

TO: All MUNFA Members

FROM: The MUNFA Executive Committee

DATE: September 16, 2008

SUBJECT: Search for New President of Memorial University (Update)

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Since we last wrote, MUNFA and CAUT met with the Minister of Education about government's intervention in the search for a new president at Memorial University. Based on the meeting, which took place September 9<sup>th</sup>, we have no clue as to what the government is going to do. The Minister of Education said, in her defense, that the Chair of the Board of Regents contacted the Premier to set up meetings with the candidates for President. Given the Premier's schedule, the request was passed on to the Minister of Education and it was in that context that she got involved and made her comments on the suitability of the candidates. According to the Minister, the goal of the meetings was to ensure the candidate would take the University in directions consistent with government priorities and with what the province wants (see attached Points for Discussion).

The Minister of Education also said she is seeking information on how the appointment of university presidents is handled in other provinces; CAUT agreed to provide her information it had on the subject. MUNFA raised its concern that the uncertainty caused by the current situation makes it difficult to attract world-class candidates in the search for president.

Following the meeting, CAUT wrote a letter to the Chair of the Board of Regents with a copy to each member of the Board. The letter expresses surprise that the initial contact with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador came from the Board Chair, inviting the Premier to share with candidates what the Government's broader plans were and how the University might fit into them.

CAUT also expressed the importance of the University's autonomy and expressed two hopes. One is that the Board of Regents' Chair

... will take no actions that invite, or could be taken to invite, government violation of Memorial University's autonomy. The second is that the Government will unequivocally and promptly announce that it will accept the University's choice for the next president.

MUNFA will continue to monitor the situation and keep you posted. We are concerned that Government will not acknowledge the problems caused by its intervention and will do the same with future candidates. One recourse is to refer the matter to CAUT for a formal investigation that could eventually lead to censure of Memorial University. We would not take such action lightly. The MUNFA Executive will carefully deliberate on the issue, invite the membership at the October General Meeting (date to be confirmed) to share their views. In the meantime, we will continue to work for a solution that addresses our concerns and that permits the process to move forward, free from Government intervention.



**Points for Discussion**  
**Meeting with Candidate for President, Memorial University**  
**Wednesday, January 23, 2008**  
**11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**  
**Executive Boardroom**

As the province's only university, Memorial plays a vital role in our social and economic development. Our relationship with the University is critical, and working well together is an important priority.

1. As President, how would you see the University and the Province working together?
2. What government strategies and initiatives are of particular relevance to the University?

*(White Paper on Public Post-Secondary Education; Report of the Skills Task Force; Immigration Strategy; Innovation Strategy; Strategic Cultural Plan; Recreation and Sport Strategy; Northern Strategic Plan; Marine Technology Sector Development Strategy; ... student debt reduction initiatives, research and development initiatives, including the recently established Newfoundland and Labrador Research and Development Council)*

3. What mechanisms would you employ to ensure collaboration on areas of mutual interest?

*(MUN strategic plan informed by provincial priorities; regular meetings with Minister; government officials' presence on committees; joint meetings of senior officials; etc.)*

4. Since its inception, Sir Wilfred Grenfell College has grown and expanded. It has the potential to play a greater role in the economic development of the west coast of the province. Government has provided direction on implementing a new governance model to increase Grenfell's autonomy. How would you identify issues related to implementation? What might the barriers be and how would you overcome them? What factors would facilitate success?