

January 9, 2014

Dear President Campbell:

We are writing to express grave concern with the direction UNB has taken in the past few years. As present and former department chairs during this period, we are in a unique position to provide a perspective based on our daily contact with students and faculty.

During recent decades our university strengthened its reputation for research and teaching nationally and internationally. We believe decisions by your administration are placing our institutional standing at risk, to the disadvantage of both students and academic staff.

Beginning in 2009 we have been repeatedly told that UNB faces an ongoing "structural deficit". This was translated for us as the expression: Revenue – Expenses < 0. The accompanying narrative invoked shrinking demographics, the global financial crisis, and reductions in government operating grants to justify budget cuts affecting the university's core mission.

While UNB was substantially enlarging its administrative complement on both campuses, severe budget cuts were meted out to faculties to the tune of several hundred thousands of dollars per year per faculty. Chairs' discussions with Deans during budget time were, one might say, forced exercises in prioritization: the "deficit" was distributed across academic departments and faculties.

In this sense UNB seems to have adopted the fashionable ideology of accumulating wealth and placing it at the disposal of a narrow circle of *decideurs*, while generously sharing manufactured debt.

Despite rising concern, we worked together with faculty members, in circumstances stressful for all, to absorb the cuts. We strived to assist our departmental colleagues in continuing their research programs despite diminishing academic resources, and to ensure that students were affected as little as possible. Whenever it became apparent that basic course offerings were at risk without additional faculty, we invested time and energy to present detailed applications for review by the appropriate VP, which felt akin to applying for an external grant, often with a disappointing outcome.

We regularly engage our faculty members in planning both for academic reasons and administrative requirements, and have a firm grasp of the departments' practical needs in the short to medium term. By contrast, your senior administration has created the impression that the entire university is in a permanent state of emergency, and that the only way forward is to implement faculty-downsizing

directives. Decisions by the Vice Presidents, final and often unexplained, have had the effect of trumping all departmental planning efforts and of redirecting funds toward purposes known only to a select few.

We understand that we cannot always get everything our departments require. Yet we do not see how an administration that asserts the average class size in the first and second years is 31—the baffling number posted in Sir Howard Douglas Hall—could possibly have a connection to the reality in our classrooms.

This suggests that the senior administration has become seriously disconnected from the day-to-day operations and mission of the university, and has created a system that operates as an autonomous bureaucracy instead of facilitating and supporting learning and scholarship.

The result of reductions so far is a loss of 48 faculty positions in an eight year period (with more announced to the Deans for the coming year), significant increases in contract and stipend teaching, decreases in research capacity (due to instructors replacing research faculty), larger first and second year classes, and increased workload for faculty, many of whom routinely teach overload graduate courses in addition to their full undergraduate teaching duties.

It is now known that in approximately the same time frame, the number of non-faculty positions increased by 84 university-wide, and that the structural deficit expression, presented to us as a seeming higher law, had the inequality symbol backwards. The externally audited financial statements show an excess of revenue over expenses of \$28 million in 2012-13 alone.

The emergence of such facts undermines confidence in the direction in which UNB is being taken and decreases the already alarmingly low level of morale here.

It is far from clear how an elaborate bureaucratic apparatus, apparently constructed at the expense of the university's primary functions of teaching and research, could contribute to "an exceptional and transformative student experience" or to enhancing UNB's standing as a national comprehensive university.

Going forward we urgently request that you adopt more collegial and transparent decision making processes, and communicate clearly your administration's structural and financial goals. We believe such steps would facilitate open, ongoing, and mutually well-informed discussions between senior administration and academic staff.

(Signatories listed on the following page)

1. Allan Adam (Chair of Chemistry, UNBF, 2007-2010)
2. Tim Alderson (Chair of Mathematical Sciences, UNBSJ, 2013-)
3. Jennifer Andrews (Chair of English, UNBF, 2013-)
4. David Bedford (Chair of Political Science, UNBF, 2004-2010)
5. Anne Brown (Chair of French, UNBF, 2005-2011)
6. Sandra Byers (Chair of Psychology, UNBF, 2003-)
7. Zengtao Chen (Chair of Mechanical Engineering, UNBF)
8. Bruce Colpitts (Chair of Electrical and Computer Engineering, UNBF)
9. Peter Dare (Chair of Geodesy and Geomatics Engineering, UNBF)
10. Andrew Gerber (Chair of Mechanical Engineering, UNBF)
11. Christine Horne (Chair of French, UNBF, 2011-)
12. Paul Howe (Chair of Political Science, UNBF, 2013-)
13. Viqar Husain (Chair of Mathematics & Statistics, UNBF, 2007-2013)
14. P.T. Jayachandran (Chair of Physics, UNBF, 2013 -)
15. Robert Larmer (Chair of Philosophy, UNBF, 2006-)
16. Janet Light (Chair, Computer Science, UNBSJ, 2012-)
17. Brian Lowry (Chair of Chemical Engineering, UNBF)
18. Julian Meng (Chair of Electrical and Computer Engineering, UNBF, 2013-)
19. Koumari Mitra (Chair of Anthropology, UNBF, 2008-)
20. Nancy Nason-Clark (Chair of Sociology, UNBF)
21. Yonghao Ni (Chair of Chemical Engineering, UNBF)
22. Allan Reid (Chair of Culture and Language Studies, UNBF, 1999-2013)
23. Perry Riley (Chair of Engineering, UNBSJ)
24. Mary Rimmer (Chair of English, UNBF, 2010-2013)
25. Remy Rochette (Chair of Biology, UNBSJ)
26. Marcelo Santos (Chair of Geodesy and Geomatics Engineering, UNBF)
27. Gary Saunders (Chair of Biology, UNBF, 2005-2008, 2012-)
28. Allison Schriver (Chair of Civil Engineering, UNBF)
29. Cliff Shaw (Chair of Earth Sciences, UNBF, 2009-)
30. Vladimir Tasić (Chair of Mathematics & Statistics, UNBF, 2013-)
31. Gilles Villemure (Chair of Chemistry, UNBF, 2010-)
32. William Ward (Chair of Physics, UNBF, 2008-2013)
33. Bruce Wilson (Chair of Civil Engineering, UNBF)
34. Thom Workman (Chair of Political Science, UNBF, 2010-2013)
35. Li-Hong Xu (Chair, Physical Sciences, UNBSJ, 2003-2007)