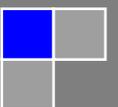


MPHEC

# Annual Report

*Year in Review: 2011-2012*



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**Additional copies of the Annual Report may be obtained from:**

Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission  
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For an overview of the MPHEC and its activities, please visit the web site at: [www.mphec.ca](http://www.mphec.ca).

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## Our Mission

As an Agency of the Council of Maritime Premiers that provides advice to Ministers responsible for Post-Secondary Education in the Maritimes, the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission assists institutions and governments in enhancing a post-secondary learning environment that reflects the following values:

## Our Values

- 1 Quality:** continuous improvement in the quality of programs, institutional practices, and teaching.
- 2 Accessibility:** program, delivery, and support services that optimize post-secondary education availability
- 3 Mobility:** portability of learning and credits throughout the post-secondary education system in the Maritimes.
- 4 Relevance:** effective and responsive interaction among learners, the work force, and the community.
- 5 Accountability:** evidence of value, sustainability, and cost-effectiveness of public and learner investment.
- 6 Scholarship and Research:** commitment to the pursuit of knowledge.

### *Excerpt of the MPHEC Act*

1. The Commission shall, in carrying out its duties, give first consideration to improving and maintaining the best possible service to students as life-long learners by:
  - (a) taking measures intended to ensure that programs of study are of optimum length and best quality,
  - (b) stressing prior learning assessment and recognition, and credit transfer, to implement the principle that duplication of effort is not required in order to gain credit for learning which [that - NS] has been successfully accomplished,
  - (c) promoting smooth transitions between learning and work,
  - (d) promoting equitable and adequate access to learning opportunities, including making those opportunities available at times and places convenient to the student, and
  - (e) taking measures intended to ensure teaching quality.
2. The Commission's principal duties are:
  - (a) to undertake measures intended to ensure continuous improvement in the quality of academic programs and of teaching at institutions, which without limiting the generality of the foregoing may include the review of institutional programs and practices for assuring such improvement and making recommendations to institutions and the Provinces,
  - (b) to ensure that data and information is collected, maintained and made available for assuring the public accountability of institutions, and to assist institutions and the Provinces in their work, which without limiting the generality of the foregoing may include:
    - (i) establishing data and system standards,
    - (ii) establishing public reporting requirements and producing public reports, and
    - (iii) carrying out studies in regard to public policy, institutional concerns and issues related to post-secondary education, and providing advice to institutions and the Provinces on these matters.
  - (c) to take initiatives to stimulate cooperative action among institutions and the Provinces where such action is likely to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the post-secondary education system in the Provinces, which without limiting the generality of the foregoing may include:
    - (i) encouraging initiatives for institutions to offer joint, complementary and regional programs, and
    - (ii) encouraging administrative, financial and common service arrangements which reduce the overhead cost of programs and the overall cost to students and the Provinces.
  - (d) to continue to develop and administer funding transfers among the Provinces for regional programs, which without limiting the generality of the foregoing may include developing and administering funding arrangements for programs outside the region, as required to provide additional educational opportunities for students from the region, and
  - (e) to undertake such other duties as the Ministers may assign.
3. The Commission may:
  - (a) provide such services and functions, as may be agreed upon by the Ministers, to one or more institutions or to one or more of the Provinces,
  - (b) provide such advice and services, as may be agreed upon by the Ministers, to one or more of the Provinces to determine their post-secondary education funding policy, and
  - (c) recommend to the Ministers the names of post-secondary educational institutions that may be added to or deleted from those prescribed by [the - NS] regulation for the purposes of the definitions "institutions" and "universities" [in section 1 - NB]; [2002, c.34, s.11 -PEI].



## Message from the Chair and the Chief Executive Officer



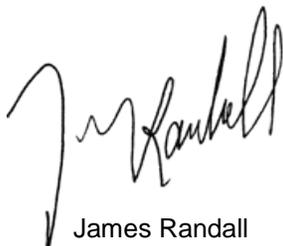
On behalf of the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission, we are pleased to present our 2011-2012 Annual Report, highlighting our activities and accomplishments over the past fiscal year. We hope this overview provides valuable insight into the Commission's work.

We would like to begin by thanking David Stewart for chairing the Commission since April 1, 2010, as well as Michael O'Grady, who was Vice-Chair for the same period. We would also like to thank all of the Commission members for their continuous hard work and dedication, along with the many volunteers that assist the Commission on a regular basis. It is through this support network that the Commission is able to achieve so much each year, and we expect no different for the year ahead.

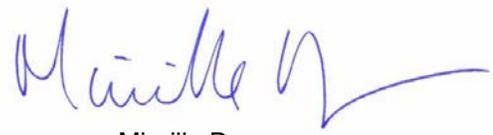
This year has been particularly exciting with the adoption of the Commission's fifth multi-year business plan. We are proud of the collaborative efforts that went into the development of this document, which details the Commission's proposed deliverables for the next three years. Notwithstanding some budgetary challenges, we have developed a plan of action that should allow the Commission to effectively deliver on its mandate. To this end, and from the five duties assigned to the Commission in the Act, two key priority areas have been identified. First is the work done under quality assurance and second is data collection and the development of research products.

At year end, the Commission's efforts shifted from strategy to implementation. Indeed, exciting work in the Commission's priority areas has already begun, including (1) the development of a second cycle of the monitoring process (whereby the Commission validates that universities are assessing their programs in a comprehensive manner), which will include much consultation with stakeholders, and (2) the development of the Commission's research agenda (through which the Commission hopes to focus regional efforts in collecting and analysing information).

The Annual Report includes links to complete documents and releases from 2011-2012 to provide more details on the Commission's work and findings. We invite you to consult our website for more current information on the Commission's ongoing activities.



James Randall  
Chair



Mireille Duguay  
Chief Executive Officer



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- D. Program Proposals Considered for Approval 2011-2012 ([http://www.mphec.ca/resources/AR\\_11-12\\_AppendixD.pdf](http://www.mphec.ca/resources/AR_11-12_AppendixD.pdf))



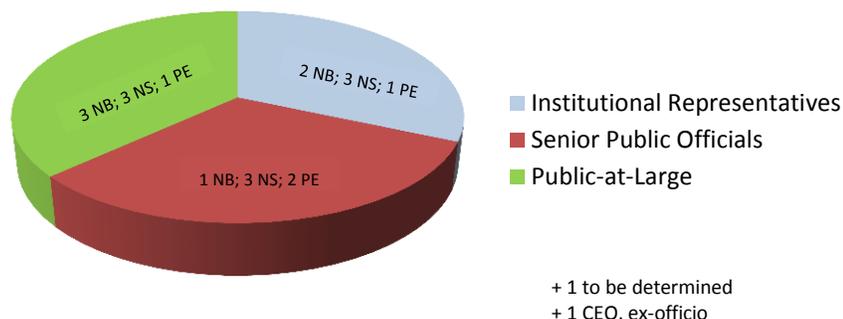
# Year in Review: 2011-2012

## THE COMMISSION

### About the MPHEC

- The Commission is an arm's-length organization accountable to the Ministers responsible for Post-Secondary Education.
- Its composition is as follows:

### Members of the MPHEC Board



- A list of Commission members can be found in Appendix B, at: [http://www.mphec.ca/resources/AR\\_11-12\\_AppendixB.pdf](http://www.mphec.ca/resources/AR_11-12_AppendixB.pdf). At year-end, there were two vacancies.
- The Commission meets approximately five times per year, normally on institutional campuses, on a rotating basis.
- At year-end, the Commission had operated with 12 permanent and contractual employees. A list of staff can be found at: <http://www.mphec.ca/about/staff.aspx>

### Operational Framework

- The Commission puts a heavy reliance on stakeholder input through its operational framework (joint committees, working groups drawing on required expertise, etc.).
- The Commission's standing committees and working groups are as follows:
  - AAU-MPHEC Academic Advisory Committee
  - AAU-MPHEC Quality Assurance Monitoring Committee
  - AAU-MPHEC Advisory Committee on Information and Analysis
  - MPHEC Measures Working Group
  - MPHEC Finance Committee
  - NB/MPHEC Finance Working Group
  - NB/PEI Educational Computer Network Board of Directors
  - NB/PEI Educational Computer Network Technical Committee
- A list of members on each of the above-noted committees can be found in Appendix B, at: [http://www.mphec.ca/resources/AR\\_11-12\\_AppendixB.pdf](http://www.mphec.ca/resources/AR_11-12_AppendixB.pdf).
- The Commission obtains additional stakeholder input through workshops/forums, stakeholder meetings, as well as seeking formal comments in various formats (e.g., through the Commission's program distribution process).

### Operating Principles

- Universities are autonomous and responsible to their constituencies for the quality of academic offerings and activities.
- Stakeholders (governments, students, taxpayers, etc.) have a legitimate need for information and assurances about the quality of institutional programs and services.
- The best processes and outcomes emerge from dialogue and collaboration (iterative processes).

### Business Plan 2012-13 to 2014-15

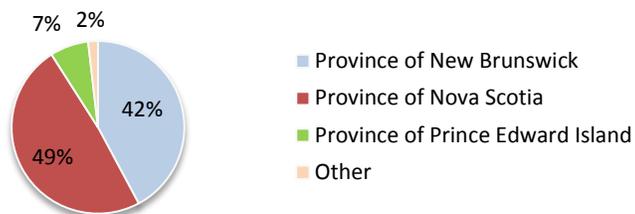
- This year marked the development of the Commission's fifth Multi-Year Business Plan, which was approved during the Commission's October 2011 meeting. The complete document can be found at: [http://www.mphec.ca/resources/Web\\_BP\\_2012-13\\_2014-15.pdf](http://www.mphec.ca/resources/Web_BP_2012-13_2014-15.pdf)
- The Business Plan shows an ambitious work plan for the Commission and outlines clear priorities for this work over the next three years. Considering that the three Maritime provinces collectively spend over \$1 billion annually toward university education in this region, the Business Plan clearly demonstrates that the Commission provides value for money.

- Difficult decisions had to be made during the planning period as a result of a reduction in base funding between 2010-11 and 2014-15 (-3% in 2011-12, -1% in 2012-13, -1% in 2013-14) combined with unfunded mandated and contractual increases in certain expenditures (i.e., salaries and benefits, rent) during that timeframe. The (projected) budget was balanced through a combination of identifying other sources of revenue and through significant reductions in expenses under salaries and benefits, as well as operating expenses. One position was eliminated with part of the work outsourced, and one position is to be left vacant for most years.
- The Commission's quality assurance program, the Commission's *first priority*, includes two main activities: (1) the assessment of new and modified academic programs prior to their implementation and (2) the monitoring of how institutions assess their programs once implemented and other activities that support student learning. These two activities represent a very cost-efficient approach to quality assurance, while respecting the universities' autonomy.
- The Commission has identified the work it does in data collection and the development of research products as its *second priority*. Maintaining a comprehensive collection of data and information in-house enables the MPHEC to provide its stakeholders not only with standardized statistics and custom-generated outputs, but also in-depth analytical reports and articles with a Maritime-specific focus.
- Keeping in mind fiscal constraints, the Commission is also working to develop a research program that will allow it to address the needs of its stakeholders as efficiently as possible.

## Resources

- As noted above, the current fiscal year was the first of three years, in which reductions to the Commission's base funding would be implemented. At the same time, the Commission was instructed that it would have to absorb cost-of-living adjustments and other inflationary items throughout the year.
- The Commission's revenue for its administration was approximately \$1.4 million in 2011-2012. The majority of this funding is provided by the three Maritime provinces on a per-capita basis through the Council of Atlantic Premiers annual budget approval process. The remaining sources of revenue include: the Province of New Brunswick (translation allocation), the New Brunswick Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour (for financial services and work performed under the Degree Granting Act [DGA]), and SRDC (for the provision of data).

**Revenue by Funding Source (2011-12)**



- The Commission's expenditures, totalling approximately \$1.4 million in 2011-2012, are presented below.

**Expenditures per Function (2011-12)**

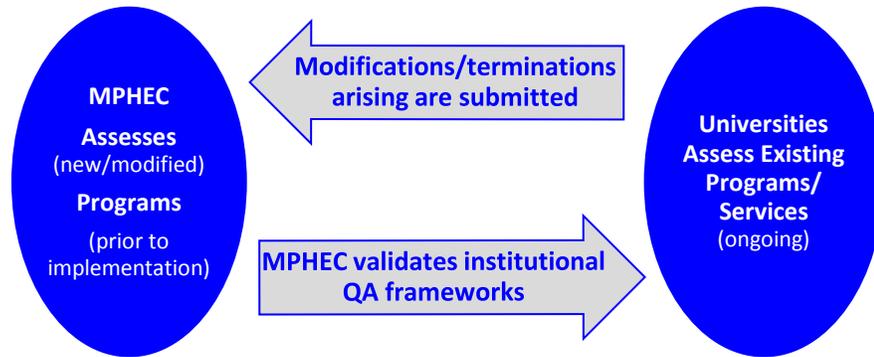


- The "Quality Assurance" function, including expenditures relating to work performed for the Province of New Brunswick under the Degree Granting Act, on a cost-recovery basis, comprises 43% of the Commission's direct and indirect costs.

- Expenditures in the area of “Data and Information” comprise another 37% of the Commission’s direct and indirect expenditures.
- Finally, work performed under the function of “Collaboration and Other Services” comprise the remaining 20% of the Commission’s direct and indirect expenditures. Work performed on a cost-recovery basis for the Provinces in the area of funding administration is included in this category.
- The detailed MPHEC 2011-2012 financial statements can be found in Appendix A, online at: [http://www.mphec.ca/resources/AR\\_11-12\\_AppendixA.pdf](http://www.mphec.ca/resources/AR_11-12_AppendixA.pdf).

## QUALITY ASSURANCE

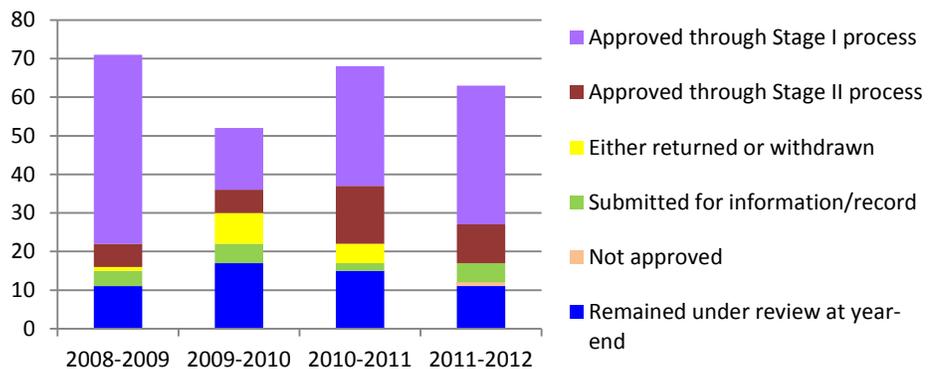
- The Commission provides quality assurance services for all publicly-funded universities in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. The Commission also carries out quality assessments of degree providers established under provincial Degree Granting Acts.
- The Commission’s primary activities in the area of quality assurance include its program assessment process and quality assurance monitoring. When combined, both instruments ensure a continuum of quality, as illustrated below.



### Academic Program Assessment

- During 2011-2012, the Commission considered a total of 63 program proposals. The following demonstrates how this year’s submissions relate to previous years.

Program Proposals Reviewed by the MPHEC



- Details on each program proposal considered during the 2011-2012 fiscal year can be found in Appendix D, at [http://www.mphec.ca/resources/AR\\_11-12\\_AppendixD.pdf](http://www.mphec.ca/resources/AR_11-12_AppendixD.pdf).

- A number of programs underwent revisions as a result of the program assessment process (primarily through the Stage II assessment); each is identified with an asterisk in the table in appendix D. Through this iterative process, the Commission provides guidance and support to institutions, which allows for various improvements to be made to programs during the assessment and ensures standards are met.
- The Commission, through its program distribution process, received 81 peer-based comments on the 63 proposals submitted this fiscal year. These thoughtful comments provide valuable insight during program assessments, and reflect the universities' commitment to the process.
- Over 2011-2012, the Commission continued to consult with institutional representatives directly involved with the development of program proposals with a view to releasing a final version of its updated policy that will meet the needs of both the Commission (in carrying out its legislated duties) and institutions (in developing quality program proposals). Through this update, it should be clear what the Commission requires to make an informed decision on a proposed program, and as a result, the process should be less resource-intensive for all involved. A final version of the policy is expected to be released in late spring 2012.

### ***Improving Coverage and Efficiency***

- In Nova Scotia, students are only eligible for student financial assistance when enrolled in an MPHEC-approved program, and in New Brunswick, institutions have been notified that this will also be the case starting August 2012. In addition, both provinces only account for MPHEC-approved programs within their respective funding formulae.
- It is important that the Commission be accountable to its stakeholders in terms of demonstrating the coverage of the Commission's program assessment process. In this regard, the Commission is pleased to report that over 99% of all programs offered by Maritime universities have Commission approval.
- For the proposals remaining as not approved (less than 1%), the Commission is currently working with institutions offering such programs to further reduce the number of non-approved programs in the Maritimes.
- In addition, five workshops on quality assurance were conducted on institutional campuses; this series of workshops was initiated in 2010-11, and will be completed in 2012-13.
- At times, programs are approved with conditions that require follow-up. The Commission is currently in the process of following-up on all programs approved with conditions since 1999. In light of some delays experienced the Commission plans to develop a revised process to maximize efficiency and improve timeliness, which ought to be implemented sometime in 2012-2013.
- The Commission approves all programs on the condition that the submitting institution conducts an external review of the program, normally after one or two cohorts have graduated. In order to determine the extent to which programs approved by the commission have indeed been received (and whether follow-ups are taking place), at year-end, the Commission was planning to collect specific details on program reviews from each institution within its scope.

### ***Monitoring of Institutional Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures***

- The monitoring function is a process through which the Commission monitors/verifies/reports that the universities within its scope assess their existing programs and activities with a focus on students and on learning.
- The Commission has assessed the QA policies and procedures at all institutions within its scope as part of the first cycle of the monitoring process, and follow-up action plans in response to such reviews have been submitted by each institution; however, further work is required to conclude this process with seven of the 16 institutions.
- The first cycle focussed on ensuring that all institutions had an implemented policy to support on-going quality assessment and improvement. This goal has largely been achieved but there are remaining gaps if the Commission is to discharge its legislated mandate properly.
- The Commission is moving forward with the development of a second cycle to close the gaps identified to date, primarily: students and learning being at the periphery of many institutional QA policies and few institutions covering more than academic units in their review processes.
- At year-end, the Commission was developing a discussion paper centered on "quality." The paper will be circulated to key stakeholders including institutions and governments,

and the feedback collected from this process will be used to further develop the assessment framework for a second cycle and help ensure that student learning is at the heart of quality assurance activities.

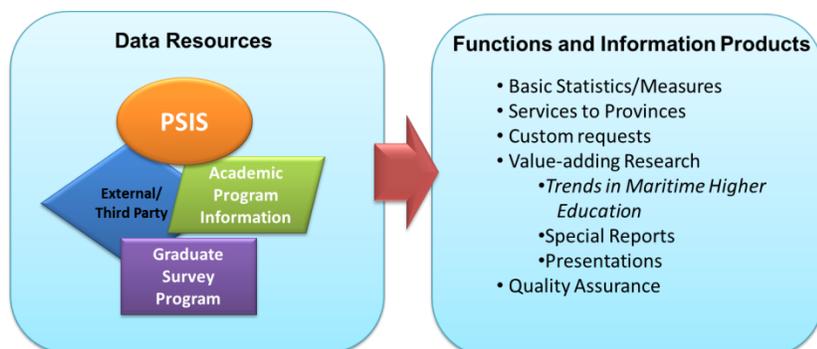
- As noted above, the Commission is collecting details regarding the extent to which institutions are reviewing programs approved by the MPHEC, and whether follow-ups to such reviews are taking place. The Commission will use the information collected to develop a second cycle that meets the needs of Maritime universities.
- The Commission engaged in three assessments under the New Brunswick Degree Granting Act in 2011-2012.
- **Master of Education - Yorkville University** (assessment prior to implementation): Yorkville University had submitted a proposal for a new Master of Education with four specializations (Adult Education, Educational Leadership, Inclusive Education and Guidance and Counselling). In response to findings resulting from the MPHEC review, Yorkville elected to withdraw the latter three specializations. The Commission's advice pertaining to this program therefore focussed solely on a Master of Education in Adult Education. The Commission advised the Minister in July 2011 that the proposed program appears to correspond with the standards normally associated with the degree, subject to a number of conditions (in relation to admission requirements, faculty/staff resources and course and program development) and on the recommendation that a follow-up review be carried out at the end of the second year. The Minister announced in October 2011 that degree designation had been granted, subject to conditions as recommended by the MPHEC.
- **Bachelor of Business Administration - Yorkville University** (assessment prior to implementation): Assessment of this new program had not concluded by year-end.
- **Master of Arts in Counselling Psychology - Yorkville University** (assessment of existing program): the Commission launched its first assessment of an existing program under the NBDGA; the assessment remained in progress at year-end.
- No assessments were undertaken under the Nova Scotia Degree Granting Act.

**Assessments Conducted Under the Provincial Degree Granting Acts**  
(Services to Provinces: NB, NS)

## DATA AND INFORMATION

**Data Resources and Products**

- The Commission is involved in data collection and the development of research products and is recognized in the Maritimes, and nationally, as a credible source of data and information on post-secondary education. The focus is to promote and make available value-added sources of information to various governments, post-secondary institutions, students and the public-at-large, to increase awareness of, and dialogue on, Maritime post-secondary education issues and opportunities.
- The Commission's primary data resources include:
  - More than 30 years of enrolment data, the last 11 years in detailed Postsecondary Student Information System (PSIS) format.
  - A program information database which includes information on academic programs submitted by the universities through PSIS and the Commission's program review process.
  - Graduate Follow-up survey data is also available for five graduating classes (1995, 1996 [both surveyed one year after graduation], 1999, 2003 [surveyed two and five years after graduation]; and 2007 [surveyed two years after graduation]).
  - Tuition, ancillary, and residence fee information.



**Collection of Student Data (Post-Secondary Student Information System [PSIS])**

- Through PSIS, the MPHEC collects data on institutions' program and course offerings, student demographics, program and course registration, and credit transfer on an annual basis, which are used to fulfill many information needs. These data support Commission functions such as Quality Assurance, Province-Specific Services (funding formulas) and Data and Information. Maritime universities reported 201 elements through PSIS for 88,974 students enrolled and/or graduated during the 2010-2011 academic year. (<http://www.mph.ec.ca/research/postsecondarystudentinfosys.aspx>).
- In May 2011, the MPHEC released a new version of its proprietary software, the MPHEC Maritime pre-screener (MPS), which is used by Maritime universities to verify PSIS data files before submission to the MPHEC. The MPS version 8.0 is now an all-in-one tool that incorporates both the MPHEC's requirements as well as Statistics Canada's pre-screener verifications, streamlining the submission process for data providers.
- During 2011-2012, further improvements were made to the MPS including new features such as Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) code verification, and it is now also available to colleges under the mandate of the MPHEC. This updated software (version 9.0) is scheduled to be released to institutions in May 2012.

**Enhancing Analytical Capacity**

- In 2011-2012, the Commission enhanced its analytical capacity beyond tracking students within single institutions, to being able to track them at the system level - across Maritime universities. The longitudinal data file, which is based on the MPHEC PSIS, currently contains data on approximately 325,000 individuals, providing information on universities and programs attended, courses taken, and credentials granted since 1999-2000. Going forward, tracking information will be updated with each annual PSIS data collection cycle.
- The Measures of Student Progress and Outcomes project was launched by the Commission in 2008 to help fulfill its mandate to assist institutions and governments in enhancing the post-secondary learning environment. The measures provide Commission stakeholders with a better understanding of student educational pathways, and graduate outcomes.
- Building on its recently completed longitudinal linkage database, the Commission is developing measures to characterize students' mobility and progression through the Maritime university system.

**Basic Statistical Tables**

- Each fall, the MPHEC releases several standard enrolment and full-time equivalents statistical tables available at: <http://www.mph.ec.ca/research/enrolment.aspx>, as well as standard credentials granted tables, available at: <http://www.mph.ec.ca/research/credentialsgranted.aspx>.
- Tuition fees data for undergraduates, graduates and international students are available at: <http://www.mph.ec.ca/research/tuitionsurvey.aspx>.

**Data in Support of Funding Formulas (Service to Provinces: NB, NS)**

- As a service to the Provinces, the MPHEC provides, on an annual basis, calculated key measures from PSIS to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in support of their funding formulas (<http://www.mph.ec.ca/funding/fundingadministration.aspx>).
- The MPHEC delivers full course equivalents, weighted full course equivalents, full-time equivalents, and enrolments, which support the following components of the Nova Scotia Funding Formula: the Weighted Enrolment Grant, the Size Grant, the French Language Grant, the Part-Time Student Grant and the international student funding limits.
- The Commission calculates full-year weighted full-time equivalents for use within the funding formula calculating the distribution of Unrestricted Operating Assistance to the New Brunswick Universities. These are also used in the annual calculation of the Regional Transfer Arrangement (further explained below under "Interprovincial Agreements and Intra-Maritime Program Funding Arrangements").

**Development of KPIs (Service to provinces)**

- Assistance is being provided to New Brunswick in the development of its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

## Custom Requests

- Over the course of the year, the Commission has provided custom data files and measures to government, institutions and other stakeholders
- The MPHEC provided detailed inter-provincial transfer student data on behalf of eight Maritime universities to the Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions and Transfers for a pan-Canadian survey of student mobility.

## Value-Adding Research

### *Is Demand for University Education Shrinking Among Maritimers? (Trends in Maritime Higher Education Vol. 9 No.1 Feb. 2012 )*

*"Since 2004, we have seen demand for university education among Maritimers soften. The question is, are we looking at part of a recurring cycle, or is there a new trend underway?"*

*-Mireille Duguay, CEO*

- In February 2012, the Commission released an important study which explained that the declining demand for university education among Maritimers in recent years, if uncorrected, could exacerbate the effect of projected demographic decline among the 18-24 age group over the next 13 years. The paper projects nearly 7,000 fewer Maritimers enrolling in the region's universities in 2025 if demand remains at the same level as today. Declining demand among Maritimers has not meant declining enrolments in Maritime universities. Enrolments have remained fairly stable in recent years through the recruitment of students from outside the region. Highlights from the paper include:
  - i. The demand for university education in the region by Maritimers has been variable over the long term; it was characterized by strong growth from 1985 to the early 90s, a plateauing in the mid-to-late 90s and then a period of modest increases; in recent years it has been showing signs of softening.
    - Among Nova Scotians, the demand peaked in 2002 at 25.0% and has since dropped 4 percentage points to 21.0%, equivalent to the level of demand in 1992. Although demand is still highest among Nova Scotians compared to other Maritimers, the gap has narrowed considerably.
    - Among New Brunswickers, the demand peaked in 2005 and since declined 1.7 percentage points, and now rests at 18.6%.
    - The profile for Prince Edward Island has been similar in recent years. Since 2005, the demand among Islanders decreased 1.0 percentage point to 18.0%.
  - ii. Today, the Maritime participation rate of women is 28%, a full 10 percentage points higher than that of men (18%).
  - iii. Between 2012 and 2025, the 18-24 age group is projected to shrink by:
    - 18,500 or 21.1% in Nova Scotia; 13,700 or 20.3% in New Brunswick; and 2,700 or 19.6% in Prince Edward Island.
    - This would mean 34,900 fewer people in the typical university-age range in the Maritimes in 2025.
  - iv. Questions raised for the reader by the paper's findings were: Why has the demand for university education stopped growing among Maritimers? What should be the optimal university participation rate of the region's youth? What would be the impact on the provincial economies with substantially fewer university-educated Maritimers available to meet the needs of the region's labour force? How can universities and governments address the projected shortfall of Maritimers enrolling in the region's universities?

### *The MPHEC Annual Digest: Enrolment and Credentials Granted (Trends in Maritime Higher Education Vol. 9 no. 2 Mar. 2012)*

*"Maritime residents represent a shrinking share of university students."*

*-Mireille Duguay, CEO*

- The Annual Digest was published for the first time in March 2012 and will continue on a yearly basis, to coincide with the publication of basic statistical tables. The digest provides stakeholders an at-a-glance reference to key trends and important shifts in enrolments and credentials granted. Highlights in enrolment trends over the last ten years (2000-01 to 2010-11) include:
  - The total number of Maritime residents enrolled in the region's universities has decreased 2.9%.
  - Despite a decrease in the number of Maritimers, total enrolment increased for a second straight year to 70,817 students, up 1.7% over the previous year and 11% over 10 years.
  - Almost 10,000 students were enrolled at the graduate level. The number of graduate students enrolled in Maritime universities has increased 46% in the last 10 years.
  - International students represent one of the fastest growing groups of students in Maritime universities, increasing nearly 14% over the previous year, and 150% over ten years. A paper is under development exploring this trend further; *International Student Enrolment in Maritime Universities* is scheduled to be released under the Trends in Maritime Higher Education series on May 30, 2012.

**Review of the  
Graduate Survey  
Program**

- This was an important year for the Commission’s graduate survey program. In February 2011, a request to fund the program was denied by the Regional Treasury Board (whose members are the Atlantic Deputy Ministers of InterGovernmental Affairs and Finance). The Commission, convinced of the value of the program to its stakeholders, agreed a review was necessary to ensure that the program would continue to provide valuable information about the effectiveness of university education in the region.
- The comprehensive review was formally launched in April 2011 with the publication of *Shaping the Future of the Maritime University Graduate Survey Program*. The discussion paper highlighted key trends drawing on 15 years of survey data, including:
  - Combining all loan sources and including further education, 70% of Class of 2007 first degree holders borrowed an average of \$37,013, up 13 percentage points compared to the Class of 1999; 22% now borrow \$45,000 or more.
  - Employment rates (based on number in the labour force) by graduating class:
 

1995	1996	1999	2003	2007
85%	86%	91%	95%	86%
  - Between the 1999 and 2003 cohorts, average earnings (in constant dollars) among first degree holders increased 3%; between the 2003 and 2007 cohorts, earnings increased 4%.
  - Liberal arts and sciences graduates (62%-71%) are twice as likely to pursue a second degree as are Applied Arts & Sciences/Professional graduates (30%-37%), which means their transition to the labour force tends to be longer.
  - The high level of satisfaction with the quality of teaching at Maritime universities has remained steady over fifteen years. However, graduates’ perceptions on whether that education is worth the money have declined 12 percentage points from 81% (Class of 1995) to 69% (Class of 2007).
- The paper included questions meant to spark dialogue and was used as a springboard for five roundtable consultation sessions conducted with a variety of groups including government representatives from each Maritime province, institutional researchers, student representatives and Commission members. The participants were unanimous in their expression of strong support for the Commission’s graduate survey program, including its current research objectives.
- The review resulted in the cancellation of the existing program and the design of a new one. The proposed survey program costs \$145,000 per year, and represents the minimum acceptable program design and cost that meets the Commission’s (and its stakeholders’) key criteria.
- The survey will encompass the themes of financing education, employment outcomes, graduate mobility, and further education. It will focus solely on bachelor’s graduates and will follow a 6-year cycle which will include two graduating cohorts, both interviewed two years after graduation, with one of those two cohorts also interviewed six years after graduation.
- In early 2012, the three provinces had confirmed their support for this revised program.

**Tuition, Ancillary and  
Residence Fees Data  
Review**

- The Commission conducted a review of the statistics it publishes annually on tuition, ancillary and residence fees with a view to confirming their value and ensuring that they are presented in a way most useful to its stakeholders. It also used for the first time Statistics Canada’s Tuition and Living Accommodation Survey (TLAC) as the data source for the preparation of its 2011-2012 fee tables in order to streamline the data collection process. After a validation process was completed with the institutions, graduate and undergraduate tuition fee tables were published in October 2011.
- The Commission determined that the ancillary fees reported in TLAC were too variable across institutions to be able to draw meaningful conclusions so the publication of this information was deferred until a more detailed analysis could be conducted. The analysis was completed over the winter and a new table layout was prepared, which will be validated by the institutions and published in June 2012.

## COLLABORATION AND OTHER SERVICES

### *Interprovincial Agreements and Intra-Maritime Program Funding Arrangements*

- The Commission continued to administer agreements with other Canadian provinces to place Maritime students in programs of study not available in this region. In 2011-2012, **399 Atlantic students** benefited from these agreements.
- The Commission also maintained the Regional Transfer Arrangement (RTA) whereby each of the three Maritime provinces provides funding for any of its residents enrolled in a university program in either of the other two Maritime provinces that is not offered in the student's home province. As a result, in 2009-2010, the latest year for which statistics are available at the time the budget is prepared, a total of **1,199 students** benefited from the RTA.
- In addition, **236 Atlantic** students in Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Sciences were funded through the Atlantic Veterinary College Interprovincial Funding Agreement in 2009-2010, the latest year for which statistics are available at the time the budget is prepared. The agreement is administered by the Province of Prince Edward Island.

### *Financial Services (Services to Provinces)*

- **New Brunswick:** The Commission is responsible for preparing the university education budget (which also includes the Maritime College of Forest Technology). This includes calculating operating (unrestricted, tuition grant and restricted) assistance and the various transfers through interprovincial agreements in which the Province participates.
- The MPHEC also administers the university education budget throughout the year, including the Province's committed funds. This includes providing audited financial statements for the Province's university education funding.
- The Commission provides support to the NB/MPHEC Finance Working Group and flows federal funding to institutions for the Canada/New Brunswick Official Languages in Education Agreement and sits on the bi-partite committee that reviews projects submitted under the Province's University Deferred Maintenance Program.
- **Prince Edward Island:** The Commission is responsible for preparing the post-secondary education (PSE) budget. This includes providing the budgeted amounts for the various transfers through interprovincial agreements in which the Province participates.
- The Commission flows funding for the Department of Health relating to Prince Edward Island's contribution to the residency stipends at the Dalhousie Medical School.
- The Commission also administers the PSE budget throughout the year, including the Province's committed funds. This includes providing audited financial statements for the Province's university education funding.

### *Forum on Data Collection and Research*

- The Commission's annual one-day Forum on Data Collection and Research provides a venue for data providers and provincial representatives to become informed of data collection requirements and processes; to discuss issues related to PSIS reporting; and to learn about the Commission's research. The Forum had been scheduled for March 27, 2012 at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, in Truro Nova Scotia, but was postponed to April 17<sup>th</sup> due to inclement weather.
- The agenda covers the PSIS data submission, MPHEC research projects, PSIS data linkage possibilities, and a presentation by the CEO on the development of the Commission's Research Agenda.

### *NB/PEI Educational Computer Network Agreement (NB/PEI ECN)*

- The NB/PEI Educational Computer Network (ECN), in which the Commission is a signatory, has provided connectivity among its members and to the wider world for the past 40 years. Additional benefits include joint purchasing and licensing, shared support services, the delivery of network-based services and information exchange.
- The ECN unveiled, in conjunction with its partners, a new high-speed network, called the Optical Regional Advanced Network (ORAN), on November 18, 2011 at the National Research Council. The ORAN is a joint initiative of the Province of New Brunswick, the New Brunswick universities, the Maritime College of Forest Technology, the MPHEC, the National Research Council of Canada, and the newest partners, New Brunswick Community College and Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick. The new network is designed to provide a high-speed network that maximizes capacity while reducing capital and operating costs for all partners, to facilitate cutting-edge research and collaboration regionally and globally. The event was well attended.

- The ECN also celebrated its 40th anniversary at St. Thomas University in November 2011. Attendees included current and past members of both the ECN Network Committee and ECN Board. During the celebration, the ECN Board confirmed its commitment to renew the ECN Agreement for another five-year term, confirming the continuing existence of this excellent inter-institutional collaboration.
- The ECN partnered once again with Interuniversity Services Inc. (ISI) in November 2011 to host a one-day workshop on Desktop and Application Virtualization for ECN members which was well-attended.
- As noted in last year's report, all of the NB and PEI institutions within the ECN shared in the joint purchase of commercial internet services for the first time last year. In the current fiscal year, the NBCC and CCNB initiated discussions with the ECN on the possibility of joining this partnership. These discussions will continue into the new fiscal year.

***National and  
International  
Forums***

- The Commission is a member of various committees and working groups and may be delegated by the Maritime Ministers to represent all three Maritime provinces.
- The Commission participates in the following forums:
  - CMEC Quality Assurance Subcommittee
  - Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions & Transfer
  - National Advisory Committee on Post-Secondary Education Statistics
  - Strategic Management Committee (SMC)
  - SMC Subcommittee on the CESC Data Strategy
  - Atlantic Financial Reporting Committee
  - International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education