

Good afternoon. On my behalf and on behalf of my colleagues at UNB, thank you Nicole for organizing this retreat. Discussing university governance is like discussing repointing the masonry on a grand building. It's not scintillating, but it is absolutely necessary. Not attending to it can result in irreparable damage to a fine structure. So thank you Nicole and the Board of Governors for engaging this issue.

When I began as the Canada Research Chair in Atlantic Canada in 2012, I researched the history of UNB. For our purposes today, two findings are important.

One, UNB does not have a tradition of being imitative of other universities, such as Cambridge and Oxford or Harvard, Yale, Columbia, and Princeton, the universities the Loyalists knew. The Loyalists were committed to a university in the province, but one that was responsive to local circumstances, rather than slavishly imitative. Indeed, to the extent that UNB resembles a university system, it is to the ethos of the Scottish Enlightenment and Scottish universities, committed to a balance of liberal arts education, practical on the ground innovation, and a laudable and stubborn insistence that a provincial university did not have to ape Cambridge and Oxford, or Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, much less play second fiddle. The UNB I joined in 2012 has a two centuries long and proud commitment to innovations appropriate to local circumstances, but capable of being adapted to other contexts, and a stubborn but well-earned pride in being able to innovate from an imperial, a national, and now a global periphery. It has a long list of achievements to show for it, from founding one of the oldest herbariums in North America, to innovations in geodesy and geomatics, to the nurturing of Canadian poetry, to biomedical engineering, to establishing the best regional history journal in all of Canada, and to simply educating successive generations who are recognized as outstanding members of civic communities wherever they land.

In my first semester on Senate, the issue of Academic Planning was revisited. The administration's intent for Academic Planning, as conveyed at that meeting, was to apply someone else's model to UNB. It faced enormous and justified resistance from the faculty because it was so contrary to the deep and successful culture of UNB and it threatened to damage the institution in ways that would be difficult to repair. Without a proposal appropriate to UNB, Academic Planning was going nowhere. On March 17th 2015 in the standing committee of Senate called "Academic Planning," I asked Tony what we were going to do to address the growing problems in the Faculty of Engineering between rising student numbers and shrinking faculty complement. He told me that we could do nothing until we had an academic plan. I seized that moment to begin the process in the spirit of innovation and collegiality that was so deep in the culture of the UNB and my colleagues across the Fredericton campus responded in kind.

You have heard about the Academic Planning process before, so today I just want to talk briefly about outcomes.

[Ending opening comment: spoke from the PP slides]

[Closing comment] The academic planning process that started in March 2015 was about the revitalization of UNB's spirit of innovation and collaboration combined with careful attention to local needs. Our recommendations to Senate were modest, but were intended to allow others who had not been directly involved to catch up with the LCC and get involved.