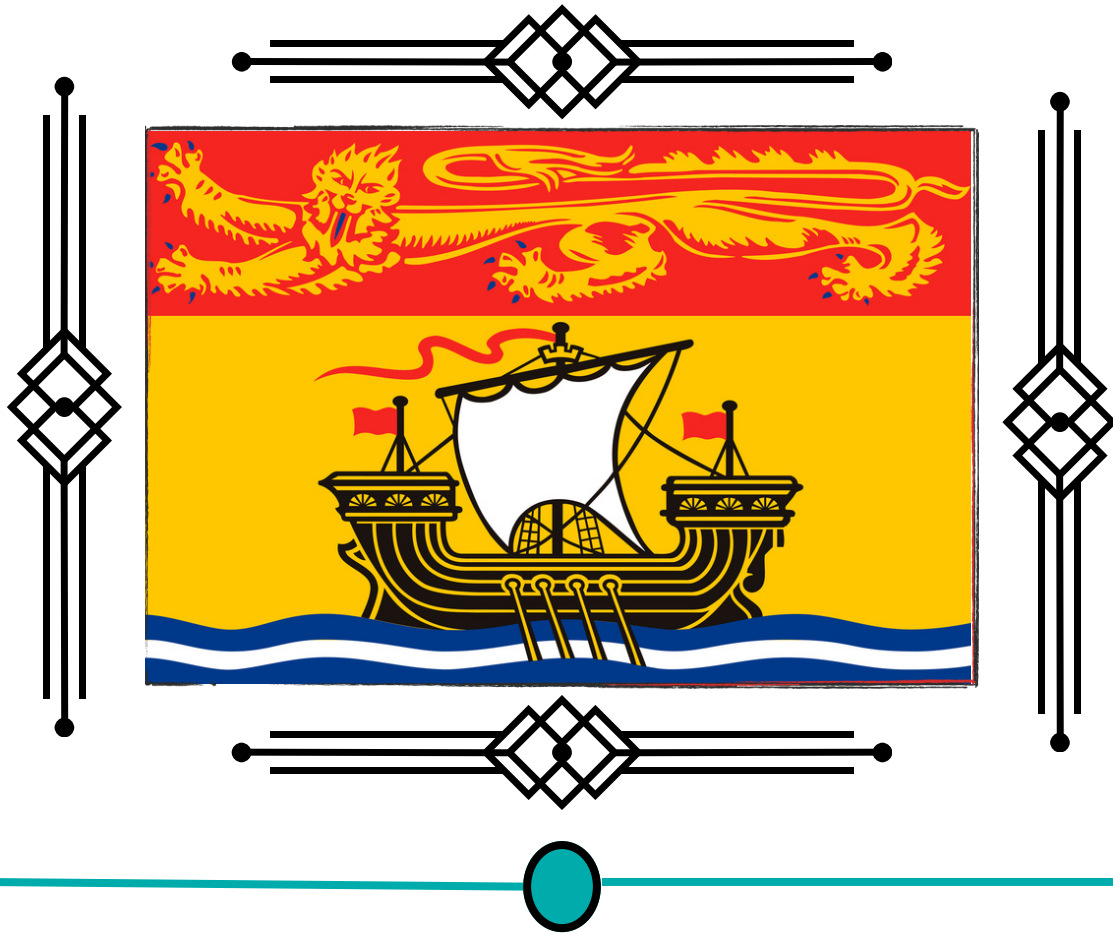
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TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



As a provincial entity, the New Brunswick Student Alliance recognizes and respectfully acknowledges that it carries out its work on the traditional unsundered and unceded territory of the Wolastoqiyik, Mi'kmaq and Peskotomuhkati peoples. This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship" which these nations first signed with the British Crown in 1726. The treaties did not deal with the surrender of lands and resources, but in fact recognized Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik titles and established the rules for what was to be an ongoing relationship between nations. We, the staff and members of the New Brunswick Student Alliance, pay respect to the elders - past and present - and descendants of this land.



ABOUT US

Our Mission:

The New Brunswick Student Alliance will conduct effective advocacy informed by research and evidence-based policy, build relationships with decision-makers in order to advance the collective agenda of its members, collaborate with students and community groups to inform equity, diversity, and inclusion through intersectional praxis, and provide opportunities for students to lead change through outreach and campaigns

Our Vision:

A post-secondary education system in New Brunswick where any student can attain an accessible, affordable and high-quality education while enjoying an exceptional quality of life rooted in the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion through intersectional praxis.



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

In light of the many challenges faced by post-secondary students in New Brunswick we have compiled this document to tackle these issues utilizing avid research and consultation among students and various stakeholders, The New Brunswick Student Alliance is committed to advocating for a sustainable and accessible future for post-secondary education. As an alliance, we aim to advocate for transformative initiatives that empower our students and ensure their prosperity. New Brunswick is recognized for its history of academic excellence and innovation, and its post-secondary institutions are hubs of talent, creativity, and potential. However, we are at a critical moment where the financial strain on students and the lack of adequate mental health support are impacting the lives of students and their education.

Post-secondary students are the future leaders and workforce of our province, however we are currently grappling with the immense burden of rising tuition fees, the increasing cost of living, and accumulating student debt. These financial challenges are not only detrimental to their academic success but also to their overall well-being and mental health. Many students are forced to make difficult choices between their education and meeting their basic needs. Moreover, the mental health crisis among students is alarming. The pressures of academic life, coupled with the isolation and uncertainty brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic have exacerbated existing mental health challenges. The lack of readily available resources and comprehensive support systems for students mental health is a deeply concerning issue that needs to be addressed. I strongly believe that by working towards a shared vision, we can forge a strong partnership to tackle these pressing problems. Through this partnership, we can pave the way for a brighter future for post-secondary students and ensure their well-being remains a top priority. I invite you to strongly consider the recommendations in this document. Together, we can make New Brunswick the best province to live, work & study . By committing to the well-being and prosperity of students, we will ultimately invest in a stronger and more optimistic, rewarding future for all of New Brunswick.



Emily Boucher, Chair



EQUITY, DIVERSITY, & INCLUSION

PRINCIPLES

As Canadians, we have had recent cause to reflect on the ways in which Canada has unjustly treated Indigenous, Black, and other racialized Canadians over the course of its history. In its 2021 Speech from the Throne, the Government renewed its commitment to equity, justice, diversity, and inclusion. It is clear that addressing the systemic discrimination of these groups within Canada's criminal justice system is an essential component to shaping a future that more fully and truly reflects the Canadian ideals that we strive for, both as a federal public service and more broadly as a country (1).

Through research, we recognize that other maritime provinces possess action plans focused on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), with the exception of New Brunswick (2). Our membership schools such as St. Thomas University, Mount Allison University, and The University of New Brunswick (Saint John) are committed to the principles and practices of EDI through the development of research-based action plans. Students and researchers have raised concerns about the extreme lack of active research and data regarding EDI in New Brunswick (3).

Recommendation: The New Brunswick Student Alliance calls upon the Government of New Brunswick to meaningfully consult and collaborate with equity-deserving groups in developing an official EDI Action Plan. In doing so, we ask the Government of New Brunswick to invest monies from the 2023/24 budget where 30.8 million was dedicated to inclusivity in education. From the latter, we ask that 200,000 be invested. into an EDI action plan, this will encourage awareness and understanding of equitable spaces in schools. (5)

84% of 930 respondents acknowledge there is unconscious discrimination within the province of New Brunswick, while no concrete statements or research about EDI are done by the government. (4)



Recommendation: The New Brunswick Student Alliance calls upon the Government of New Brunswick to implement recommendations 4, 5, and 25 outlined in the 2022 Systemic Racism Commissioner's Final Report. (3)

1. <https://www.canada.ca/en/parole-board/corporate/publications-and-forms/moving-towards-diversity-equity-inclusion.html>
2. beta.novascotia.ca/documents/diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-2019-2024
3. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Research - St Thomas University : Equity, Diversity and Inclusion | Research | UNB
4. <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/csr-crs/en.html>
5. https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/finance/news/news_release.2023.03.0140.html



HOUSING

PRINCIPLES

When referring to adequate housing it will be defined as affordable, accessible, safe, equitable, and accommodating when utilized in this policy.

Adequate student housing is crucial as the New Brunswick population increases (10). Not only will it assist students, but it may also work as a mechanism to alleviate some of the pressure of housing non-student New Brunswickers as well. co-operation among all levels of government as well as with key stakeholders such as the public universities identified in the Housing For All strategy, private developers, and students themselves is required to ensure adequate student housing.

As a basic human right (11), housing impacts personal, mental, and financial well-being, potentially jeopardizing if it is inadequate (12). Additionally, other social, economic, and cultural rights cannot be effectively upheld without housing. This issue can be especially pertinent for out-of-province (13) and international students (14). Many of them are unfamiliar with the housing market when relocating across provincial and national borders, they are met with additional challenges. International students have to seek out housing upon arrival, and many times the options they are met with are inadequate. This further affects their ability to prioritize their well-being and safety as they attempt to integrate and attain education in Canada. Accountability is necessary in the creation of adequate housing. An online rental registry has been created in the Province of Quebec to further ensure landlords are maintaining their properties adequately and affordably, to curb the increasing cost of rental properties in the Province.

RECOMMENDATION: The New Brunswick Student Alliance calls upon the Government of New Brunswick, in consultation with the municipalities, to create a Rental Registry.



10. Government of New Brunswick. (2017, April 24). New Brunswick population reaches 800,000. https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2022.03.0164.html#:~:text=According%20to%20Statistics%20Canada%2C%20New,of%20population%20growth%20since%201976.

11. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), The Right to Adequate Housing.

12. Review of the Rental Landscape, NB. Pg. 31

13. Derek Haggett, "No vacancy: Post-secondary students struggle to find spots to live," CTV News, (CTV News Atlantic, August 25, 2022).

14. [Vanessa Balintec](#), "International students say they want to study in Canada, but staying is a problem if they can't find housing," CBC News, (CBC/Radio Canada, August 22, 2023). [International students say they want to study in Canada, but staying is a problem if they can't find housing | CBC News](#)



HOUSING

PRINCIPLES

Although a lump sum of provincial investment has been announced as described in the Housing for All strategy, no guidelines for assessment nor decision-making for this funding have been made publicly available, leading to uncertainty in regards to the equitability and feasibility of university and student-relevant funding in the Housing for All strategy. Research shows the Nova Scotia Government's commitment to post-secondary education and to its student population with increased investments totalling \$8 million being specifically allocated to universities to address housing needs at Cape Breton University and The Atlantic School of Theology (15).

if retention is the goal, there needs to be adequate housing (16). Recruiting and influencing students to come to Canada, and New Brunswick more specifically (17), means there is a need for adequate places to live, whether this be on or off campus. Student livelihoods and academic careers depend on their ability to live near their institution of choice, and if there are no places to live they may be less inclined to enroll.

RECOMMENDATION: The New Brunswick Student Alliance calls upon the Government of New Brunswick to complete a thorough review of governmental surplus properties, as outlined in the Housing for All strategy, in cities and municipalities encompassing universities. So, additional residential properties can be created.

RECOMMENDATION: The New Brunswick Student Alliance calls upon the Government of New Brunswick to utilize monies in the Housing for All strategy to create additional off-campus housing, as well as on-campus, marketed towards students to further free up rental spaces for non-student New Brunswickers. While the latter is being completed we ask for continued consultation with the New Brunswick Student Alliance alongside relevant stakeholders in working to create adequate student housing.

15. Advanced Education, Municipal Affairs and Housing, "More Funding to Increase Housing Options for Post-Secondary Students" <https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20221219004>

16. Housing for All, NB Pg. 4

17. Usher, A., (2022). The State of Postsecondary Education in Canada, 2022. Toronto: Higher Education Strategy Associates



FOOD INSECURITY

PRINCIPLES

Access to affordable and balanced food options is recognised in Canada as a fundamental human right and basic survival need to support individuals' growth, energy levels, and immune system function (23). Yet many students are finding it increasingly difficult to access affordable meals or food items to sustain themselves throughout school.

Students disproportionately feel the impacts of increases in the cost of food, particularly in the cases of disadvantaged or racialised students. For students like Garrett Oakes, a second-year student at the University of New Brunswick (Saint John), facing these increased costs of food "feels daunting and unachievable".

Post-secondary institutions across the country have seen a marked increase in the number of students experiencing food insecurity, and accessing campus food banks, as well as emergency funds and other valuable resources. For many, it could even cause them to abandon their studies entirely. This was found to be most certainly true via a recent study of Canadian university students, finding that forty percent of those interviewed said they were considering dropping out (24),

RECOMMENDATION: The University of New Brunswick, Mount Allison University, and St. Thomas University implement policy measures, allocate space, and allocate funding to support their respective student unions' efforts in fighting food insecurity in a manner that is transparent, evidence-based, and at an increasing rate respective to rises in the costs of food over time.

New Brunswick is the sole province in Canada to have seen outright large-scale enrolment declines over the past 20 years (25). Inflation is rising, and food centres across the country are also noticing a growing demographic of visitors being international students, who rely on food banks as an essential outlet for sourcing nutritious and affordable meals (26).

Costs this past academic year for New Brunswick students have already demonstrated increases in other areas, such as tuition and residence expenses which have both risen at a rate of over 4%, leading to an urgency to address this harmful trend sooner rather than later (27),

23. [https://foodpolicyforcanada.info.yorku.ca/frameworks/right-to-food/#:~:text=The%20right%20to%20food%20was,et%20al.%2C%202007\).](https://foodpolicyforcanada.info.yorku.ca/frameworks/right-to-food/#:~:text=The%20right%20to%20food%20was,et%20al.%2C%202007).)

24. <https://www.cfs-fcee.ca/blog/heres-how-inflation-is-impacting-students-across-canada>

25. https://higherstrategy.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/SPEC-2023_v1.pdf

26. <https://www.cfs-fcee.ca/blog/heres-how-inflation-is-impacting-students-across-canada>

27. <http://www.mph.ec.ca/research/maritimeuniversitystatistics/tuitionsurvey.aspx>



FOOD INSECURITY



New Brunswick ranks second among the ten provinces in terms of the percentage of people living in food insecure households equaling 22.8% and first among provinces in terms of households living with “moderate” food insecurity at 12.9% (27).

RECOMMENDATION: We call upon the Government of New Brunswick and applicable municipal governments representing New Brunswick universities establish a long-term agreement to allocate funding at an increasing rate respective to rises in the costs of food over time towards university-specific food insecurity initiatives as a direct means of supporting university students who struggle in receiving equitable resources from other avenues.

28. <https://proof.utoronto.ca/2023/new-data-on-household-food-insecurity-in-2022/>



UNIVERSITY FUNDING

PRINCIPLES

Adequate funding is necessary to ensure the quality of university programs, student services, infrastructure, and faculties. Universities rely on government funding as their largest source of revenue when creating budgets, student tuition being the second largest source of revenue (18). As such, students often pay the price for insufficient government funding. Increases in tuition fees exacerbate the financial burdens placed on students, serving as an additional obstacle to the affordability of postsecondary education and jeopardizing the quality and accessibility of vital student services.

Average tuition & fees in New Brunswick for undergraduate students was \$ 6,374 in 2012-13 and is \$8 978 in 2022-23. This is an over 40% increase in a decade and a 3.7% increase in just one year (19).

RECOMMENDATION: We call on the Government of New Brunswick to be informed by and account for inflation rates, adapt to the rising costs of living, and incorporate student consultation in decision making when limiting increases to operating grants.

We also recognize that international students pay more than double the tuition fees of domestic students and incur various other costs such as travel and health care. International students contribute \$22 billion annually to Canada's economy with a total impact of international students contribute \$142,375 million on the province's GDP in 2018, but are struggling to find financial aid, and are unable to access federal and provincial student loans.

New Brunswick, as of 2023, is recognized as the fourth most expensive undergraduate tuition in Canada, with an average undergraduate tuition of \$8,978, up by nearly four percent from the previous year (21).

From 2010-2020, New Brunswick, unlike every other province, experienced a significant drop in overall enrolments (22). Low tuition rates could alter this trajectory by incentivizing out-of-province and international students to move to New Brunswick and by encouraging young New Brunswickers to study and seek employment at home. Seeing that the average annual inflation of universities is 3% (23).

RECOMMENDATION: We call on the Government of New Brunswick to increase the post-secondary education operating grant by a minimum of 3% annually.

RECOMMENDATION: We call on The Government of New Brunswick to consider international students' overwhelming contribution to the province's GDP and Global Talent, we ask to set aside a percentage (introducing metrics) of the 115m that is distributed to Post-secondary institutions to dedicate towards awards and bursaries intended for international students who are in need during their studies.

18. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/201008/dq201008b-eng.htm>

19. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?>

pid=3710012101&cubeTimeFrame.startYear=2011+%2F+2012&cubeTimeFrame.endYear=2021+%2F+2022&referencePeriods=20110101%2C20210101

20. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?>

pid=3710012101&cubeTimeFrame.startYear=2011+%2F+2012&cubeTimeFrame.endYear=2021+%2F+2022&referencePeriods=20110101%2C20210101

21. https://higheredstrategy.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/HESA_SPEC_2021.pdf

22. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/rising-tuition-inflation-new-brunswick-1.6461783>



MENTAL HEALTH

PRINCIPLES

We continue to see where university students face high levels of stress brought on by expectations for student success, high levels of student debt, limited job prospects upon graduation, and independent living.

Promoting student mental health and resilience is therefore a long-term investment in students' success, population health, and economic prosperity. (5)

The government has stated in the New Brunswick Family Plan Framework Document that good health is “fundamental to the resilience of individuals, families, and communities.” They do so with good reason: a quarter-million New Brunswickers aged 15 and above have been diagnosed with a mental health disorder or substance abuse at some point in their life. Furthermore, a third of Canadians in their 20s live with mental health-related problems or illnesses, while 36% of New Brunswickers do not think their mental health is good.

The Inter-Departmental Addiction and Mental Health Action Plan has outlined the priority of adequate staffing and space to fill gaps by the year 2021 (6) but the Canadian Institute for Health Information shows that New Brunswick has an average wait time of 66 days for mental health counselling, three times the national average, which is 22 days. We are seeing where 1 in 3 students report that current on campus mental health services do not meet their diverse needs. (7)

Other Maritime provinces have invested heavily in post-secondary student mental health with the Nova Scotia Government investing \$500,000 in the suite of technology-based intervention programs, and Prince Edward Island Government investing \$25 per student in mental health funding. However, New Brunswick students still await support from their government to invest specifically in post-secondary student mental health. New Brunswick must provide these supports in order to ensure students have a healthy transition from school to work-life which in essence will impact their ability to operate in getting tasks done—further increasing the efficiency of the labour force.

RECOMMENDATION: The New Brunswick Student Alliance advocates that the provincial government, universities, and student representative bodies work together to develop a comprehensive provincial strategy for mental health on New Brunswick’s university campuses.

RECOMMENDATION: The New Brunswick Student Alliance calls upon the Government of New Brunswick to invest 14.2mil for a range of mental health initiatives, including, offering culturally safe and competent mental health and addictions care, using clinical psychology students to deliver care as they finish their studies, and work towards universal access to mental health.

5. Monaghan C, Linden B, Stuart H. Postsecondary Mental Health Policy in Canada: A Scoping Review of the Grey Literature: Politique de santé mentale post-secondaire au Canada: un examen de la portée de la littérature grise. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*. 2021; 66 (7): 603-615. doi:10.1177/0706743720961733

6. New Brunswick Department of Health Addiction and Mental Health Branch. (2021, February 23). Inter-departmental addiction and Mental Health Action Plan. https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/h-s/pdf/en/MentalHealthandAddictions/inter-departmental_addiction_and_mental_health_action_plan.pdf

7. <https://globalnews.ca/news/9873377/n-b-counselling-wait-times-data/>



SEXUAL VIOLENCE

PRINCIPLES

Sexual violence is a prevalent issue on post-secondary campuses. With the student movement in 2020, the number of sexual violence survivors coming forward with how their post-secondary institutions failed them in providing support is alarming. As an organization that advocates for accessibility, quality of education, and quality of life for post-secondary students in the province, the NBSA strongly believes that sexual violence and lack of support for survivors should not be part of the university experience. Until action is taken to address sexual violence on campus, post-secondary education will remain inaccessible.

Sexual violence remains a present and persistent problem on post-secondary campuses across the province universities in New Brunswick each have different sexual violence policies, reporting procedures, and survivor support systems; a report by Denise E. Elliott et al. titled, "Trauma-Informed or Trauma Denied: Principles and Implementation of Trauma- Informed Services for Women" (8). states that creating policies and providing services that are "trauma-informed" allows for a systemic shift where all members of the reporting system are focused on respecting the emotional well-being of the survivor;

The same report by Denise E. Elliott et al. also states that if policy and services are not conducted in a way where every individual involved in the reporting process is trauma-informed and focused on ensuring the emotional well-being of the survivor, then the trauma can actually be deepened.

A study conducted from 2015 through 2016 by the University of New Brunswick (Fredericton), which included responses from 1220 students, showed that 53% of those students indicated they would not know where to get help after being sexually assaulted and 61% indicated they would not know how to make a report;

RECOMMENDATION: The New Brunswick Student Alliance advocates that the provincial government provide 2.4million annually to support institutions and community groups such as Sexual Violence New Brunswick so that trauma- informed support services and initiatives are accessible on all public postsecondary institutions in New Brunswick, regardless of regional differences and when/where the instance of sexual violence occurred.

8. Monaghan C, Linden B, Stuart H. Postsecondary Mental Health Policy in Canada: A Scoping Review of the Grey Literature: Politique de santé mentale post-secondaire au Canada: un examen de la portée de la littérature grise. The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry. 2021; 66 (7): 603-615. doi:10.1177/0706743720961733 6. New Brunswick Department of Health Addiction and Mental Health Branch. (2021, February 23). Inter-departmental addiction and Mental Health Action Plan.

https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/h-s/pdf/en/MentalHealthandAddictions/inter-departmental_addiction_and_mental_health_action_plan.pdf 7.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/9873377/n-b-counselling-wait-times-data/>

9. https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/eco-bce/WEB-EDF/Violence/PDF/en/preventing_responding_to_SV_NB-e.pdf

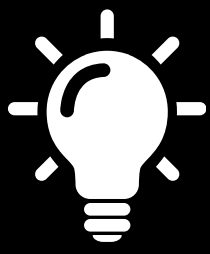


SEXUAL VIOLENCE

PRINCIPLES

A report released by the Government of New Brunswick in August 2018 titled, “Preventing and Responding to Sexual Violence in New Brunswick: A Framework for Action” (9), which indicated a desire to, “Work in partnership with post-secondary institutions to improve supports and responses to sexual violence within their institutions,” stated that, “Victims of sexual violence require specialized care and support, while perpetrators of sexual violence must be held accountable for their behaviour;” Hence why we are recommending that specialized care and support be implemented now.

RECOMMENDATION: The New Brunswick Student Alliance advocates that the provincial government adopt an accountability framework requiring public postsecondary institutions to revise and update sexual violence policies every two years, taking into consideration the changing postsecondary landscape, that meets the following criteria: (listed in our Index).



Reference notes

Recommendations mentioned:

Equity Diversity and Inclusion : The New Brunswick Student Alliance calls upon the Government of New Brunswick to implement recommendations 4, 5, and 25 outlined in the 2022 Systemic Racism Commissioner's Final Report.

Recommendation 4: A clear strategic plan to combat hate and discrimination in New Brunswick, including online hate. A clear theme that came from our data is the lack of safety that many marginalized communities feel. Such legislation would demonstrate to communities GNB's commitment to their health and safety. Without action, the best laid plans...remain plans.

Recommendation 5: Develop an anti-racism policy and mandate that all provincial workplaces adhere to this policy. This policy should be mandated to all parts of GNB.

Recommendation 25: Provide greater financial support for the creation and implementation of anti-racism resources. It is particularly important that our curriculum does not support the erasure of various histories and present-day success. As author Thomas King reminds us, "You have to be careful with the stories you tell. And you have to watch out for the stories that you are told."

Equity Deserving Groups: communities that experience significant collective barriers in participating in society. This could include attitudinal, historic, social and environmental barriers based on age, ethnicity, disability, economic status, gender, nationality, race, sexual orientation and transgender status, etc.

Sexual Violence: The New Brunswick Student Alliance advocates that the provincial government adopt an accountability framework requiring public postsecondary institutions to revise and update sexual violence policies every two years, taking into consideration the changing postsecondary landscape, that meets the following criteria:

1. that this process is independent, specialized, and completely separate from other complaint and reporting processes at the institution.
2. that all policies include clearly defined timelines for the complaint process.
3. that interim measures are available and accessible between informal and formal procedures at the institution.
4. that permit third-party and anonymous reporting.
5. that the process is survivor-centric, with all efforts made to ensure the safety and security of the Complainant.
6. that the process is clearly outlined in the stand-alone sexual violence policy; and that the institution create tools that must be distributed and available on-campus that help students navigate and understand the sexual violence reporting process at their institution.

OUR MEMBERS

The New Brunswick Student Alliance (NBSA) is the largest student organization in New Brunswick, representing over 6,000 post-secondary students across three-member campuses: Mount Allison University, St. Thomas University, and the University of New Brunswick's Saint John.



The voice of today, for students of tomorrow





New Brunswick Student Alliance
Alliance Etudiante Nouveau Brunswick

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