



Canadian Association of University Teachers
Association canadienne des professeures et professeurs d'université

August 3, 2022

BY EMAIL: president@unb.ca

Dr. Paul Mazerolle
President and Vice-Chancellor
University of New Brunswick
Sir Howard Douglas Hall, Rm 111
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Dear President Mazerolle,

On behalf of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), I am writing about important academic governance matters that have arisen at the University of New Brunswick.

As you are aware, academic freedom and collegial governance are the foundational values of our colleges and universities. They allow our institutions to fulfill their mission of preserving, sharing, and advancing knowledge. The modern understanding of collegial governance in Canada was first established in the early 1960s when CAUT partnered with the forerunner of Universities Canada to establish the Duff-Berdahl Commission. The Commission's report strongly endorsed bicameral or shared governance in which institutions would operate under the general direction of a Board of Governors that is only minimally involved in academic planning. A Senate comprised of a majority of academic staff was identified as the central forum for debating and developing educational policy for the institution. The Commission recommended that academic staff should have primary responsibility for academic matters because their judgment is necessary to ensure the right academic decisions are taken. This recommendation has since become universally adopted, including in legislation and in legally binding collective agreements, and is recognized as a key pillar of sound governance in universities and colleges.

It is therefore troubling to learn that this foundational principle of academic governance has not been fully respected in relation to the proposed restructuring of senior academic leadership at UNB. It is my understanding that earlier this year the Senates of the Fredericton and Saint John campuses met to discuss your Administration's proposal to replace the two academic Vice-Presidents for each campus with one Provost who would oversee the academic affairs of both campuses. I am aware that while the proposal was approved by the Fredericton Senate, the Saint John Senate voted to reject. Subsequently, you reportedly indicated that approval from both Senates was not necessary to proceed with the proposal, and that Senate was in any case merely "advisory".

CAUT has no particular opinion on the merits of the proposal that both Senates considered. Rather, our concerns are ones based on process and principle. Consistent with established practices of university governance, both Senates must remain the primary forum where academic decisions are

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approved and made. Senates are not advisory bodies – they exercise authority over all academic and educational matters. This means both Senates must approve the change in question.

I urge you to work with the AUNBT and re-commit to the basic principle of collegial governance by fully respecting the authority of the UNB Senates. Given that this matter implicates important principles of collegial governance and academic freedom, CAUT, in cooperation with the AUNBT, will monitor the situation closely and, subject to any additional information you may provide, will consider appropriate actions to take.

Sincerely,



David Robinson
Executive Director

Cc: Peter McInnis, CAUT President
Robin Whitaker, CAUT Vice-President
Alison Hearn, Chair, CAUT Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee
Melissa White, President, AUNBT