

Council on Higher Education

Annual Report

September 1, 2022 - August 31, 2023

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Chairperson's Message

The Council on Higher Education is defined as a category three entity pursuant to the **Transparency and Accountability Act**. As Chairperson, I am pleased to submit the 2022-23 Annual Report of the Council on Higher Education. This report covers the period of September 1, 2022 to August 31, 2023.

The Council on Higher Education works within the authority granted under the **Council on Higher Education Act**.

My signature below is on behalf of the Council on Higher Education and is indicative of its accountability for the actual results reported herein.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'K. Howell', written in dark ink.

Honourable Krista Lynn Howell

Chairperson of the Council on Higher Education

Overview

The Council on Higher Education (the “Council”) is a partnership between Memorial University (MUN), College of the North Atlantic (CNA), and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Council is tasked with the promotion of a shared approach between MUN and CNA with respect to program planning, promoting collaboration on issues related to economic development in the province, and enhancing cooperation in the delivery of public post-secondary academic programs.

Mandate

As outlined in section 8(1) of the **Council on Higher Education Act**, the Council is responsible for making recommendations to MUN, CNA, and the Minister of Education with respect to the following:

- Strategic directions for post-secondary education in the province;
- Reduction of unnecessary duplication of effort and expense;
- Sharing of resources, information and student support services;
- Cost-effective provincial, national and international recruitment policies, standards and activities;
- Student credit transfer arrangements; and
- Other related matters.

Guiding Principles

Recommendations provided by the Council are guided by the following principles:

- Promotion of a shared approach between the university and the college with respect to program planning and delivery;
- Fostering and promoting the collaboration of the university and the college on issues related to economic development in the province; and
- Enhancing cooperation and specialization in the delivery of post-secondary academic programs in areas agreed upon by the Council.

Membership

The Council encourages collaboration at the highest levels of leadership and ensures the continued engagement of students in setting priorities and decision-making. As specified in section 3(1) of the **Council on Higher Education Act**, Council membership includes:

- Minister of Education (Chair);
- Deputy Minister of Education;
- Chair, MUN Board of Regents;
- Chair, CNA Board of Governors;
- President of MUN;
- President of CNA;
- MUN Student Representative; and
- CNA Student Representative.

As appropriate, the Minister of Education may appoint three additional members to the Council.

Council membership as of August 31, 2023 is listed below.

Name	Position	Membership Details
Hon. Krista Lynn Howell	Minister, Education	By virtue of position
Tracy King	Deputy Minister, Education	By virtue of position
Glenn Barnes	Chair, Memorial University Board of Regents	By virtue of position
Mark Bradbury	Chair, College of the North Atlantic Board of Governors	By virtue of position
Dr. Neil Bose	President and Vice Chancellor, Memorial University	By virtue of position
Elizabeth Kidd	President and CEO, College of the North Atlantic	By virtue of position
Vacant	MUN Student Member	Lieutenant-Governor in Council
Vacant	CNA Student Member	Lieutenant-Governor in Council

Members serve without remuneration. The Council is not subject to the **Independent Appointments Commission Act**.

Staff

There are no staff positions directly employed by the Council; however, the Director of Literacy and Institutional Services of the Department of Education provides support to the Council and acts as officer under the **Council on Higher Education Act**. The officer does not have voting privileges.

Budget

The Council does not have a defined budget and is not required to submit separate financial statements; all expenses are charged to the Department of Education's Literacy and Institutional Services Division. The Council did not incur expenditures during the reporting period.

Highlights and Partnerships

The Council is a tripartite alliance between MUN, CNA and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, with focus on increasing collaboration between the entities. The Council continues to identify ways for the institutions to collaborate, assist in supporting and facilitating the transfer of students between the two institutions, and pool resources.

During the 2022-23 year, the Council did not meet. With legislation proclaimed in 2007, the role and function of the Council on Higher Education is dated and requires a review in order to remain relevant and responsive to today's educational and societal standards. This was reflected under recommendation five of the Public Post-Secondary Education Review, which recommended the abolishment of the Council and to repeal the Council on Higher Education Act, 2007. Recommendation six further recommended the establishment of an alternative mechanism to facilitate and ensure focused attention on collaboration in the post-secondary education system.

While the committee did not meet during the 2022-23 year, related work outlined within this report was conducted by the department to support the issues and objectives of the Council for the year. Further, the Council's 2023-26 Activity Plan consists of one main objective focused on the revitalization of the role of the Council with specified annual indicators to assist the Council in achieving its modernization goal.

Committees and Subcommittees

In addition to the Council itself, there have been a number of committees and subcommittees that supported the work of the Council. These committees and subcommittees were not active in the 2022-23 period.

Comprised of senior officials from MUN, CNA, and the Department of Education, the Advisory Committee has provided advice in the past and support to the Council, while ensuring the work of the Council remained reflective of its mandate, Council members' priorities, and Government's strategic priorities.

Specialized Council subcommittees have been established as needed to address current and relevant areas of concern in relation to post-secondary education in the province. The Council has previously had three subcommittees: Articulation and Transfer, Applied Research Priorities, and Indigenous Education. Subcommittee membership included officials from MUN, CNA, and the Department of Education. Each subcommittee had its own area of focus. Articulation and Transfer focused on enhancing student mobility between the public post-secondary institutions. Applied Research Priorities focused on increasing collaboration between MUN and CNA on applied research initiatives. Indigenous Education focused on exploring opportunities to enhance Indigenous education and share information between institutions.

Report on Performance

The Council's work is guided by three priorities identified in its 2020-23 Activity Plan:

- Supporting and facilitating the transfer of students between MUN and CNA;
- Identifying further opportunities to foster collaboration to partner and pool resources; and
- Discussing and assessing opportunities for collaboration on possible impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2022-23 is the final reporting year under the 2020-23 Activity Plan. On behalf of the Council, the Department continues to progress important work in priority areas through collaboration between MUN and CNA.

Performance measurement information was identified in the 2020-23 Activity Plan to assist both the Council and public in monitoring and evaluating progress in meeting these objectives.

Issue 1: Supporting and facilitating the transfer of students between Memorial University and College of the North Atlantic.

To ensure seamless academic mobility for students, non-duplication of effort, and cost-efficiency, it is vital that all credentials achieved be recognized at the public post-secondary institutions in the province. The Articulation and Transfer Subcommittee was not able to meet during this reporting period, however communication and collaboration between MUN and CNA continued in other forms to ensure work continued.

Objective: By August 31, 2023, the Council will have assisted the two-way transfer of students between institutions.

2022-23 Work Accomplished

The following chart highlights the successful work accomplished to support and facilitate the transfer of students during the 2022-23 reporting cycle.

Indicator	Results (2022-23)
1. Continued collaborative initiatives to ensure academic mobility.	In the 2022-23 academic year, the Department of Education worked with MUN and CNA to assess, update, and release the annual Newfoundland and Labrador Credit and Program/Block Transfer Guide (2022-2023 guide released December 2022). The Transfer Guide lists established transfer of credit and program precedents available to students in Newfoundland and Labrador and is updated on an annual basis each December; the document is available online:

	https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/post-secondary-education/transfer-guide/ .
2. Explored further opportunities to facilitate transfer of students between Memorial University and College of the North Atlantic	Opportunities to facilitate student transfer between MUN and CNA through various forums including ongoing engagement with institutions in response to emerging priorities were provided in 2022-23 academic year. The Department explored opportunities to improve collaboration on student transfer, inclusive of private training institutions.

Issue 2: Engagement to identify further opportunities to foster collaboration to partner and pool resources.

Coordination and collaboration between MUN and CNA, specifically in the area of applied research, has seen great successes. Both institutions are continuing to use this approach to identify and assess further opportunities to foster collaboration, partner and pool resources in the areas of applied research, micro-credentialing, and international education.

Objective: By August 31, 2023, the Council will have identified and assessed current and additional opportunities to foster collaboration, partner and pool resources.

2022-23 Work Accomplished

The following chart highlights the successful work accomplished to identify and assess opportunities for collaboration, partnerships, and the pooling of resources during the 2022-23 reporting cycle.

Indicator	Results (2022-23)
1. Continued to pursue opportunities to increase research initiatives undertaken by public post-secondary institutions.	Opportunities to increase research initiatives undertaken by public post-secondary institutions through the Council were delayed in 2022-23 due to the Council's desire to revitalize the Council's role in order to remain relevant and responsive to today's educational and societal standards. Collaboration between the Department and institutions remained ongoing through various forums.
2. Explored opportunities for	Opportunities for collaboration, partnering, and pooling of resources to support initiatives, including micro-credentialing

collaboration, partnering and pooling of resources to support initiatives, including, micro-credentialing and international education.	and international education continues through ongoing engagement between the Department and post-secondary institutions in 2022-23 academic year.
3. Reviewed and prioritized the results of the Public Post-Secondary Education Review recommendations.	<p>The final report of the Public Post-Secondary Education Review, “All Hands on Deck: Responding to the Challenges of the 21st Century by Leveraging Public Post-Secondary Education,” was released on April 29, 2021. The report is available here.</p> <p>The Department of Education continued to review, analyze, prioritize, and respond to work priorities related to the Report and its recommendations in 2022-23 academic year.</p>

Issue 3: Discuss and assess opportunities for collaboration on possible impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created and continues to create many challenges to the continuation and operation of post-secondary education provincially, nationally, and internationally. However, with challenges come opportunities for our public post-secondary institutions, providing them with new areas of collaboration, and the ability to be responsive to future initiatives that will assist with the post-COVID-19 economic recovery. The Council was not able to meet this objective and its indicators during the reporting period, however communication and collaboration between Council members continued in other forms.

Objective: By August 31, 2023, the Council will have identified opportunities for collaboration between the public post-secondary institutions and the Provincial Government resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

2022-23 Work Accomplishments

The following chart highlights the successful work accomplished to identify opportunities for collaboration to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 during the 2022-23 reporting cycle.

Indicator	Results (2022-23)
1. Assessed opportunities to support industry, economic recovery and growth.	Assessment of opportunities to support industry, economic recovery and growth through engagement between the department and post-secondary institutions on emerging priority sectors remained ongoing throughout the 2022-23 academic year.
2. Created opportunities for student service innovation and flexibility.	Opportunities for student service innovation and flexibility continued at an institutional level with support from Government as necessary in the 2022-23 academic year.

Opportunities and Challenges

Towards the latter part of 2019-20, Newfoundland and Labrador experienced firsthand the effects of the COVID-19 global pandemic. The pandemic and related public health measures still continue, albeit at a much lesser degree, throughout 2022-23. Post-secondary institutions quickly pivoted to online and remote learning, moved student supports to virtual platforms, found new ways to safely allow for practical training, and established methods to allow in-person learning at times when it was safe to do so. These pressures impacted the work of the Council, the Advisory Committee, and subcommittees. However, communication and collaboration between MUN, CNA, and the Department of Education continued in other forums, which may be explored more fully in the coming years.

The final report from the Public Post-Secondary Education Review was released on April 29, 2021. The Department of Education, MUN and CNA continue to review and analyze the recommendations from the final report, which may provide additional opportunities for collaboration in many forums in the coming years.

Conclusion

The Council on Higher Education and its committees and subcommittees were greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Education, MUN, and CNA, continue to recognize the importance of continued collaboration on identified Council priorities, however it is also noted that emerging opportunities have resulted in prospective modernizations for the Council with new priorities and partners for engagement.