

Report of the
Joint AUNBT/UNB
Working Group on
Health and Wellness

Submitted to AUNBT and UNB
c/o Sue Blair and Van Lantz
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Background

The Joint AUNBT/UNB Working Group on Health and Wellness (the “Working Group” or “WG”) and this resulting report arose from the 2021 round of bargaining relating to the Collective Agreement between AUNBT and UNB (the “Collective Agreement”). The mandate and direction provided to the WG was as follows:

Many AUNBT members (especially those who relocated to New Brunswick as a part of their employment) encounter challenges adapting to the regional and community health and wellness context. UNB offers an array of health and wellness supports, but there is a gap in either knowledge or access to these services. This working group will explore the current health and wellness provisions within the UNB community, and examine mechanisms that facilitate the access to health and wellness supports by employees, either from the university or from public health in NB.

This report is being provided to the respective AUNBT and UNB (the “Parties”) Lead Negotiators with respect to the 2021 round of collective bargaining.

The Work of the Working Group

The WG met throughout the Winter 2022 term to carry out its mandate as detailed above, and specifically completed the following steps to inform its work:

- Reviewed the collective agreements for the Comparator Group of Canadian Universities (the “Comparator Group”) as detailed in MOU 14 of Collective Agreement to ascertain whether and how the health and wellness provisions contained in those agreements compared to those in the Collective Agreement;
- Reviewed the Okanagan Charter – An International Charter For Health Promoting Universities & Colleges;
- Reviewed information available on other Canadian Universities’ websites relating to health and wellness programs and offerings at those institutions;
- Surveyed the landscape of health and wellness services available to AUNBT members, either through UNB-specific services or through the broader New Brunswick Health Care system; and
- Created a survey relating to access to primary care and awareness of campus health and wellness services, distributed said survey to all full-time AUNBT members, and analyzed results of same.

Issues Identified

Resulting from the above, the WG has identified two principal issues.

The first relates to the coordination of health and wellness services and programs at UNB. In examining the Comparator Group agreements and information available online, it seems that the health and wellness services available at UNB are within the range of those available at other institutions; however, these services and initiatives do not seem to be centrally co-ordinated at

UNB. For example, some such services are managed and administered by People & Culture, others by URec, the Fredericton campus pharmacy, the Faculty of Nursing, or the Faculty of Kinesiology, to name a few. Furthermore, the ease and simplicity of access to information related to such programs and services for faculty members is lacking.

The second issue the WG has identified relates to access to primary health care services. This is informed by the results of the survey the WG sent to full-time AUNBT members, which approximately 1/3 of full-time AUNBT members completed. 30% of respondents indicated that they do not have access to a primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner), and more than 1/3 of those individuals have been without such services for more than four years. The WG acknowledges that inadequate access to a primary health care provider is an issue being experienced widely throughout New Brunswick, but the survey results confirm that the challenges presented by this societal issue are being experienced by a notable number of full-time AUNBT members, and that this presents an issue for UNB with respect to recruitment and retention.¹

Recommendations

The WG makes the following two recommendations to the Parties:

1. A joint Health and Wellness Committee be established, with representation from UNB and AUNBT, with the mandate of coordinating health and wellness initiatives and programs at UNB and making information related thereto clearly and easily accessible to members of the campus community by way of a ‘one-stop-shop’ website, similar to the site created by UNB relating to COVID-19. The WG specifically directs the parties to the following link from UBC as an example for guidance: <https://wellbeing.ubc.ca>
2. A specific task force with representation from UNB and AUNBT be created to ascertain the gap in primary health care coverage being experienced by faculty and explore options for addressing those gaps and providing relief to those experiencing the challenges related to inadequate primary health care coverage.

¹ One of the survey questions asked respondents “To what extent is availability of a family doctor or nurse practitioner services a determining factor in where you seek employment” on a scale of 1 (not at all important) to 10 (extremely important). The most common answer (24% of respondents) was 10.