

MPHEC

Annual Report

Year in Review: 2010-2011



Additional copies of the Annual Report may be obtained from:

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For an overview of the MPHEC and its activities, please visit the web site at: www.mphec.ca.

ISBN: 978-0-919471-90-0

MPHEC MISSION

As an Agency of the Council of Maritime Premiers that provides advice to Ministers responsible for Post-Secondary Education in the Maritimes, the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission:

**Assists institutions and governments in enhancing
a post-secondary learning environment
that reflects the following values:**

- **Quality:** continuous improvement in the quality of programs, institutional practices, and teaching.
- **Accessibility:** program, delivery, and support services that optimize post-secondary education availability.
- **Mobility:** portability of learning and credits throughout the post-secondary education system in the Maritimes.
- **Relevance:** effective and responsive interaction among learners, the work force, and the community.
- **Accountability:** evidence of value, sustainability, and cost-effectiveness of public and learner investment.
- **Scholarship and Research:** commitment to the pursuit of knowledge.

Excerpt of the MPHEC Act

1. The Commission shall, in carrying out its duties, give first consideration to improving and maintaining the best possible service to students as life-long learners by:
 - (a) taking measures intended to ensure that programs of study are of optimum length and best quality,
 - (b) stressing prior learning assessment and recognition, and credit transfer, to implement the principle that duplication of effort is not required in order to gain credit for learning which [that - NS] has been successfully accomplished,
 - (c) promoting smooth transitions between learning and work,
 - (d) promoting equitable and adequate access to learning opportunities, including making those opportunities available at times and places convenient to the student, and
 - (e) taking measures intended to ensure teaching quality.

2. The Commission's principal duties are:
 - (a) to undertake measures intended to ensure continuous improvement in the quality of academic programs and of teaching at institutions, which without limiting the generality of the foregoing may include the review of institutional programs and practices for assuring such improvement and making recommendations to institutions and the Provinces,
 - (b) to ensure that data and information is collected, maintained and made available for assuring the public accountability of institutions, and to assist institutions and the Provinces in their work, which without limiting the generality of the foregoing may include:
 - (i) establishing data and system standards,
 - (ii) establishing public reporting requirements and producing public reports, and
 - (iii) carrying out studies in regard to public policy, institutional concerns and issues related to post-secondary education, and providing advice to institutions and the Provinces on these matters.
 - (c) to take initiatives to stimulate cooperative action among institutions and the Provinces where such action is likely to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the post-secondary education system in the Provinces, which without limiting the generality of the foregoing may include:
 - (i) encouraging initiatives for institutions to offer joint, complementary and regional programs, and
 - (ii) encouraging administrative, financial and common service arrangements which reduce the overhead cost of programs and the overall cost to students and the Provinces.
 - (d) to continue to develop and administer funding transfers among the Provinces for regional programs, which without limiting the generality of the foregoing may include developing and administering funding arrangements for programs outside the region, as required to provide additional educational opportunities for students from the region, and
 - (e) to undertake such other duties as the Ministers may assign.

3. The Commission may:
 - (a) provide such services and functions, as may be agreed upon by the Ministers, to one or more institutions or to one or more of the Provinces,
 - (b) provide such advice and services, as may be agreed upon by the Ministers, to one or more of the Provinces to determine their post-secondary education funding policy, and
 - (c) recommend to the Ministers the names of post-secondary educational institutions that may be added to or deleted from those prescribed by [the - NS] regulation for the purposes of the definitions "institutions" and "universities" [in section 1 - NB]; [2002, c.34, s.11 -PEI].

Letter of Transmittal

September 30, 2011

Honourable Marilyn More
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Honourable Martine Coulombe
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Dear Ministers:

We have the honour to submit to you, the Ministers responsible for Post-Secondary Education the Annual Report of the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission. This report covers the period from April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011.

Yours very truly,



David Stewart
Chair



Mireille Duguay
Chief Executive Officer

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Year in Review: 2010-2011

THE COMMISSION

About the MPHEC

- The Commission is an arm's length organization accountable to the Ministers responsible for Post-Secondary Education.
- It is composed of 20 members, representing three groups: universities; government and non-university leaders; public-at-large and students, across New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. A list of Commission members can be found in Appendix B, at: http://www.mphec.ca/resources/AR_10-11_AppendixB.pdf
- In order to carry out its duties, the Commission holds approximately five regular meetings per year, normally on institutional campuses on a rotating basis.
- The Commission scheduled a planning session for April 2011 to discuss its planned directions and priorities for the next multi-year business plan.
- The Commission CEO was reappointed for another term following extensive consultation, including feedback from the Ministers and Deputy Ministers responsible for Post-Secondary Education in all three Maritime provinces.
- At year end, the Commission had operated with 13 permanent and contractual employees. A list of staff can be found at: <http://www.mphec.ca/about/staff.aspx>

Operational Framework

- The Commission puts a heavy reliance on stakeholder input through its operational framework (joint committees, working groups drawing on required expertise, etc.).
- The Commission's standing committees are as follows:
 - AAU-MPHEC Academic Advisory Committee
 - AAU-MPHEC Quality Assurance Monitoring Committee
 - AAU-MPHEC Advisory Committee on Information and Analysis
 - MPHEC Measures Working Group
 - MPHEC Finance Committee
 - NB/MPHEC Finance Working Group
 - NB/PEI Educational Computer Network Board of Directors
 - NB/PEI Educational Computer Network Technical Committee
- A list of members on each of the above-noted committees can be found in Appendix B, at: http://www.mphec.ca/resources/AR_10-11_AppendixB.pdf

Operating Principles

- Universities are autonomous and responsible to their constituencies for the quality of academic offerings and activities.
- Stakeholders (governments, students, taxpayers, etc.) have a legitimate need for information and assurances about the quality of institutional programs and services.
- The best processes and outcomes emerge from dialogue and collaboration (iterative processes).

Resources

- The Commission's revenues for its administration were \$1,566,273 in 2010-2011. The majority of this funding is provided by the three Maritime provinces on a per-capita basis through the Council of Atlantic Premiers annual budget approval process. The remaining sources of revenue include: the NB Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour for financial services, the Maritime departments responsible for Post-Secondary Education (for the Graduate Survey program), SRDC (for the provision of data) and work performed for the Province of New Brunswick under the Degree Granting Act (DGA).
- Expenditures for administration totalled \$1,589,970 of which 70.6% went to salaries and benefits. Other expenditures included the Graduate Survey program, work performed for the Province of New Brunswick under its Degree Granting Act (a cost-recovery initiative), office rent, supplies, furniture and equipment, travel associated with committee and Board meetings, publications, consulting fees under the program approval process, etc.
- The Commission had an operating deficit of \$23,697 due to unfunded pension cost increases of approximately \$43,600. Through careful management of its resources, the Commission was able to absorb approximately \$19,900 of these unplanned expenses. The detailed MPHEC 2010-2011 financial statements can be found in Appendix A, online at: http://www.mphec.ca/resources/AR_10-11_AppendixA.pdf

Corporate Issues

- At year-end, the Commission was undertaking a comprehensive strategic planning exercise. The process is designed to allow the Commission to clearly identify its priorities and to redesign its work to allow it to absorb a permanent -5% budget cut while maintaining the quality of its services in priority areas.
- The adoption of the MPHEC Act in 2005 required changes to the Commission's governance. The main issue that remained unresolved was an apparent disconnect between the Commission's legislated accountability to the Ministers and the budget approval, and member appointment processes, which did not fully allow for ministerial input.
- In response to the concerns raised by the Commission's Board on this topic, the Deputy Ministers responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs appointed a working group in 2009-2010 to explore how to best address these challenges. The working group provided its final report to the Deputies in the summer of 2010. The recommendations proposed a re-alignment of the procedures and the Act, clearly outlining the role the Ministers must play in terms of supporting the Commission's ability to fulfill its duties.
- Specifically pertaining to the budget submission process, the working group recommended that (1) the Deputy Ministers responsible for Post-Secondary Education be provided a role in the final approval of the Commission's annual operating budget and (2) that the Commission be provided with latitude in the exercise of its annual budget, without exceeding it, as required to meet its legislated responsibility to Ministers.
- Both of these recommendations, in addition to a recommendation to amend the appointment process for membership on the Commission, were approved at the Regional Treasury Board's (RTB) October 21, 2010 meeting.
- The recent RTB decision is welcome news. These changes will allow the Commission to focus on fulfilling, to the best of its abilities, its legislated functions.
- In order to complete the implementation of its 2005 Act, a twentieth member must be assigned to a category and a province and regulations listing the institutions within the scope of the Commission need to be adopted by the three provinces.

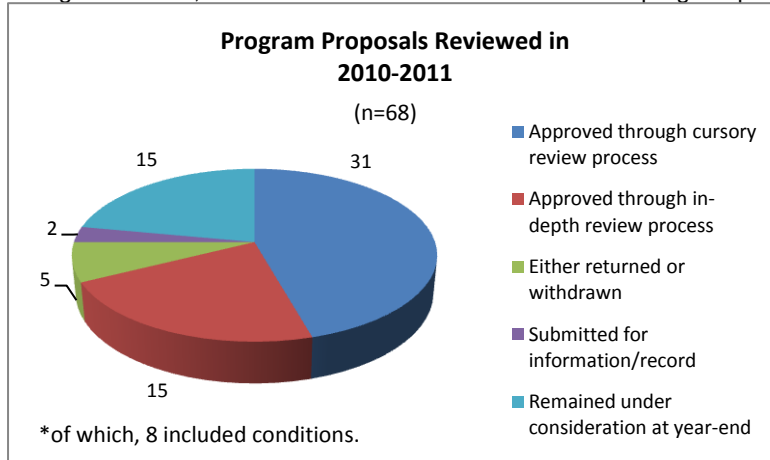
Security and Confidentiality

- The Commission is dedicated to maintaining high standards of security and confidentiality.
- In 2010-2011, a security checklist was conducted that resulted in a number of updates that are meant to increase the security and confidentiality of the Commission's holdings and an annual workshop is now being held to confirm staff awareness and adherence to the Commission's standards in this area.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Program Assessment

- During 2010-2011, the Commission considered a total of 68 program proposals.



- Details on each program proposal considered during the 2010-2011 fiscal year can be found in Appendix D, at http://www.mphec.ca/resources/AR_10-11_AppendixD.pdf.

- The Commission's Policy on Quality Assurance, as it pertains to the program assessment process, is currently being updated. A draft document was released in March 2011 for consultation purposes. The update is intended to provide clarification on the Commission's approach to program assessment and the information required to determine whether a program meets agreed-upon quality standards. Over the course of the year, consultation occurred with Maritime universities and a final version of the Policy will be released for implementation during fiscal year 2011-2012.
- Several meetings and workshops were held throughout the year with university groups that focussed on the program assessment process and provided an opportunity for participants to provide feedback to the Commission in light of their experiences, which will inform the updated Policy. Participants were also interested in learning more about the Commission's quality assurance monitoring process and how this links with program assessment, and with other Commission activities.
- It is anticipated that the enhanced policy framework and the targeted communication efforts (workshops, presentations) will lead to better program proposals being submitted, making the process less resource-intensive for all involved.

Compliance

- With a focus on enhanced effectiveness and transparency, the Commission engaged in an exercise to determine universities' compliance with the program assessment process and to discuss possible options to address potential non-compliance. Proposals are normally submitted prior to implementing new programs; it was found that fewer than 1% of all programs currently offered by universities in the Maritimes had either been submitted to the MPHEC after its implementation, been implemented following a non-approval, or not been reviewed by the MPHEC. The Commission agreed that it is important to ensure awareness of its program assessment process and the types of proposals that ought to be submitted; institutions' compliance with the program assessment process will continue to be monitored regularly. Nova Scotia has already tied its student financial assistance to MPHEC-approved programs, while, at year-end, New Brunswick was in the process of operationalizing this connection. Both provinces also only account for MPHEC-approved programs within their respective funding formulae. Their measures are expected to further reduce non-compliance.

Monitoring of Institutional Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

- This is a process through which the Commission monitors/verifies/reports that institutions assess their existing programs and activities with a focus on students and on learning.
- The first cycle focussed on ensuring that all institutions had an implemented policy to support on-going quality assessment and improvement. This goal has largely been achieved but there are remaining gaps if the Commission is to discharge its legislated mandate properly; this should be the focus of the second cycle.
- The Commission agreed that a second cycle of the monitoring process was required to close the gaps identified during the first cycle, which were primarily in the area of student learning.
- The assessment framework for a second cycle was under development at year-end. It will likely centre on improvements made by institutions since the first cycle and on the quality of teaching and learning. It will be subject to consultations, likely to occur over the next year.
- This year focused on follow-ups to the recommendations given to institutions in the first cycle of the monitoring process.
- At year end, four follow-up action plans had been submitted, and three were pending. It is expected that the remaining action plans will be submitted within the next year.

Reporting on University Quality

- In November 2010, the Commission held a meeting with its stakeholders at Mount Allison University focused on *Stakeholders' Expectations for Reporting on University Quality*.
- Nearly 70 participants attended the event, including: students; student associations; faculty associations; university senior administrators as well as individuals with responsibilities in the area of institutional research, recruitment, admissions and enrolment management; and government officials.
- During the event, a majority agreed that universities had a responsibility to make as much information available as possible regarding their quality, but also to ensure that this information is provided in the proper context and for a specific purpose; it was further emphasized that such information should focus on continuous improvement rather than on rankings.

- Stakeholders also identified challenges associated with reporting, particularly with respect to a lack of resources. It was suggested that the Commission might get involved with institutions to help them achieve various goals with regard to reporting on university quality.
- The results of the discussion are being used in the development of the second cycle of the monitoring process (above) and the Commission's next multi-year business plan, due in Fall 2011.
- In the next year, the Commission will be contacting participants to provide details on how the results of the meeting are incorporated into the Commission's workplan.

Assessment of the Effectiveness and Benefits of Articulated Programs in the Maritimes

- In October 2010, the Commission released the Assessment of the Effectiveness and Benefits of Articulated Programs in the Maritimes. The MPHEC defines an articulated program as a program that could not be offered or conferred were it not for the participation (and the content) of the partner institution which does not normally grant degrees. Articulated programs present unique challenges for students as they transition between different types of institutions.
- The study found that factors associated with high student persistence and satisfaction were: field of study, program structure, geographic proximity between institutions and inter-institutional coordination. The main findings of the study reinforce the importance of the MPHEC guidelines currently in place for developing and offering new articulated programs.

New Brunswick and Nova Scotia Degree Granting Acts (Services to Provinces)

- Since 2003, the MPHEC has been advising the Minister responsible for Post-Secondary Education in New Brunswick, upon request, with regard to the quality of program proposals submitted under the New Brunswick Degree Granting Act (NBDGA). Within the 2010-2011 fiscal year, two such program assessments were launched: (1) Yorkville University – Master of Education in Adult Education, Educational Leadership, Inclusive Education and Guidance and Counselling and (2) Yorkville University – Bachelor of Business Administration. Both of these assessments were in progress at year-end.
- In addition, since March 2007, the MPHEC has been responsible for conducting **institutional assessments** in order to determine that an institution governed by the NBDGA has the necessary governance, policies, planning and financing in place to deliver a quality degree program. During 2010-2011, the Commission provided advice to the Minister for two such institutional assessments: Lansbridge University and Meritus University.
- **Lansbridge University:** The Commission conducted its first institutional assessment in 2008 and advised the Minister that it would be inappropriate to undertake any program assessments until the issues identified within the Panel's report have been fully dealt with. In 2009, the Minister asked the Commission to conduct a second institutional assessment of Lansbridge University to confirm that Lansbridge University is now meeting the standards. The Commission advised the Minister in April 2010 that with reference to the Commission's sixteen assessment standards, Lansbridge met seven, partially met eight and failed to meet one. The Minister announced in August 2010 that Lansbridge would no longer be designated as a university in New Brunswick; the institution has since closed.
- **Meritus University:** The Commission advised the Minister that with reference to the Commission's sixteen assessment standards, Meritus met 15 and partially met 1. Prior to the Minister announcing a decision on the assessment, however, Meritus informed the Department that it would be closing (last day of classes March 14, 2011) due to what they deemed insufficient levels of enrolment to sustain a quality academic and student service infrastructure.
- In 2008, the Commission approved the *Procedures and Information Requirements for the Assessment of Institutions and Programs under the Nova Scotia Degree Granting Act*; no assessments under this Act had been carried out by year-end.

Policy Development

- During 2010-2011, a *Policy for the Assessment of Existing Degree Programs Established under the New Brunswick Degree Granting Act* was developed, which can be found at: <http://www.mphec.ca/quality/NBDegreeGrantingAct.aspx>
- A policy on the *Procedures and Information Requirements for the Follow-up on Conditional Program Designations under the New Brunswick Degree Granting Act* was also developed during 2010-2011 which can be found at: <http://www.mphec.ca/quality/NBDegreeGrantingAct.aspx>

DATA AND INFORMATION

Collection of Student Data (Post-Secondary Student Information System [PSIS])

- Through PSIS, the MPHEC collects data on institutions' program and course offerings, student demographics, program and course registration, and credit transfer on an annual basis, which are used to fulfill many information needs. These data support Commission functions such as Quality Assurance, Province-Specific Services (funding formulae) and Data and Information:
http://www.mphec.ca/resources/PSIS_Data_Element_Description_October_2010_MPHEC_EN.pdf
- During 2010-2011, the MPHEC undertook a complete overhaul of its proprietary software, the MPHEC Maritime pre-screener (MPS), which is used by institutions to verify PSIS data files before submission to the MPHEC. The new MPS (version 8.0) will streamline the PSIS submission process for institutions by eliminating the need to use Statistics Canada's Data verification System. The software is scheduled to be released to institutions in May 2011.
- In March 2011, staff was invited to speak on the topic of Engaging Institutions as part of the PSIS Strategic Planning Symposium in Ottawa.

Forum on Data Collection and Research

- A Forum on Data Collection and Research was hosted by the Commission on November 25, 2009 in Truro, Nova Scotia.
- This annual event is an important venue through which the Commission maintains its support to, and relationships with, registrars and institutional researchers from Maritime universities.

Data in Support of Funding Formulas (Services to Provinces)

- As a service to provinces, the MPHEC provides on an annual basis calculated key measures from PSIS to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in support of their funding formulas.
- The MPHEC delivers full course equivalents, weighted full course equivalents, full-time equivalents, and enrolments, which support the following components of the Nova Scotia Funding Formula: the Weighted Enrolment Grant, the Size Grant, the French Language Grant, the Part-Time Student Grant and the international student funding limits.
- The Commission calculates full-year weighted full-time equivalents for use within the funding formula calculating the distribution of Unrestricted Operating Assistance to the New Brunswick Universities.
- The full-year full-time equivalents and full-year weighted full-time equivalents are also used in the annual calculation of the Regional Transfer Arrangement (further explained below under "Interprovincial Agreements and Intra-Maritime Program Funding Arrangements").

Graduate Survey Program

- This program provides important information on graduate outcomes including satisfaction with education, debt, returning to study, employment and mobility patterns.
- The graduate survey program is currently not funded. At the February 4, 2011 meeting of the Atlantic IGA and Finance Deputies' Committee, the MPHEC's request for an additional \$150,000 baseline funding for future graduate follow-up surveys was denied. This Committee noted that the survey is a valuable piece of work but that there is a need for the MPHEC to review the frequency of the survey and the means in which to fund it in the future.

Review of the Graduate Survey Program

- At year end, the Commission launched a comprehensive review of its graduate survey program with the publication of a discussion paper entitled, *Shaping the Future of the Maritime University Graduate Survey Program*. The goal of the review is to ensure that the program continues to provide valuable information about the effectiveness of university education in the region, and that its deliverables continue to be effective in the dissemination of findings. The review is being conducted within the context of the survey program's long-standing funding challenges and the Commission's own funding challenges.

Five Years On: Survey of the Class of 2003 Maritime University Graduates

- The Commission released *Five Years On: Survey of Class of 2003 Maritime University Graduates* with a public presentation and press conference in June 2010. The report focuses on those who completed their first degree in 2003, and follows their progress at two points in time: namely, 2005 and 2008.
- Findings showed that a university education pays off and that the benefits increase over time: between 2005, when they were previously surveyed, and 2008, many more graduates are working full-time and in permanent positions. Earnings increased \$12,094, or 25 per cent, to \$49,215, with 70 per cent employed in management or positions that required a university education.
- The findings also indicated that for graduates of liberal arts and sciences programs in particular, pursuing a second degree was the norm, with 80% pursuing further studies within five years of completing their first degree. As a result, they often accumulate more debt and are less likely to be debt-free after five years. Liberal arts and sciences graduates also earn less, on average, than their applied or professional program peers.
- The financial investment for university graduates is significant: by 2008, 78 per cent of first degree holders borrowed money to finance their education, including that degree and subsequent education. Graduates who borrowed relied on government, banks, and other sources, and borrowed an average of \$31,047 with 46 per cent borrowing \$30,000 or more. Compared with graduates of the Class of 1999, the percent of students who borrowed increased five percentage points, and the average amount borrowed increased by two percent.
- Eight-in-10 graduates said their university education was worth the time invested, and seven-in-10 said it was worth the financial investment

Two Years On: Survey of Class of 2007 Maritime University Graduates

- The report *Two Years On: Survey of Class of 2007 Maritime University Graduates* was released with a public presentation and press conference in January 2011. It examines graduate satisfaction with education, further education trends, employment, and financial status, with a focus on those who completed their first degree in 2007.
- By 2009, 73% of first degree holders borrowed money to finance their education, including the 2007 degree and/or any further education. Graduates who borrowed relied on government, banks, family members and other sources, and borrowed an average of \$37,013 by 2009, with one third borrowing \$45,000 or more. Compared to graduates of the Class of 2003, Maritimers in the Class of 2007 relied to the same extent on government student loans, but increased their reliance on other sources such as banks and borrowing from family members.
- The employment rate of Class of 2007 first degree holders is down 9 percentage points compared to that of the Class of 2003 two years after graduation. The Class of 2007 was surveyed in the midst of an economic recession, which probably accounts for the decreased employment rate. However, the number employed full-time and in highly skilled jobs was about the same compared to four years earlier.
- In 2009, first degree holders employed full-time earned over \$43,000, which is above the earnings of the general population in the Maritimes, again reflecting the value of a university education.
- Two years after graduation, Maritime provinces are retaining about the same proportion of graduates compared to the previous Class. By province, the proportion of Class of 2007 graduates living in their home province two years after completing their first degree was: Prince Edward Island: 63%; Nova Scotia: 74% and New Brunswick: 71%.
- This survey also represents a unique opportunity for the Commission to conduct research that was not possible before. Respondents were asked for their permission to link their responses from the survey to their administrative data contained in the PSIS database maintained by the Commission, which will enable research on the associations between pathways through postsecondary education, and graduate outcomes.

Data Dissemination

- Several custom presentations on the findings of these surveys were given over the course of the year (to institutions, to provincial governments, at the Canadian Institutional Research and Planning Association [CIRPA] conference etc.)

Measures of Student Progress and Outcomes

- This project is intended to provide the Commission's stakeholders with objective measures of how the region's university sector is functioning, focusing on measures of student progress and outcomes. In recent years, the Commission has released measures on university participation, as well as persistence and graduation. Key findings include:
 - **Participation:** The Maritimes' high overall participation rate is due in part to a large influx of students from outside the region (now making up 30% of enrolment).
 - **Persistence and Graduation:** Of the students entering a four-year bachelor's degree program, 77% were still enrolled in the same institution after one year and 57% completed their degree within 6 years.

Tracking students between institutions

- Building on the measures of participation and graduation within the university of first entry, the Commission has begun a project tracking students across Maritime universities through the establishment of record linking methodology. The end result of the work will be to characterize the students who leave their institution of first entry and enrol in another Maritime university. The longitudinal analysis of students' pathways will provide useful information to governments and universities. It will also contribute to understanding the nature of inter-institutional migration within the Maritimes.

Profile of transfer students

- In 2010-11 a study of new students enrolling in Maritime universities who had transferred credits from a previous post-secondary institution from within or outside the Maritimes was undertaken. The PSIS transfer file forms the main data source for this project. The main deliverable under this project will be an analytical paper profiling new transfer students at 11 Maritime universities from 2006 to 2009, which will likely be released in fiscal year 2011-2012.

General Data Dissemination

- The Commission releases annually several standard data tables on tuition, enrolments, credentials granted, and full-time equivalents (FTE): <http://www.mphec.ca/research/MaritimeUniversityStatistics.aspx>
- In August 2010, the MPHEC released a survey of 2010-2011 undergraduate arts tuitions fees, ancillary fees and room and board costs at public Maritime Universities. Over the course of the year, this data collection activity was reviewed in an effort to establish priorities. The Commission has agreed to continue collecting and publishing tuition-related data, securing Statistics Canada's agreement to use its TLAC survey to streamline the data collection process for institutions and for the MPHEC.
- In the Fall of 2010, the Commission released 2009-2010 standard enrolment tables, 2009 credentials granted tables, downloadable databases, MPHEC Quick Facts tables, 2009-2010 full-year FTE and full year weighted FTE. A complete list of tables released in 2010-2011 is available at: <http://www.mphec.ca/research/MaritimeUniversityStatistics.aspx>
- In 2010-2011, the MPHEC provided custom data, upon request, to the following stakeholders: provincial governments, post-secondary institutions, and the public-at-large.
- Appendix C (http://www.mphec.ca/resources/AR_10-11_AppendixC.pdf) includes a list of Commission releases and publications

POST-SECONDARY FUNDING

Interprovincial Agreements and Intra-Maritime Program Funding Arrangements

- The Commission continued to administer agreements with other Canadian provinces to place Maritime students in programs of study not available in this region. In 2010-2011, 393 Atlantic students benefited from these agreements.
- The Commission also maintained the Regional Transfer Arrangement (RTA) whereby each of the three Maritime provinces provides funding for any of its residents enrolled in a university program in either of the other two Maritime provinces that is not offered in the student's home province. As a result, in 2008-2009, the latest year for which statistics are available at the time the budget is prepared, a total of 1,226 students benefited from the RTA.
- In the Spring of 2009, the Finance Committee was tasked with performing an in-depth review of the RTA at the request of the Maritime Deputy Ministers (Deputies) responsible for post-secondary education. The final report was submitted to the Deputies in September 2010. The Deputies agreed with the Committee's recommendation to modify the calculation such that the significant peaks and valleys in the expected contributions from New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island to Nova Scotia will be smoothed out in future years.

Financial Services (Services to Provinces)

- In addition, 206 Atlantic students in veterinary medicine and veterinary sciences were funded through the Atlantic Veterinary College Interprovincial Funding Agreement in 2008-2009, the latest year for which statistics are available at the time the budget is prepared. The agreement is administered by the Province of Prince Edward Island.
- **New Brunswick:** The Commission is responsible for preparing the university education budget (which also includes the Maritime College of Forest Technology). This includes calculating operating (unrestricted, tuition grant and restricted) assistance and the various transfers through interprovincial agreements in which the Province participates.
- The MPHEC also administers the university education budget throughout the year, including the Province's committed funds. This includes providing audited financial statements for the Province's university education funding.
- The Commission provides support to the NB/MPHEC Finance Working Group and flows federal funding to institutions for the Canada/New Brunswick Official Languages in Education Agreement and sits on the bi-partite committee that reviews projects submitted under the Province's University Deferred Maintenance Program.
- **Prince Edward Island:** The Commission is responsible for preparing the post-secondary education (PSE) budget. This includes providing the budgeted amounts for the various transfers through interprovincial Agreements in which the Province participates.
- The Commission flows funding for the Department of Health relating to Prince Edward Island's contribution to the residency stipends at the Dalhousie Medical School.
- The Commission also administers the PSE budget throughout the year, including the Province's committed funds. This includes providing audited financial statements for the Province's university education funding.

NB/PEI Educational Computer Network Agreement (NB/PEI ECN)

- The NB/PEI Educational Computer Network (ECN), in which the Commission is a signatory, provides connectivity among its members and to the wider world. Additional benefits include joint purchasing and licensing, shared support services, the delivery of network-based services and information exchange.
- The ECN partnered with Interuniversity Services Inc. (ISI) in November 2010 to host a one-day workshop on customer service for ECN members. It is hoped that a similar event can be jointly hosted in the new fiscal year which would include both ECN and ISI members (i.e. Nova Scotia universities). Other possible areas of collaboration will be explored.
- A recent milestone was the joint purchase of commercial internet services which, for the first time, included all of the NB and PEI institutions.
- Members of the NB institutions have been working to develop a partnership with the National Research Council Institute for Information Technology - Fredericton, New Brunswick Community College and Collège Communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick to design the next iteration of the network, which would be three to four times faster than the existing network. It is expected that the launch of the new network will occur in the upcoming fiscal year.
- A celebration of ECN's 40 years of collaboration is being planned for the upcoming fiscal year, to occur in conjunction with the launch of the network.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL FORUMS

- The Commission is a member of various committees and working groups and may be delegated by the Maritime Ministers to represent all three Maritime provinces.
- The Commission participates in the following forums:
 - National Advisory Committee on Post-Secondary Education Statistics
 - Strategic Management Committee (SMC)
 - SMC Subcommittee on the CESC Data Strategy
 - Pan-Canadian Consortium on Admissions & Transfer
 - International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
 - Statistics Canada's PSIS Definitions and Codesets Review Working Group
 - Atlantic Financial Reporting Committee
 - CMEC Quality Assurance Subcommittee