

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

AUNBT wants open discussion of the UNB Act

FREDERICTON and SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK (August 7, 2014) — Today the Association of University of New Brunswick Teachers sent a message to all its members outlining grave concerns with proposed changes to the UNB Act.

The UNB Act is the legislation which determines how the University is structured and run: it describes different bodies like the Board of Governors and the two Senates (one on the Fredericton and one on the Saint John campus) and outlines how they operate, including areas where the provincial government has oversight.

In 2013 the Board of Governors established a committee to revise the *UNB Act*. As with acts of incorporation generally, revisions are made from time to time. AUNBT is worried that the current process, however, is going well beyond administrative updates.

“If they shrink the Board, hobble the Senates and get rid of government oversight as we have heard they intend,” said AUNBT President Miriam Jones, “UNB will lose the checks and balances that universities need if they are to maintain their independence and their unique character. Universities exist in a balance of different interests — students, teachers, researchers, employees, the administration, civic and provincial politicians, corporate interests — and while decision-making can be complex, that complexity is necessary to ensure that all views are represented. We are worried about what we are hearing. We are worried that the roles of the academic staff, the students, and the government, which represents the wider interests of the people of New Brunswick, will be curtailed. We are worried that UNB will lose that essential balance and be given over to corporate interests.”

“Of course,” Dr. Jones added, “a lot of this is speculation as there has been very little real information forthcoming. There are in fact two faculty members on the committee but they are not allowed to report anything that goes on. The Board promised to consult widely but so far the process has been opaque. We are worried that the revisions will become a *fait accompli* before the academic staff or the students have a chance even to comment.”

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The Association of University of New Brunswick Teachers (AUNBT) represents over eight hundred full-time and contract academic staff and librarians at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton, Saint John, Moncton, and Bathurst.

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