



**MPHEC**  
Maritime Provinces  
Higher Education  
Commission

**CESPM**  
Commission de  
l'enseignement supérieur  
des Provinces maritimes

**MARITIME PROVINCES HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION (MPHEC) – Fewer Maritimers choosing to attend university compared to decade ago**

**June 3, 2014**

Updated statistics released today by the MPHEC show that demand for university education has declined among Maritimers since 2003-04 and has shown little indication of rebounding since the Commission last reported on this trend.

This means that fewer Maritimers, amidst an already shrinking population, are choosing to attend university, and this introduces a number of questions for the region.

Why are fewer Maritimers choosing to attend universities at a time when there are more seats available than ever? Are Maritimers fully aware of the real value of a university degree? Are Maritimers making different educational choices, or are more of them simply foregoing postsecondary education altogether? Are costs becoming too high for some? Is there enough awareness of government programs designed to help students pay the cost of their education?

Commission CEO Mireille Duguay said “Maritimers have historically enjoyed a high level of participation in universities, well above the Canadian average, but the gap is closing, with the Canadian rate continuously rising while the rate in the Maritimes has been slowly declining”.

The situation does vary by province. Since 2004-05, the demand by Nova Scotians for university education in their province of residence declined three percentage points to 21.1%. Over the same time period, demand by New Brunswickers decreased 1.4 percentage points to 18.3% and demand by Prince Edward Island residents decreased 0.5 percentage points to 18.6%.

Ms. Duguay added “The Commission in previous studies has looked at potential factors impacting demand for university education by Maritimers, such as the parallel increases in demand for community college programs, rising educational costs, the perceived value of a degree given the costs. We know that that these factors and others are still at play, but our governments and universities need more information to be able to address the trends and ensure that as many Maritimers that are qualified can attend the postsecondary institution of their choice.”

The Commission is conducting a survey of Maritime grade 12 high school students in May of this year to provide that information. “We are looking forward to these survey results which will help us understand how young Maritimers are making decisions about pursuing postsecondary education,” said Ms. Duguay. To fully understand the nature of demand for university education in the Maritimes, the MPHEC monitors 9 different indicators referred to as participation rates. The updated tables are available for download from the Commission’s website [www.mphec.ca](http://www.mphec.ca).

About the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC): The MPHEC, established in 1974, is celebrating its 40th Anniversary. The MPHEC is an arm’s length organization accountable to the

Ministers responsible for post-secondary education in the Maritime provinces. The Commission assists institutions and government in enhancing the post-secondary learning environment. The Commission's 20 members are drawn from the Maritime provinces, and represent higher education institutions, provincial governments and the general public. The Commission's primary orientation in carrying out its duties is to give first consideration to improving and maintaining the best possible service to students as lifelong learners.

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FOR BROADCAST NEWS

The Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) released new statistics today showing that demand for university education has declined among Maritimers since 2003-04.

This means that fewer Maritimers, amidst an already shrinking population, are choosing to attend university.

Factors behind the declining demand include increased demand for community college programs, rising educational costs, and the perceived value of a degree given the costs.

Commission CEO Mireille Duguay said that a Commission-led survey of Maritime grade twelve students now underway will help explain how young Maritimers are making decisions about pursuing postsecondary education. The information will assist Governments and universities address the trends and ensure that as many Maritimers that are qualified can attend the postsecondary institution of their choice.

The statistical tables are available for download from the Commission's website [www.mphec.ca](http://www.mphec.ca).

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