

March 18, 2009

Colleagues:

Yesterday's provincial budget confirmed the rumoured 2-year wage freeze for civil servants and imposed a de facto 2-year wage freeze on other entities in the broad public sector, including the province's four major universities. It referred to universities in the following terms:

**Universities and municipalities receive significant financial support from New Brunswick taxpayers. The government anticipates these entities will take the appropriate steps to manage their wage bills in a manner similar to the province. Grants to universities and municipalities will be adjusted in future years to reflect this expectation.**

In looking over the entire budget package, you will not fail to have noticed that the province is investing significant money in infrastructure renewal and capital construction at the universities while limiting greatly their capacity to renew the human resources that are the core of our collective enterprise. You will also have noted that, though the province is freezing public service wages, it is pouring hundreds of millions into public servants' pension plan. They have announced no such off-setting pension relief for university employees.

At 8 this morning AUNBT had an initial meeting with UNB's provost and its vice-president (finance) to receive their initial reaction to yesterday's funding and freeze announcements. When we have been able to obtain clarifications and to reflect further on the situation, we will offer more extended comments.

Meanwhile, the New Brunswick public should know that, despite nearly two decades of underfunding, UNB remains a vibrant intellectual community where committed academics engage with ambitious students to foster the critical thinking that makes for useful citizens.

David Bell  
president Colleagues: