

Summary of AUNBT Comments on the 2017 KPMG Report on the Administrative Services Review

In April of 2017, consulting company [KPMG submitted their final report](#) on administrative services at UNB. On July 5, 2017, members of the university community were invited to comment. Subsequently, we invited feedback from our members. This summary reflects the serious concerns we have about the administrative services review (ASR) process and the [KPMG report](#).

The review process and the [KPMG report](#) raise serious issues of accountability and leadership:

- The report proposes few solutions that have not already been considered through various top-down exercises, actions, or reviews, including the ad hoc one-time provost appointment in 2006, the 2014 [Senior Administrative Roles and Responsibilities Review](#) (SARR), and the 2013-2015 attempt to revise the UNB Act.
- The ASR process and [KPMG report](#) have been used as vehicles to make recommendations about the responsibilities and functioning of the President and Vice-Presidents, and creation of a provost, that are significantly different from those in the [SARR report](#) without providing reasons for so differing. For example, the [SARR Report](#), authored by three experienced and successful university administrators, did not recommend or even mention the position of a provost.
- The KPMG report misrepresents current administrative organization at UNB (omitting key bodies such as PET and Deans Council), and continues the process of marginalizing Senates by excluding them from organizational charts at the same time that it outlines a central role for the Board of Governors. This extends the inappropriate representations on the UNB website, where [Senates are shown as peripheral entities related to the institution's organizational structure only through the University Secretary](#).
- In its recommendations, the report continues and extends administrative efforts towards greater managerialism and corporate-style governance that would further weaken collegial governance and participation. It is of particular concern that the organizational model from which Senates appear to be excluded "was subsequently reviewed with the President for final amendments and edits to ensure consistency with the strategic direction of the University." (p.49 of the [KPMG report](#))

The report is deeply flawed methodologically:

- It uses an inappropriately small set of comparison institutions that is not representative of UNB's special two campus model, while ignoring other and better structural fits (such as the Vancouver and Okanagan campuses at UBC).
- It purports to base its analysis on interviews but limited these to senior administrators, ignoring front-line departmental and faculty-based administrators, as well as faculty, staff, and students.
- The ASR process is poorly integrated into other campus-wide initiatives, including academic and strategic planning, and the forthcoming searches for a new President and several Vice-Presidents. This suggests that the review is not being driven by the academic mission but rather by a desire to consolidate administrative authority and control at the expense of our existing collegial rights and organizational structure, including deans and department chairs.

The recommendations of the [KPMG report](#) would not solve institutional problems and if implemented would instead increase them:

- The lack of integration of bicameral, collegial governance (particularly Senates and Faculty Councils) in the institutional vision presented is inappropriate.
- The consolidation of services under a shared service model, including centralization of reporting of departmental and faculty-based administrative support will not improve academic or administrative functions; faculty in universities that have implemented such models report increased conflict within and among units, reduction in the quality of support services, and an increase in workload for faculty members and department chairs (such as at the [University of Saskatchewan](#), p.i-iv).
- The removal of the President from core activities of the academic mission of the University to focus on external issues would increase the lack of connection of that office with the campus communities, and would compound already serious problems of morale and trust.

- The recommendations would entrench the removal of the VP Advancement from articulation with the academic and finance VPs. Such a model has been in place for some time, and it has had a detrimental effect on the University's core academic mission. Ongoing operating funds have been redirected to the VP Advancement while academic units faced complement reductions, and it is possible that substantial "one-time" expenses on marketing in recent years could soon become ongoing.
- The recommendation for a provost position would expensively increase the layers of administrative control in one Canada's smallest comprehensive universities, and would significantly change the relationship between the senior administration located on the Fredericton campus and the VPSJ and the Saint John campus. The report does not provide a compelling justification for a provost.
- Both the particular set of institutional comparisons and the recommendation to restructure the senior administration would result in diminution of academic autonomy and administrative services at both UNBF and UNBSJ.

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