

Post-Secondary Education in Labrador

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Executive Summary

In April, 2006, Memorial University commissioned a study to review the geographic, demographic, socio-cultural and economic factors that affect post-secondary education in the Labrador region as a whole and the five very different economic zones into which it is divided. This report describes post-secondary education needs among various groups, identifies gaps in present offerings and makes suggestions for future development of post-secondary education.

The project involved the compilation of both qualitative and quantitative data from existing documents, additional data collection and interviews with stakeholders. The work was conducted over an eight week period starting in April, 2006.

Labrador shares many of the features of other circumpolar regions including a large and isolated geography and transportation challenges. The population of Labrador is approximately 28 000 and is comprised of Innu, Inuit, and Métis, who together form approximately a third and who reside primarily in north and south coast communities and central Labrador, and non-Aboriginals who live mainly in Western Labrador and the Straits. Overall, the population is declining however Innu and north coast Inuit communities have seen a gradual increase. The population is younger and a higher proportion of babies are born to younger woman than the provincial average, particularly in north coast and Innu communities. Child-care is an issue for many by the time they reach the post-secondary stage. Education and income levels are lower than the provincial average on the north and south coast and the Straits, but higher in central and western Labrador.

A combination of high drop out rates and a high proportion of general stream graduates makes for very few post-secondary eligible high school graduates (fewer than 150/year) from Labrador. Western Labrador is the only area producing a higher proportion of academic and advanced high school graduates than the provincial average. These problems in the secondary school system are well known and long standing in eastern Labrador and most pronounced in Innu and Inuit communities, where language and culture issues, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, high teacher turnover and a shortage of specialist teachers combine to produce very few graduates. The cumulative effect of many years of non-completion of high school is a significant group of adults with less than a high school education, very few of whom have gone on to complete Adult Basic Education.

With low numbers graduating from high school and a high proportion of the adult population with less than a high school education, the potential market for post-secondary education is not large and many potential students will require academic upgrading to access it. Present post-secondary offerings in Labrador include Adult Basic Education, transition and university transfer courses, business, applied arts, and trades and technology programs offered at the Labrador West and Happy Valley-Goose Bay campuses of the College of the North Atlantic. The range of transfer courses offered live

is relatively limited from an arts and business perspective, although math and science options are well covered.

There is a strong consensus that post-secondary education delivered in Labrador offers optimal access and relevance for the residents of this region. A number of unmet demands for post-secondary education in Labrador have been identified and it is recommended that they be addressed. Teacher and language training and curriculum development are high priorities for both the Innu and the Inuit and it is important that their educational background and unique needs and situations are factored into the development of these programs. Aboriginal self-government is imposing immediate demands for business and public administration education. As is the case with teacher and language training, any such programs must address the education gap of potential participants. There is an as yet un-quantified demand for additional arts and business first year courses and second year transfer courses at the two college campuses. Currently, small numbers, particularly at the Labrador West campus, make it difficult to justify increasing the number of courses offered with live instruction however this should be considered if student numbers increase. The recent expansion in iron ore mining has increased the demand for skilled trades in Labrador West. There is also a demand for professional development programs for the mining industry and post-graduate programs such as the Degree in Post-Secondary Education for young retirees who are interested in a second career in this region.

Perhaps the most noteworthy finding of this study is that the key limiting factor for post-secondary education in Labrador is the low level of student success in the K-12 system, particularly in the Aboriginal communities. A committed effort to address student retention and graduation status offers the potential for a four fold increase in post-secondary ready, high school graduates from Labrador. Future development of post-secondary education, and indeed of the region as a whole, hinges on addressing the root causes and finding solutions for the non-completion of high school. This will require close collaboration among the Department of Education, the College of the North Atlantic, Memorial University and the Aboriginal groups and the attention of education, linguistics, ethnography and community health researchers. The need for a research base in the region to provide a coordinated approach to research activities, a connection to the northern research network and a mechanism to ensure that the maximum educational benefit is derived from all research, was first identified over fifteen years ago and has yet to be addressed. The long term implications of the K-12 education gap and the dearth of solutions only serve to reinforce the need. It is strongly recommended that education-focused, multi-disciplinary research be undertaken by researchers based in Labrador.

In conclusion, a multi-faceted approach including improved post-secondary offerings, collaboration among educational institutions and Aboriginal groups and multi-disciplinary research is required to address educational gaps and un-met demands for post-secondary education in Labrador.

Post-Secondary Education in Labrador

1.0 Introduction

Post-secondary education is recognized as an important component of cultural, social and economic development. Planning and decision making for post-secondary education in Labrador require an understanding of the geography and demography of the region that, in some respects, shares more in common with the remainder of northern Canada than it does with the island portion of the province. There are a variety of issues, many of which are related to Labrador's northern context, which have direct and indirect impacts on post-secondary education needs in Labrador. At the request of Memorial University this report was produced in an effort to understand both the current status of post-secondary education in the region and to help provide direction for the future.

2.0 Goals

1. Identify the most important social, developmental and cultural issues of Labrador as a basis for understanding the post-secondary education needs in the region;
2. Determine the actual and potential needs for post-secondary education in Labrador among high school students, working professionals and other groups. In particular, the needs of Aboriginal organizations and governments should be determined;
3. Identify the gaps between post-secondary education demands and present offerings in Labrador;
4. Identify new approaches for the future development of post-secondary education in Labrador.

3.0 Methodology

The project involved the compilation of both qualitative and quantitative data from existing documents, and additional data collection from a variety of sources including the College of the North Atlantic, the Nunatsiavut Government Post-Secondary Student Support Program, the Labrador School Board and Memorial University. Additional qualitative information was collected through interviews with stakeholders in the region and at Memorial University. A complete list of individuals who were interviewed is found in Appendix 1. The work was conducted over a six week period beginning in April, 2006.

3.1 Data Limitations

Although there is considerable existing information related to post secondary education and the issues surrounding it, there are limitations to the data. For example, some data is collected and organized by regional zone while other data is organized by school district or for the entire Labrador region. There also tends to be more data available for certain subgroups of the population, for example the Innu, and less for others. Literacy data is not broken down for the Labrador region in the most recent International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (IALSS June 2006). Occupational data is difficult to extract at the provincial level let alone the regional or zonal board level.

4.0 Geography

In a study conducted by Dr. J Rourke in 2004¹, distance from post-secondary institutions was identified as a significant factor in determining how many pursue post-secondary education. The findings of this study show that even after controlling for family income, parental education and other factors associated with university participation, students who live more than 80 km away from a university are 58% as likely to attend university as students who live within 40 km. Distance is very much a factor in Labrador where no one lives within 80 km of a university. The Labrador region is a vast (281 000 km²) and sparsely populated geographic area that has long been isolated from the rest of the province and mainland Canada by the nature of its relatively remote location, limited transportation connections and until recently, limited telecommunication connections as well. Transportation within the region has improved in recent years with the completion of two phases of the Trans-Labrador Highway, a gravel road which links central and western Labrador with Quebec and a separate portion which links the south east coast communities to the Labrador Straits, and from there via ferry to the Island portion of the province. Work has begun on the final link between central Labrador and the south east coast which will enable travel by road from Labrador West to the Straits. The north coast region remains the most isolated, with no road connection, boat links in the summer only and air connections, when weather permits, to other regions via Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

5.0 Telecommunications

Telecommunication connections have also improved in recent years with high-speed internet access available in all communities with the exception of Black Tickle which has dial-up service with a local number. Telesat Canada also offers internet access via

¹ Rourke, James. *Admission of Rural Origin Students to Medical School: Recommended Strategies*. Society of Rural Physicians of Canada, 2004-05.

satellite which is available anywhere in Labrador at a reasonable price. Public internet access and two way videoconferencing facilities are also available in most communities, through schools, libraries or other institutions. Internet usage data is not available at the regional level however 2003 data from Statistics Canada indicates that provincially, 56.3% of households have at least one regular internet user compared with a national average of 64.2%.²

6.0 Economic Development Zones

The region is subdivided into five economic zones with a total of 28 communities including two large towns (> 5 000) and 26 small towns (< 5 000 people).

- Zone 1 Inukshuk**
North coast communities Nain, Natuashish, Hopedale, Makkovik, Postville, Rigolet.
Primarily Innu and Inuit population, Voisey's Bay nickel mining is the only major industry, health, education and local government provide some employment, no road connection between communities or with the remainder of Labrador.
- Zone 2 Hyron**
Labrador West communities Churchill Falls, Labrador City-Wabush
Originally populated with workers from Newfoundland and Quebec, many of whom are now retiring young and staying in the community, industrial economy based on two iron ore mines, the service sector that supplies the mines and hydro-electric power generation. Recent boom in iron ore demand and prices means increased ore production, employment and housing demand. Connected to central Labrador and Quebec by gravel road.
- Zone 3 Central Labrador**
Upper Lake Melville communities Happy Valley-Goose Bay, North West River, Sheshatshiu, Mud Lake.
Mixed population of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, government services centre for the region and military base. Connected to Labrador West and Quebec by gravel road.
- Zone 4 Southeastern Aurora**
South east coast communities Cartwright, Paradise River, Black Tickle, Charlottetown, Norman Bay, Pinsents Arm, Mary's

² Statistics Canada CANSIM Table 358-002 and Catalogue no. 56F0004MIE, last modified 2005-02-18. Accessed at <http://www40.statcan.ca/101/cst01/comm12b.htm>

Harbour, Lodge Bay, St. Lewis, Port Hope Simpson, William's Harbour
Primarily Métis population, traditional fishing and subsistence economy. All but three communities connected to one another and the Straits by gravel road.

Zone 5

Labrador Straits

Straits communities Red Bay, West St. Modeste, L'Anse au Loup, Forteau, L'Anse au Claire.

Non-Aboriginal population, limited cash economy and employment from fishing, small business and tourism. Connected by road to Blanc Sablon, Quebec and the south coast and by ferry to Newfoundland.

The characteristics of these zones vary significantly and are discussed further below.

7.0 Demographics

Census results indicate the population of Labrador peaked in 1991 at 30 375. By 2001, the population had declined by 8.3% to 27 860 and recent Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment figures³ suggest the number dropped further to 27 366 in 2004. The province as a whole is experiencing declining population and increasing median age as a result of both out migration and a reduced birth rate and this trend is evident in Labrador. Although there has been a decline in the population for the region as a whole, this decline is not consistent throughout the region. The population of Zone 1, the north coast, has been increasing steadily as shown in Table 1 below. Table 1 also reveals that people living in Zone 1 are younger than those in the remainder of the region with over 41% under age 18. A review of median ages broken down by community indicates that the Labrador population as a whole is younger than the remainder of the province. This is particularly evident in Zone 1, the north coast region where five out of the six communities have the youngest median ages in the province. The median age in Natuashish is 17 making it the youngest community in the province, where the average median age is 38.⁴ With a high proportion of young people in the region, education is an obvious priority.

³ Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, Regional Labour Market Information Workshop, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Nov 2005

⁴ Community Accounts (n.d) Accessed April 22, 2006
www.communityaccounts.ca/communityaccounts/onlinedata/default.asp

Table 1: Population breakdown and changes 1991-2001

| | Zone 1 North Coast | Zone 2 Lab West | Zone 3 Central | Zone 4 South coast | Zone 5 Straits | Labrador |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 1991 pop | 2 985 | 12 200 | 10 050 | 2 955 | 2 185 | 30 375 |
| 2001 pop | 3 220 | 10 280 | 9 640 | 2 720 | 2 000 | 27 860 |
| % change 1991-01 | + 7.9% | -8.4% | -4.1% | -8.0% | -8.5% | -8.3% |
| Population Breakdown 2001 | | | | | | |
| < 5 yrs | 9.2% | 5.3% | 7.6% | 6.4% | 5.8% | 6.7% |
| % 5-18 yrs 2001 | 32% | 19.6% | 24.6% | 21.9% | 20.8% | 23% |
| % 18-24 yrs 2001 | 9% | 9.8% | 7.6% | 8.6% | 6.8% | 8.6% |
| % > 15 yrs | 66% | 82% | 74.5% | 79.2% | 80.5% | 77.1% |
| % seniors | 9.5% | 11% | 12.1% | 14% | 23.8% | 12.5% |

Source: Community Accounts (n.d.) Accessed 2006-04-17.

www.communityaccounts.ca/communityaccounts/onlinedata/default.asp

7.1 Post-Secondary Demographics

Of the total population in Labrador, 2 400 fall into the prime post-secondary age bracket of 18-24 years and a further 13 655 are in the 25-54 age bracket where post-secondary education may be an option. As shown in Table 2 below, almost three quarters of the post-secondary aged population resides in zones 2 and 3, western and central Labrador.

Table 2: Post-Secondary Population by Zone, 2001.

| | Zone 1 North Coast | Zone 2 Lab West | Zone 3 Central | Zone 4 South Coast | Zone 5 Straits | Labrador |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 18-24 yrs | 290 | 1 005 | 730 | 235 | 135 | 2 400 |
| 25-54 yrs | 1 280 | 5 525 | 4 625 | 1 340 | 1 340 | 13 655 |
| Total 18- 54 yrs | 1 570 | 6 530 | 5 355 | 1 575 | 1 475 | 16 055 |

Source: Community Accounts (n.d.) Accessed 2006-08-10

www.communityaccounts.ca/communityaccounts/onlinedata/default.asp

7.2 Population Projections

Population projections for the Labrador region for the upcoming five years (2006-2010) suggest very small growth for the region overall, with some variation among the five zones. These projections, based on the 2001 census and a medium scenario, are presented in Table 3 below. With news of expanded mining production in Labrador West and the opening of two new mines in that area, the projections for population growth in that area may be unduly conservative.

Table 3: Population Projections for Labrador, by zone, 2006-2010.

| | Zone 1 North Coast | Zone 2 Lab West | Zone 3 Central | Zone 4 South Coast | Zone 5 Straits | Labrador |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 2006 proj | 3 235 | 10 214 | 9 569 | 2 541 | 2 014 | 27 573 |
| 2010 proj | 3 335 | 10 265 | 9 647 | 2 495 | 2 040 | 27 782 |
| % change 2006-10 | + 3% | + 0.5% | + 0.8% | - 1.8% | + 1.3% | + 0.76% |

Source: Community Accounts (n.d.) Accessed 2006-04-17
www.communityaccounts.ca/communityaccounts/onlinedata/default.asp

7.3 Young Parenthood

Women in Labrador have children at younger ages than the rest of the province and this is most pronounced in Zone 1 where 23% of babies are born to mothers less than 20 years of age as compared to 14% in Labrador as a whole and 7% in the province.⁵ Early parenthood has implications regarding ability to travel and the supports that are required to pursue post-secondary education.

7.4 Aboriginal Population

There are three Aboriginal groups in Labrador, the Inuit, the Innu and the Métis, which together comprised approximately 30% of the total population in 1996 as shown in Table 4 below. Note that the proportion of the population that is Aboriginal varies substantially throughout the region.

⁵ Community Accounts (n.d.) Accessed April 24, 2006.
www.communityaccounts.ca/communityaccounts/onlinedata/default.asp

Table 4: Population by Ethnicity (1996 Data)

| | Zone 1 North Coast | Zone 2 Lab West | Zone 3 Central | Zone 4 South Coast | Zone 5 Straits | Labrador Total |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Population by Ethnicity | | | | | | |
| Métis | 30 | 65 | 1 440 | 1 870 | 135 | 3 555 |
| Inuit | 2 115 | 30 | 1 450 | 75 | 10 | 3 690 |
| Innu | 640 | 75 | 950 | 0 | 10 | 1 675 |
| Total Aboriginal | 2 209 (90%) | 170 (2%) | 3 840 (38%) | 1945 (68%) | 155 (7%) | 8 920 (30%) |
| Non- Aboriginal | 320 (10%) | 10 985 (98%) | 6 160 (62%) | 920 (32%) | 1 915 (93%) | 20 400 (70%) |
| Total | 3 105 | 11 155 | 10 000 | 2 865 | 2 070 | 29 320 |

Source: Institute for the Advancement of Public Policy (May 21, 2004) *Final Report Baseline Study Human Development in Labrador*. St. John's NL. Original source cited is Statistics Canada, 1996 census.

Note that the above information gives a general sense of the distribution of Aboriginal people in Labrador however it is dated and does not correlate well with the Aboriginal groups' own estimates of their populations. Innu participation in census counts has historically been less than complete and their own estimates suggest the current population is approximately 1 700 in Sheshatshiu and 650 in Natuashish. The Nunatsiavut government counts 4 662 Inuit living in Labrador, approximately 2 700 on the north coast, 1 800 in central Labrador and the remainder in Zones 2 and 4. The Métis estimate they have 7 000 members, split evenly between the south coast and central Labrador. As of 2001, the proportion of Aboriginal people in Labrador as a whole had increased to 35% of the population⁶ and it is not unreasonable to assume that the current proportion is even higher.

⁶ Statistics Canada, Census 2001. Accessed on line.

7.4.1 Innu Culture and Language

The extent to which the traditional cultures and languages of the Aboriginal groups in Labrador have been preserved varies substantially. Adherence to language and traditional culture is strongest among the Innu, the bulk of whom reside in Sheshatshiu (located in Zone 3) and Natuashish (formerly Davis Inlet, located in Zone 1). The two dialects of Innu-Aimun are the predominant languages used in conversation and at work in these two communities. Innu-Aimun is primarily a spoken language so many Innu have limited writing skills in their first language which makes acquisition of a second language that much more difficult. The lack of fluency in English has had a serious impact on Innu education from primary school onward as does the transition from a nomadic lifestyle to a community based lifestyle that was essentially imposed during the resettlement process in the 1950s and 1960s. School attendance is very sporadic, very few Innu have completed the high school curriculum and even fewer have succeeded in post-secondary education. Alcoholism, substance abuse and violence are prevalent in the Innu communities. The relative importance of the traditional versus the dominant culture is actively debated among the Innu – as one elder told his grandson, the traditional culture is necessary for the spirit but the dominant culture is where one makes money⁷. The Innu face significant challenges to train teachers and develop the Innu-Aimun curriculum materials required to revamp the primary and secondary education system to better reflect their desire to both retain their language and acquire the knowledge and skills needed to pursue post-secondary education and enter the labour market. Work is currently underway to develop an Innu-Aimun-English-French dictionary, a first step in providing a standard for written Innu-Aimun. There is also a significant need for academic upgrading/bridging for working age adults in both Innu communities to enable them to access further education and training.

7.4.2 Inuit Culture and Language

The Inuit in Labrador live primarily in five north coast communities and the Upper Lake Melville area. English is much more widely spoken among the Inuit, particularly the younger generations. Inuktitut fluency is largely confined to Inuit elders although efforts are being made to revive the language. Inuktitut language immersion programs are offered in two communities: in Nain, for kindergarten to grade 4 and in Hopedale, for kindergarten and grade 1. There are concerns about the effectiveness of the immersion program in terms of both English and Inuktitut performance. Grade four immersion children have tested at a grade one level in English⁸ which puts them at a disadvantage for the remainder of primary school and on into secondary. With the formation of the Nunatsiavut government in December, 2005, there is strong pressure in Inuit communities to revive and sustain the Inuktitut language and to educate Inuit to take on the roles and responsibilities associated with self-government to ensure that services will be available in both English and Inuktitut. Training of Inuktitut language teachers is one of the priorities for the new government, as is development of curriculum materials. The challenge of educating young Inuit to become fluent and literate in both Inuktitut and English is faced by the Nunavut Inuit as well and as Thomas Berger's recent report

⁷ Densmore, Lisa. Personal Communication , 7 April, 2006.

⁸ McNeill, Tim. Personal Communication, 25 April 2006

clearly states, this requires a “high level of commitment to both languages, together with the resources – skilled teachers, appropriate curriculum materials, and methods for assessment of student progress – in both as well”.⁹ The educational system in Nunavut is currently producing young adults who “end up without fluency or literacy in either language”.¹⁰ Much the same could be said for the Inuit communities in north coast Labrador. Work is underway to develop Inuktitut curriculum materials and there is the possibility of collaboration in teacher education and curriculum development with the Western Arctic Inuvialuit who also use Roman orthography or even the Nunavut and Nunavik Inuit. Although the latter use syllabics, transcription is getting easier.

7.4.3 Métis Culture

The Métis population is concentrated in central Labrador and the south east coast. The Métis culture is very closely tied with traditional life on the land and the sea of the south coast region. Unlike the Innu and Inuit, there is no language differential with mainstream culture. The cultural impact on education is felt primarily when students have to leave their coastal communities and adapt to a very different lifestyle in a more urban setting.

8.0 Income Levels

There is an acknowledged link between income level and the decision to pursue post-secondary education, particularly if post-secondary education facilities are not located in one’s home community.¹¹ In Labrador, income levels vary substantially among the five economic zones as shown in Table 5 below. Personal incomes in both Zone 2 western Labrador and Zone 3 central exceed the provincial average, and in the case of western Labrador, the national average is exceeded as well. This reflects the strength of the local economy in each of those zones. In Labrador West, iron ore mining and hydro- electric generation and the local businesses that supply and service these industries provide high wage employment and there is very low un-employment (9.7% in 2000 compared with a provincial rate of 21.8%)¹². In central Labrador government services and the military base provide high wage employment and again, the unemployment figure of 13.9% in 2001 is below the provincial average. In the remaining three zones, personal income is below provincial and national averages and unemployment exceeds the provincial rate. The wage economies of these zones are much less robust and employment opportunities are more limited. The combination of low income and distance from post-secondary institutions is a serious disadvantage for students from coastal Labrador and the Straits who wish to attend post-secondary institutions.

⁹ Berger, Thomas. The Nunavut Project: Conciliator’s Final Report, March 1, 2006, p30.

¹⁰ Berger, Thomas. The Nunavut Project: Conciliator’s Final Report, March 1, 2006, p.29.

¹¹ Rourke, James. (2005) *Strategies to Increase Enrolment of Students of Rural Origin to Medical School*. CMAJ 172 (1): 4-7.

¹² Community Accounts, May 2001 data. Accessed 2006-04-26.
www.communityaccounts.ca/communityaccounts/onlinedata/default.asp

Table 5: Personal Income per capita 2003

| | Personal income per capita | Zone as % of Provincial \$19 800 | Zone as % of Canada \$24 900 |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Zone 1 North Coast | 13 100 | 65.9 | 52.5 |
| Zone 2 Lab West | 29 700 | 149.7 | 119.3 |
| Zone 3 Central | 22 700 | 114.5 | 91.3 |
| Zone 4 South Coast | 16 300 | 82.4 | 65.7 |
| Zone 5 Straits | 17 800 | 89.8 | 71.6 |

Source: Community Accounts. Accessed online 2006-04-18.

www.communityaccounts.ca/communityaccounts/onlinedata/default.asp

9.0 Education

There are noticeable differences in education levels among the zones and these are illustrated in Table 6. Education levels in central and western Labrador are above the provincial average while the remaining areas are below the provincial average. Zone 2 residents show a significantly higher level of education than the remainder of Labrador and the province as a whole with only 3.4% of the population without at least a grade nine education and the highest proportion of people with a university degree in the region. The north coast region has the highest proportion of residents with less than a grade nine education although the greatest number of people with very low education is in central Labrador. Note that there are over 2 500 people aged 15 and over in Labrador who have less than a grade nine education and almost 8 000 who have not completed their high school certificate. This has substantial implications in terms of the extent of upgrading or bridging required to prepare for post-secondary education and employment. The proportion of people who have completed a university degree is very low throughout coastal Labrador and the Straits and this can have an impact on the likelihood of their children opting for university as well.

Table 6: Highest level of schooling completed (2001 data)

*** Percentage figures are based on population 15 yrs of age and older**

| | Zone 1 North Coast | Zone 2 Lab West | Zone 3 Central | Zone 4 South coast | Zone 5 Straits | Labrador |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| Total Pop ≥ 15 yrs | 2 115 | 8 350 | 7 085 | 2 145 | 1 630 | 21 330 |
| Without high school cert (Prov 42.4%) | 1 060 50.1% | 2 325 27.8% | 2 755 38.9% | 960 44.8% | 845 51.8% | 7 945 (37%) |
| Less than grd 9 (Prov 15.2%) | 575 27.2% | 285 3.4% | 910 12.8% | 540 25.2% | 360 22.1% | 2 665 (12.5%) |
| Grd 9-12 (Prov 27.1%) | 485 22.9% | 2 035 24.4% | 1 850 26.1% | 425 19.8% | 480 29.4% | 5 280 (24.7%) |
| High school only (Prov. 9.4%) | 175 8.2% | 1 050 12.6% | 500 7.1% | 215 10.0% | 220 13.5% | 2 160 (10%) |
| Trades or non- university (Prov. 27.5%) | 595 28.1% | 3 230 38.7% | 2 615 36.9% | 780 36.4% | 395 24.2% | 7 620 (36%) |
| Some university (Prov.20.8%) | 280 13.2% | 1 745 20.9% | 1 215 17.1% | 185 8.6% | 170 10.4% | 3 600 (17%) |
| Bach degree or higher (Prov. 9.5%) | 140 6.6% | 645 7.7% | 490 6.9% | 75 3.5% | 65 4.0% | 1 415 (6.6%) |
| Bach degree not completed (Prov. 11.2%) | 135 6.2% | 1 105 13.2% | 725 10.2% | 110 5.1% | 105 6.4% | 2 185 (10%) |

Note: Figures may not add up due to random rounding.

Source: Compiled by the Community Accounts Unit based on custom tabulations from the Census of Population, Statistics Canada. Accessed 2006-04-10
www.communityaccounts.ca/communityaccounts/onlinedata/default.asp

As Table 6 indicates, several Labrador zones have significant percentages of the population with less than a Grade 9 education, with the North and South Coasts and the Straits all having more than 20% of the population in this category. These figures clearly show the need for Adult Basic Education in these areas.

An additional one-quarter of the adult population does not possess a high school diploma, and these figures are similar for all zones, from a low of 19.8% in Zone 4 to a high of 29.4% in Zone 5. This particular group may also be in need of Adult Basic Education, but may also be a target population for access programs.

A further 10% of the population has only a high-school education and might therefore be candidates for post-secondary education. For those not having the necessary admission requirements for direct entry into regular post-secondary programs, transition programs would be of value.

It is interesting to note that while 17% of the adult population in Labrador has some university education, only 6.6% have completed a degree. This suggests there might be a market for Memorial University to attract such adults back to university to complete their degrees. This is especially the case in Labrador West where, even though over one-fifth of the population has some university, only 7.7% have actually completed a degree.

9.1 Secondary School System

The importance of successful completion of high school as a pre-requisite for post-secondary education cannot be overstated. The number of students emerging from secondary school and their graduation status and hence eligibility for post-secondary education, are obvious factors in the quantification of post-secondary needs. A recent Caledon Institute study concluded that high school completion is the key to post-secondary education.¹³ The same study goes on to point out that Aboriginal students who successfully complete high school go on to succeed in post-secondary education at about the same rate as everyone else.¹⁴

9.1.1 Enrolment

There are twenty schools in Labrador offering grades 10 to 12 and total high school enrolment in 2004-05 was 1 337. There are thirteen schools in Cartwright, Black Tickle, central and western Labrador and the north coast that fall within District 1, the Labrador School Board. The remaining seven high schools on the south coast and straits are in the Western School Board. The number of students enrolled in high school in 2004-05 for each zone is provided in Table 7 below. Total provincial elementary and secondary school enrolment figures have been declining an average of -3.1% per year since 2000-01 and in Labrador the enrolment decline has been slightly higher, averaging -3.8% over the past four years.¹⁵ From September 2004 to September 2005, this decline amounted to 200 fewer students in District 1 schools.¹⁶ The decline in school enrolment is consistent

¹³ Mendelson, Michael. (July, 2006) *Aboriginal Peoples and Post Secondary Education in Canada*. The Caledon Institute. p. 37.

¹⁴ Mendelson, Michael. (July 2006) *Ibid.* p. 34

¹⁵ Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Department of Education (2005). *Education Statistics – Elementary-Secondary 2003-04 and 2004-05*

¹⁶ Fleet C. Personal communication, 2006-04-11.

with, although not as rapid, as the decline in the population as a whole noted in Table 1 with the exception of the north coast region where, as of the 2001 census, the population was showing a progressive increase while school enrolment numbers have been decreasing. The reasons for this inconsistency are not clear although higher than average drop-out rates and other early school leavers may contribute to it.

Table 7: High School Enrolment by Zonal Board, 2004-05

| | Regional Economic Development Zone | | | | | Total |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|-------|
| | 1 North Coast | 2 Lab West | 3 Central | 4 South Coast | 5 Straits | |
| High Schools | 6 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 20 |
| Grade 10 | 124 | 161 | 220 | 40 | 28 | 573 |
| Grade 11 | 45 | 120 | 127 | 34 | 20 | 346 |
| Grade 12 | 35 | 121 | 113 | 39 | 38 | 346 |
| Level 4 | 22 | 1 | 36 | 7 | 6 | 72 |
| Total HS | 226 | 403 | 496 | 120 | 92 | 1 337 |

Source: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Department of Education. Education Statistics – Elementary-Secondary, 2004-05.

9.1.2 School Performance

In general, the performance of Labrador schools lags behind provincial averages using a variety of measurement criteria including attendance rate, grade 9 test scores, drop-out rates and graduation status as shown in tables 8-11. A breakdown by individual schools is necessary to isolate the Labrador schools from Western District and although the individual school data is not presented in this report, a review of it suggests that the Labrador schools in Western District are performing below the district average for many of the performance criteria.

Table 8: Attendance Rates and Average Days Absent for Labrador and Western Districts and the Province 2004-05

| School District | Attendance Rate | Avg Days Absent |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Labrador | 86.6 | 27.9 |
| Western | 92.6 | 13.5 |
| Province | 91.5 | 15.6 |

Source: Department of Education, Education Statistics – Elementary-Secondary, 2005-06

Table 9: Grade 9 Average Math Scores and selected CRT Language Arts Test Results by School District 2005

| School District | Math Avg Score | % at Lowest Performance Levels 1 and 2 | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|--|--------------|--------------|
| | | Demand Writing | Prose | Poetry |
| Labrador | 52.2 | 27.9 | 45.6 | 39.7 |
| Western Province | 56.3 54.8 | 24.5 22.7 | 32.6 31.9 | 35.8 36.3 |

Source: Department of Education, Education Statistics – Elementary-Secondary, 2005-06.

Table 10: School Drop-Out Rates by District, 2002-03 to 2003-04

| | Drop-Out Rate |
|---------------------|---------------|
| District 1 Labrador | 7.6% |
| District 2 Western | 3.7% |
| Province | 4.3% |

Source: Department of Education, Education Statistics – Elementary-Secondary, 2003-04.

Table 11: Number and Percentage of High School Graduates by Economic Zone and Graduation Status 2004-05.

| Economic Zone | Graduation Status | | | | | | Total Graduates |
|------------------|-------------------|------|----------|------|---------|------|--------------------|
| | Honours | | Academic | | General | | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | |
| Zone 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 20 | 20 | 80 | 25 |
| Zone 2 | 30 | 28.8 | 38 | 36.5 | 36 | 34.6 | 104 |
| Zone 3 | 7 | 8.4 | 36 | 43.4 | 40 | 48.2 | 83 |
| Zone 4 | 4 | 12.9 | 10 | 32.3 | 17 | 54.8 | 31 |
| Zone 5 | 5 | 17.2 | 10 | 34.5 | 14 | 48.3 | 29 |
| Labrador | 46 | 17 | 99 | 36 | 127 | 47 | 272 |
| Province | 1 180 | 21.8 | 2 263 | 41.7 | 1 980 | 36.5 | 5 423 |

Source: Department of Education, Education Statistics – Elementary-Secondary, 2005-06.

9.1.3 General Stream Graduates

The high proportion of general stream graduates, particularly on the north coast, is of grave concern because these students do not meet the entrance requirements of most, if not all, post-secondary education institutions. Guidance counsellors suggest there are a number reasons for students selecting the general option including poor attendance and performance in the lower grades, so students are too far behind for the academic stream by the time they reach high school, and a lack of understanding by students and their parents about the long term implications of selecting what is for many, the path of least resistance.

9.1.4 Retention Rates

A 10 year review of Labrador School Board senior high retention rates (ie. the actual number of graduates in a given year divided by the number of Grade 10 students two years before) shows district averages that are consistently lower than the provincial rate which averages about 77%. In 2002, the district average was 48.2%.¹⁷ On the north coast the retention situation is markedly worse than the district average. From 2000 to 2003, the average north coast retention rate ranged from a low of 19% to a high of 35%, averaging 29%. This amounted to a total of 91 graduates out of 316 grade ten students. The school in Natuashish produced no graduates out of 46 grade 10 students in that same four year period. These results are consistent with the findings of the Caledon Institute report which points out that “Aboriginal students who graduate from high school are just as likely to go onto and graduate from post-secondary education as are students from the total population. The problem is that Aboriginal students are much less likely to complete high school.”¹⁸ Even at the district level, the small numbers can make for large variations in the average figures so it can be difficult to determine trends however the ten year review suggests that, if anything, retention rates are deteriorating, particularly in the final three years of the review. The very low retention in north coast communities may help to explain the declining total enrolment in that zone despite population increases.

9.1.5 Menihek High School

Menihek High School in Labrador West is a notable exception to the overall poor high school performance in the region. It has higher than average attendance, a higher retention rate, more honours graduates, and higher public exam results than the remainder of the region and the province.

9.1.6 Innu Schools

Labrador School Board data and recent research conducted by Dr. David Philpott et al.¹⁹ indicate that the situation in the Innu schools in Natuashish and Sheshatshiu is

¹⁷ Fleet, C. Labrador School Board Senior High Retention Rates June 1992-June 2002. 2003-06-30.

¹⁸ Mendelson, Michael. (July, 2006) *Aboriginal Peoples and Post Secondary Education in Canada*. The Caledon Institute. p. 31.

¹⁹ Philpott, David, Nesbit, Wayne, Cahill, Mildred, Jeffery, Gary (2004). *An Educational Profile of the Learning Needs of Innu Youth*.

significantly worse than the remainder of Labrador and given the demographics of these communities where approximately half the population is comprised of school age youth, this is of considerable concern. Labrador School Board data indicates that there have been no high school graduates from Davis Inlet/Natuashish since June, 1996 and from 1990-96, the total number of graduates was 9. In Sheshatshiu, a total of 14 students have completed grade 12 since 1990. From 2003 to 2005, Dr. David Philpott et al. conducted research in Innu education and in a 2005 report to the Education Steering Committee, they stated that one third of 908 Innu school aged children do not attend school at all, only one third make it to the high school level where, on average, they attend only 20% of the time.²⁰ In an earlier report, the researchers noted that Innu children begin falling behind as early as the first grade and 100% of 15 year olds are at least five years behind in mathematics. They expressed “grave concern for the readiness of current students to meet prescribed graduation criteria within the next five years”.²¹ Innu children who attend school outside their community in Happy Valley –Goose Bay have much better attendance and performance however there is concern they will find it harder to retain their Innu-Aimun fluency. From a preservation of culture perspective, this is a high price to pay. If nothing else, the failure of English based education in the Innu communities has helped to preserve the Innu-Aimun language. In the absence of a standardized, written version of Innu-Aimun, let alone an Innu-Aimun curriculum, the challenges of maintaining the language are significant.

Factors contributing to the failure of primary and secondary education in Innu communities include language difficulties for Innu-Aimun speaking students in English language schools with non-Innu-Aimun speaking teachers, rampant alcohol abuse and its negative consequences including Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and low school attendance. Philpott et al. suggest that 35% of Innu youth display learning difficulties consistent with FASD, and that the situation is worse in Natuashish than Sheshatshiu.²² Innu youth also do not make the link between a satisfying job and post-secondary education, or even high school completion. Only 51% of students reported high school graduation was a goal although 80% of parents and 87% of teachers see it as a goal.²³ Turnover of teachers in Innu communities is an ongoing problem – a 60% turnover rate occurred in Natuashish from 2003-04, when the school had its first full complement of teachers, to 2004-05. Childcare is also an issue for school age Innu who have children of their own.

The failure of the elementary and secondary school system in Innu communities has been a long standing problem and there is now a significant number of adults who will require upgrading to high school equivalency level if they wish to pursue any further education. The only real option for upgrading has been Adult Basic Education (ABE). The College of the North Atlantic offers ABE levels two and three programming however students entering ABE level two frequently require four or more years to complete the program.

²⁰ Philpott, David, Nesbit, Wayne, Cahill, Mildred, Jeffery, Gary. (2005) *Enhancing Innu Education Report to the Education Steering Committee December 2005*. Memorial University of Newfoundland. p. 5

²¹ Philpott, David, Nesbit, Wayne, Cahill, Mildred, Jeffery, Gary (2004). *An Educational Profile of the Learning Needs of Innu Youth*, pp.14-15.

²² Philpott et al. 2004 p. 17

²³ Philpott et al. 2004. p. 21

Until very recently, ABE Level 1 literacy programs have not been funded and therefore were not readily available. Philpott notes that fewer than 20 adults in each of the two Innu communities (18 in Natuashish and 13 in Sheshatshiu) have completed basic literacy programs since 1992²⁴ and college data indicates a total of 32 adults from the two communities have completed ABE level three in the same time frame.²⁵ The Department of Education recently announced funding for Level 1 literacy programming which may better address the needs of the Innu population. Innu education advisors are suggesting that a form of continuous intake bridging/access programming, incorporating English as a Second Language (ESL) methodology, provided in the communities, together with associated childcare services, is required.

The responsibility for education in the Innu communities is affected by their reserve status and currently Natuashish is a reserve and Sheshatshiu soon will be.

9.1.7 Other Labrador Schools

A number of factors which contribute to the difficulties in Innu schools apply to other schools in Labrador as well. Low attendance is a problem in most Labrador schools as noted in Table 8. Students are absent almost thirty days a year on average. School counsellors suggest that students in coastal Labrador in particular, do not find the curriculum particularly relevant to their own situation and this may help to explain the high absenteeism and drop out rates. On the north coast, FASD is a problem in non-Innu communities as well. In 2002, 35 children were assessed in Hopedale and 26 were diagnosed with some level of FASD.²⁶ It is suspected that FASD is also an issue in Nain. The cumulative effect of low attendance and the distraction of coping with the effects of alcoholism, suicide and unemployment in the north coast communities leaves many students too far behind to cope with the academic and advanced courses they need in high school to carry on to post-secondary education.

Students in south coast and straits schools gravitate toward the general stream to a greater extent than students in central and western Labrador. Discussion with the travelling guidance counsellor suggests this is due to a number of factors including inadequate career counselling, particularly in the lower grades, a lack of understanding among parents of the importance of the academic and advanced courses for post-secondary education, and student apathy. Parental and family concern about children leaving coastal communities for post-secondary education and never returning can also be a deterrent. Very small schools and a shortage of specialist math and science teachers are also factors although students who are committed to post-secondary education can and do avail of the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation option for the courses they need.

²⁴ Philpott et al. 2005. p.13

²⁵ Hill, Robin. Personal Communication. 2006-05-24

²⁶ Institute for the Advancement of Public Policy. (2004) *Final Report Baseline Study Human Development in Labrador*. p. 8.

9.1.8 Teacher Turnover and Training

Recruitment and retention of teachers has been a longstanding problem in Labrador. In coastal Labrador schools, there is a 40% turnover of teachers²⁷ and many of the teachers have limited or no teaching experience. Given the cultural differences and prevalence of social problems, particularly in north coast communities, teachers often face challenging situations in their classrooms and do not have the skills with which to address them. Advanced training in counselling skills, cross cultural issues and English as a second language would be very helpful to teachers but is not part of conventional teacher training. Specialist teachers for high school math and science courses are difficult to recruit and with very small numbers of students, most teachers are teaching in more than one subject area. Both the Innu and Inuit recognize the importance of establishing a pool of Aboriginal teachers who are trained to address the unique needs in their schools and to reduce the recruitment and retention problem. The Teacher Education Program in Labrador (TEPL) was developed with this objective in mind however it has had very limited success, in large part because it did not meet the needs of participants.

9.1.9 Distance Learning

Advanced math, English and science courses are offered through the Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation (CDLI) and some are delivered synchronously, with a teacher on-line. The half hour time difference creates scheduling difficulties for CDLI students in schools north of Black Tickle however students in coastal schools are at least able to access these courses when they are not offered at their local schools. In the absence of specialist teachers, it is well recognized that it is a challenge for students to take on CDLI courses for advanced high school math and science courses in particular. For Aboriginal students who tend to be experiential, hands-on learners, CDLI is a major struggle. At this time, CDLI is the only option for those students living in coastal communities who wish to pursue post-secondary education and who do not want to relocate for high school. CDLI is being used for Math 3204, 3205, English 3201 and Chemistry 3202 on the north and south coast and in North West River (central Labrador). Physics 3204 is offered in only two schools in Labrador (Lab West and Central) and is not being done via CDLI in any of the remaining schools. Guidance counsellors report that it is only the highly motivated students who are willing to take on the additional challenge of doing CDLI courses but for these students, the experience helps them to develop the independent study skills they will require for post-secondary studies.

9.1.10 Education and Employment Link

In coastal communities where employment opportunities are very limited many students do not see the value in education, nor do they make the connection between employment and education. In communities where high levels of education have not been a requirement for any of the available jobs and certainly are not necessary for traditional lifestyle activities such as hunting or fishing, students see no point in persevering with

²⁷ Department of Education. Indicator 2004 A Report on Schools. Accessed on-line 2006-04-28 at <http://www.communityaccounts.ca/CommunityAccounts/OnlineData/relatedsite.asp?urltogo=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Egov%2Enl%2Eca%2Fedu%2Fpub%2Find04%2Fmain%2Ehtm>

school. In central and western Labrador where the wage economy is more widely diversified, there are many local examples of trades and professions that require post-secondary education. The obvious local connection between education and employment presumably plays a role in the success of Menihek high school however the high school guidance counsellor in central Labrador reports that student apathy is evident even when the education-employment link is readily apparent.²⁸

9.1.11 Guidance/Career Counselling

Schools with fewer than 500 students do not warrant a guidance counsellor allocation so all the schools in zones 4 and 5, and three communities in Zone 1 do not have in-school guidance counselling available. There is however an Inuit Education Counsellor based in Makkovik who travels to all north coast Inuit communities to provide career/education information to students. The Labrador School Board has two educational assessment officers who also travel to coastal communities and the Western Board has two counsellors assigned to the straits and south coast schools. The availability of guidance/career counselling by zone is summarized below.

Zone 1 North Coast: Nain and Hopedale have in-school counsellors
Inuit Education Counsellor based in Makkovik travels the north coast

Two educational assessment officers from District 1 travel to coastal communities in zones 1 and 4.

Zone 2 Lab West: Primary, middle and high schools have one counsellor each.

Zone 3 Central: Primary, middle and high schools in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Sheshatshiu school have one counsellor each. Travelling counsellor serves North West River school.

Zone 4 South Coast: Travelling counsellors from Districts 1 and 2, shared with north coast and Straits.

Zone 5 Straits: Travelling counsellors from District 2 shared with south coast.

The extent to which guidance counsellors can offer career counselling to students varies substantially among the zones. The north coast guidance counsellors and the Inuit Education Counsellor report that there is insufficient time available for career counselling due to the need to address other more critical issues the students face on a daily basis. They also suggest that the career counselling needs to begin at a very early age so that students recognize the importance of not falling behind in the lower grades. In the south coast and straits regions, the guidance counsellors travel to six or more schools each and career counselling does not receive the attention it needs. Students are frequently unaware of the variety of career options available. Guidance counsellors in western and

²⁸ Strickland, Wayne. Personal Communication. 2006-04-28.

central Labrador report that they have sufficient time to assist students with career planning. They offer presentations to classes in grade 10 and 12 and see grade 12 students on an individual basis to assist them with post-secondary education planning. As of September, 2005, all high school students will be exposed to career planning through the new Career Education course which will be compulsory for high school graduation in 2008. College of the North Atlantic, Memorial and other Canadian university representatives visit the high schools in central and western Labrador one or more times a year to present information about their offerings. A Memorial University representative also travels to coastal Labrador. All guidance counsellors contacted for this report commented on the high level of student apathy when it comes to planning for post-secondary education and careers.

9.1.12 Post High School Plans

A 2003 survey²⁹ of high school students in districts 1 and 2 revealed that 72% of students had plans for their future career. At that time health/community studies and skilled trades were the two most commonly cited planned programs of study. Most of the respondents intended to go to university (57%) or community college (19%). The study suggested that just over half of all high school students (52%) and almost three quarters (72%) of grade 12 students knew the educational requirements for their selected program and over 80% of them found out about education requirements through their own research or through family and friends. When it came to finding out about the specific requirements for college or university, again students most commonly cited their own research (34%) and family and friends (30%). Career counsellors were cited as a source of information only 9% of the time for education requirements and 28% of the time for specific admission requirements.

9.1.13 Post High School Status

The high school survey suggests 76% of students plan on university or college after high school however the graduation status results presented in Table 11 reveal that almost half (47%) of Labrador students graduate with a general diploma, which renders them ineligible for admission to many post-secondary education institutions. The actual post high school status of 2001 graduates was surveyed and the results, presented in Table 12, are more consistent with the graduation status numbers. Note that the Table 12 data is dated and does not reflect the Nunatsiavut Government policy that came into effect in 2002-03 to have Inuit post-secondary students attend their first year of university in the Transfer Year program at the Happy Valley-Goose Bay campus of the College.

²⁹ Labrador Regional Strategic Social Plan and Futures in Newfoundland and Labrador's Youth (2003). *The Future Plans of High School Students of the Labrador Regions: Survey Results.*

Table 12: Post High School Status of 2001 Labrador High School Graduates

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| Out of province university | 19.9% |
| College of the North Atlantic | 19.2% |
| Working | 17.3% |
| Memorial University | 13.7% |
| Unemployed | 7.5% |
| Non post-secondary | 4.2% |
| NL private college | 2.3% |
| Out of province college | 2.3% |
| Unknown | 13.7% |

Source: Post-secondary/Employment Status at Time of Survey, Fall 2001-Winter 2002. Corporate Planning and Research, Department of Youth Services and Post-Secondary Education. Labrador Strategic Social Plan Region.

9.1.14 Memorial University Participation

Table 12 suggests that Labrador high school graduates prefer out of province universities and the College of the North Atlantic to Memorial University for post-secondary education. Participation data gathered by Memorial University and the College of the North Atlantic shows a breakdown of high school graduates, their eligibility to attend Memorial and whether or not they do by zone and the results for 2005 are presented in Table 13 below. Results for St. John's high schools are presented for comparison purposes. Transfer year registrations for 2005 are also presented. A breakdown of transfer students' eligibility for MUN was not available by zone however overall, half of the 44 Labrador transfer students were eligible for MUN in 2005. For these students, the option of doing their first year in Labrador was obviously preferable to moving away.

9.1.15 Department of Education Strategies

The Department of Education is planning or has implemented a number of initiatives directed at improving success rates in the K-12 system. These include an examination of the effectiveness of CDLI and possible enhancements or revisions to meet the needs of coastal Labrador students, field trips for junior and senior high students to work sites and post-secondary institutions, professional development sessions for teachers on issues such as FASD, the coastal Labrador Institute for new teachers, enhanced teacher allocations, a recruitment and retention bonus and summer camps.

Table 13: Labrador High School by Zone and St. John's High School Participation at Memorial University and Labrador based College University Transfer Year, 2005

| | June Grads | Eligible for MUN | Eligibles attending MUN | Transfer Year |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Zone 1 North Coast | 25 | 2 (8%) | 0 | 5 |
| Zone 2 Lab West | 88 | 44 (50%) | 15 (34%) | 14 |
| Zone 3 Central | 79 | 25 (32%) | 5 (20%) | 24 |
| Zone 4 South Coast | 31 | 13 (42%) | 7 (54%) | 1 |
| Zone 5 Straits | 29 | 13 (45%) | 9 (69%) | 0 |
| Labrador Total | 252 | 97 (38%) | 36 (37%) | 44* |
| St. John's | 1 638 | 943 (57.6%) | 779 (82.6%) | |

* 22/44 (50%) eligible for MUN, 19/44 (43%) had <70%, 3/44 (7%) ABE or mature student entry

Source: Memorial University (2006), Centre for Institutional Analysis and Planning, College of the North Atlantic, Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Labrador City Campuses (2006).

The variation in eligibility among zones in Labrador is consistent with the high school performance data presented earlier. Labrador West has the highest proportion of graduates eligible to attend Memorial and Menihek High School performance is the best in the region. North Coast school performance is below the regional average and the very low proportion of graduates eligible for Memorial reflects this. The proportion of eligible graduates who opt to attend Memorial also varies among the zones with the South Coast and Straits area students being most likely to attend Memorial. This may reflect a closer affiliation with the Island portion of the province felt by the residents of these zones and reduced travel costs, particularly in the Straits. In the case of North Coast high school graduates, virtually all of whom are Inuit, the Nunatsiavut Post Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) mandates that their first year of university be done in Labrador through the transfer year program offered at the College of the North Atlantic. In the three years that the transfer program has been in place, PSSSP student performance in year one of university has improved and this is attributed to the additional supports and smaller class size available at the College, and the reduction in “culture shock” and easier transition associated with being able to stay in Labrador.³⁰ Guidance counsellors in Labrador West suggest that students opting for out of province universities are often looking for smaller universities in small towns and Métis Nation representatives report that their students prefer the smaller class sizes and the smaller town setting of the Corner Brook campus of Memorial. Many Labrador students, particularly from coastal

³⁰ Brennan, Lucy. Personal Communication, 2006-04-28.

communities, find the St. John's campus very intimidating and would benefit from additional support services on campus, including such options as a peer mentor program, and a mandatory orientation to campus.

The comparison with St. John's high school results show higher eligibility and much higher participation rates for these schools. This illustrates the difference in outcomes between the urban schools and Labrador schools, and is a reflection of the advantages of minimum distance and reduced cost for post-secondary education enjoyed by St. John's residents and the challenges of cultural and social issues faced by Labrador residents.

10.0 Post-Secondary Education

The demographic and high school data presented thus far help to quantify the potential "market" for post-secondary education among Labrador residents and these numbers are summarized below. Given the demographic trend, the number of high school graduates per year is likely to decline rather than increase in the near future. Note that with high school retention rates at less than 50% and almost 50% of those who do graduate exiting with a general diploma, there is significant room for improvement in the total number of high school graduates and the number who qualify for post-secondary education. Potential gains in high school completion could produce up to a four-fold increase in the number of post-secondary ready students, more than offsetting the trend toward declining population.

Table 14: Potential Post-Secondary Education Participants (2001 Census, 2004-2005 Dept of Education data)

| | |
|--|-------|
| High school general stream graduates/yr | 127 |
| High school honours/academic graduates/yr: | 145 |
| High school graduates eligible for Memorial/yr | < 100 |
| Residents >15 yrs: with less than grd 9 | 2 665 |
| with some high school | 5 280 |
| with some university | 3 600 |
| Bachelor degree or higher | 1 415 |

10.1 Current Post-Secondary Offerings

There is a range of post-secondary education available in Labrador and this is summarized in Table 15 below.

Table 15: Post-Secondary Education Offerings by Zone

| Location | Institution | Program |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Zone 1 North Coast | CNA Learning Centres in each community | Adult Basic Education Contract training such as Early Childhood Education, Office Administration, Crane Operator, Northern Cooking and Hospitality, Home Support, Carpentry, Human Services Worker and Heavy Equipment offered in various communities |
| Zone 2 Lab West | College of the North Atlantic | Comprehensive Arts and Science: College University Transfer Year First year Engineering Technology Mining Technology Adult Basic Education |
| | RSM Safety and Training Private Training Institution | Heavy Duty Equipment training |
| Zone 3 Central | College of the North Atlantic: Happy Valley-Goose Bay and North West River campuses | Comprehensive Arts and Science (CAS): College University Transfer Year CAS: College Transition Integrated Nursing Access Program -Yr 1 and 2 of BN (Collaborative) Adult Basic Education Automotive Service Technician Business Administration Community Studies Construction/Industrial Electrician Environmental Technology (yr 1) Common First Year Engineering Technology (as of Sept 06) Heavy Duty Equipment Technician Industrial Mechanic (Millwright) |

| Location | Institution | Program |
|--------------------|--|---|
| | Memorial University | Office Administration Welder Teacher Education Program in Labrador |
| Zone 4 South Coast | College of the North Atlantic: Port Hope Simpson Learning Centre | Adult Basic Education |
| Zone 5 Straits | None | |

10.2 Distance Learning

Both the College of the North Atlantic and Memorial University offer a wide range of distance learning courses which are accessible on-line. Distributed Learning Services (DLS) at the College of the North Atlantic delivers WebCT courses that are supplemented with real-time options, including video conferencing, web casting and live chat sessions among students and faculty. The Central Newfoundland study of post-secondary education access revealed that a combination of factors including lack of variety, applied learning obstacles, and student ability render access to post-secondary education by distance a less than optimal route, particularly for recent high school graduates.³¹ For working professionals and young retirees, distance is often a more attractive option and for these groups, the priorities are to find a distance program that meets their specific need and to be able to complete the entire program by distance. Career counselling is often an issue for people who want to retrain or upgrade their skills but are unsure how to go about it or in what field. Adults who are not computer literate face significant challenges with on-line learning. Additional career counselling and computer support for distance learners at the local level could lead to increased participation. For this group, flexibility in terms of timing is also a factor – continuous intake is more appealing than a fixed schedule. MUN and CNA distance programs are competing with those offered by institutions outside the province such as Athabasca and BC Open University. Round table discussions in Labrador City in 2004 revealed that most of the professionals working on graduate and degree programs in Labrador West opt for Athabasca due to the flexibility and variety of courses available.

10.3 Marine Institute

The Marine Institute has had a long standing Memorandum of Understanding with the College of the North Atlantic to work together to provide marine related training in Labrador. When a need is identified by a community or group in Labrador, contact is made with the Business Development office at the college or directly with the Marine Institute. Instructors travel to Labrador to deliver courses on site in the communities or at

³¹ SPR Associates. *Improving Access to Post-Secondary Education in Central Newfoundland: A 2004 Assessment*. 2004-10, pp.27-28.

the College in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Courses range from a few days for Marine Emergency Duty to eight to ten weeks for Fishing Master or Bridge Watch and the number of participants varies up to a maximum of 15. From September, 2005 until end June, 2006, four different courses were offered a total of 14 times in five different Labrador communities with approximately 150 participants.³² Local logistics are coordinated through the College and participants have the benefit of receiving the training in their own community. This approach works well on the north and south coasts and central Labrador where the Aboriginal groups and/or the College act to initiate the training on behalf of a number of individuals. In the Straits region, there is no local college representative, nor is there an Aboriginal group representing the region and individual residents who require training are left to their own devices to organize themselves, a much more difficult process.

10.4 Ad-Hoc University Programming

Memorial University has made attempts to offer selected courses and programs on an ad-hoc basis in Labrador, albeit with limited success in recent years. A combination of high delivery costs, faculty availability issues and a small market, present significant challenges to ad-hoc programming. The recent attempt to deliver the Centre for Management Development's Masters in Project Management program in Happy Valley-Goose Bay highlights these challenges. Despite efforts on the part of the Métis Business Centre to promote the program and initial indications of sufficient interest, it was cancelled at the last minute due to insufficient registration. With small numbers of potential participants, and varying needs in terms of content, scheduling and financial support, considerable advance planning and "beating of the bushes" is required locally to ensure there is sufficient participation to warrant delivery. Given the small numbers, it is critical that ad-hoc courses address issues of interest and relevance to Labrador. The Atlantic Aboriginal Languages course is an example of relevant content. University administrative and faculty flexibility in terms of adjusting pre-requisites, delivery format and if necessary content, to meet local needs is equally important. Although considerable time and energy is required to ensure success, ad-hoc programming does enhance post-secondary visibility in the region and, when planned well in advance, in close collaboration with local university staff, it offers potential long term benefits to both the university and local residents.

10.5 Financial Support for Post-Secondary Education

There is considerable financial support for post-secondary education available to Aboriginal students living in Labrador, particularly the Innu and the Inuit. All Aboriginal students can access the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement (AHRDA) through Human Resource Development and Service Canada and some have access to

³² Earle, Debbie, Personal Communication, 2006-08-03.

direct funding as well as explained below. For students living in coastal Labrador, this helps to offset the additional travel cost and lower income of most households.

10.5.1 Innu

In addition to AHRDA, the Innu offer financial assistance covering tuition, books, some travel and living expenses for post-secondary education. To date, they have had five students complete university degrees and five students are currently enrolled.

10.5.2 Métis

The Métis do not receive any direct funding for post-secondary support however their members have been able to access AHRDA funding. The guidelines for AHRDA funding have changed recently and the program will no longer fund the first two years of a university program however it will cover the final four semesters. It does provide support for college programs with the exception of the transfer year. On average, about 100 students per year access funding through the Métis Nation and AHRDA. Exact numbers of graduates were not provided however it was noted that most students who pursue post-secondary education opt for traditional careers such as education, nursing and engineering.

10.5.3 Inuit

The Nunatsiavut Government (formerly the Labrador Inuit Association) has offered financial assistance to their members through the Post Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) since 1986-87. The program provides funding for tuition, books, living expenses and some travel and to date, 482 students have completed post-secondary programs, with another 29 expected to graduate this year. In recent years, the program has supported on average 120 to 130 students per year, approximately 40% of whom are mature students who have families. Initially, the program experienced a very high drop-out rate among its students, often within the first year or two of their post-secondary programs, attributed to a combination of a weak academic background, non-existent study skills and significant difficulty adjusting to the transition from coastal Labrador to a large city. Additional counselling and supports have been built into the program over the years to help prepare students for post-secondary education. Since the advent of the college-university transfer year at the College of the North Atlantic in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, all PSSSP students who wish to attend university are required to do their first year at the College in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. This year allows students to acquire independent study, money and time management skills in addition to the academic credits in a supportive environment that is not quite as far removed geographically and culturally from their home communities. In the past five years, the percentage of PSSSP students opting for college (including the transfer year) over university has gradually increased from 32% to 51%. The PSSSP Director reports that there has been an improvement in the success rates of students who complete the transfer year prior to going on to second year at Memorial.

10.6 College of the North Atlantic Programming

Between 1997 and 2004 there were 870 graduates of programs delivered by the College of the North Atlantic, Happy Valley-Goose Bay Campus and learning centres in coastal Labrador. This includes 181 ABE graduates. The remainder of the students graduated from business, applied arts and trades programs. The College delivered contract-training programs to 392 students from 2000-2004 and these were primarily trades and access programs. The College has also facilitated delivery of a number of Marine Institute training programs in coastal Labrador. The College has a reputation for being flexible and responsive to the needs in Labrador. Enrolment of Aboriginal students in particular has been increasing at the Happy Valley-Goose Bay campus and this has led to serious space constraints in the existing building. Further to a recommendation in the White Paper on Post-Secondary Education, funding has been approved for an expansion to the existing facilities and construction is now underway.

10.6.1 College-University Transfer

The College University Transfer Year (CUTY) was first offered in Labrador City in 1990. The Labrador City campus has had as many as 100 students enrolled in the past but in recent years, numbers have dropped to approximately 20 students/year. The decline is attributed in part to the decline in high school enrolment and also to the popularity of the Mining Technician Program which comes complete with excellent job prospects in the local area. In Happy Valley-Goose Bay, the transfer year was first offered in 2002-03 and in the four years it has been running, it has averaged approximately 32 students a year. The transfer year offers students a number of advantages over direct entry to university including a reduced entry requirement (60% minimum instead of 70% for Memorial), lower tuition costs (\$726/semester college fee versus \$1 275/semester university tuition fee), smaller class size and additional instructor support. For many students, it provides an opportunity to develop the independent study skills they will require in university. For coastal students who have to leave home to attend, budgeting, banking and independent living skills are also acquired. Inuit students who receive university funding through the PSSSP are obliged to do their first year of university in Labrador through the Transfer Year. Currently, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Math, and English are offered live at both Labrador campuses and Folklore and Psychology are offered live at one site and via 2 way video at the other. The range of courses offered live is adequate for students interested in pursuing science related programs however it provides limited options for arts and business students. English, Folklore and Psychology are the only first year arts courses offered live. Additional arts courses such as French, History, Sociology, Business and Economics have been suggested as worthwhile additions that would allow first year arts and business students a broader slate of first year courses however small numbers may preclude live instruction. In theory students can access French and Economics via video-conference from other college campuses or via on-line distance education from the college or the university however there is no history course available and video-conference with other campuses presents scheduling challenges. Anecdotal reports from transfer students who are taking

a combination of live and distance instruction courses suggest that students have much more success with the courses taught live. The college does not do any follow-up of transfer graduates to determine their success rates in second year and beyond, although as noted earlier, the PSSSP experience indicates for Inuit students at least, it has been a success. Memorial University and the college collaborated on a study of CUTY students in 2000 and the results of that study indicated that students entering CUTY with an average below 70% did not fare well, either in CUTY or, for the few who progressed, in second year at Memorial.³³

10.6.2 Demand for Second Year Courses

The Student Services Coordinator at the Happy Valley-Goose Bay campus of the college indicated that there is a demand for second year courses, particularly from mature students with families who want to do as much of their education as possible without moving away from home. A number of students have opted to spend a second year at the college doing as many electives from their chosen program as possible to reduce the length of time they will have to spend away from home. Others complete first year but are not willing to move away to complete their degree. With doctorate and masters level instructors at both Labrador campuses, there is local capacity to deliver second year courses. Further progression will require sufficient demand (this has not yet been quantified) and willingness on the part of the various university faculties and departments. Intersession and/or summer institute second year courses provided by existing or visiting professors are also an option.

10.6.3 Comprehensive Arts and Science: College University Transition

In recognition of the large number of students emerging from high school with weaknesses in one or more areas and insufficiently high marks to meet post-secondary direct entry requirements, the College initiated a pilot program called the Comprehensive Arts and Science: College University Transition in 2005-06. Students can enter this program with a 50% average in a prescribed list of academic high school courses. The program has not yet been evaluated. Discussion with instructors reveals that some students struggle to meet all their academic upgrading needs in the 30 to 37 weeks allocated for the program.

10.6.4 Business, Applied Arts, Trades and Technology Programs

As noted in Table 14, there is a wide range of business, applied arts, trades and technology programs offered at the College of the North Atlantic in both Labrador City and Happy Valley-Goose Bay. The types of offerings vary with changes in local needs and efforts are made to anticipate future labour market needs when planning programs. Apprenticeship training is organized through the Institutional and Industrial Education

³³ Wattan, Sharon, Luther, Glenn. (June 2000). *An Analysis of Performance and Transition of the 1998 College Transfer Year Students*. Centre for Institutional Analysis and Planning, Memorial University.

Division of the Department of Education and the Industrial Training Officer for the Labrador region is based at the Happy Valley-Goose Bay campus. With increasing numbers of programs being offered, space constraints, particularly at the Happy Valley-Goose Bay campus, present an ongoing challenge. As noted earlier, construction is underway for an extension to the present building which, when built, will ease the overcrowding. Another challenge for the public college is the need to stay current with equipment for trades and technology programs. This is an issue in the Heavy Equipment Operator program where college graduates are discovering that they do not have sufficient seat time on up to date equipment to meet mining employers' needs. Until recently, a private training institution, RSM Safety and Training has offered Heavy Equipment training in Labrador City with up to date equipment and on the job training at the Iron Ore Company (IOC) mine.

10.6.5 Labrador West Trades Training

The boom in the iron ore industry and the current and projected future demand for skilled workers has meant for a strong uptake in the Mining Technician program in Labrador West. With 50% of IOC's workforce eligible to retire by 2010 and the current boom in production, 285 additional apprentices are required at IOC alone in the next four years³⁴. The trades in highest demand are millwright, electrical, heavy equipment repair, and welding, all of which are currently offered at the Happy Valley-Goose Bay campus of the College although many of the students in these programs are from Labrador West. There is strong grass roots and industry support in Labrador West for relocation of the trades training to the Labrador City campus however the cyclical nature of trades demand and the high cost of establishing additional training facilities are significant deterrents for a public college with existing capacity elsewhere. IOC has recently put out tenders for trades training in Labrador West and the local need may be filled by the private sector. Consideration is being given to developing the initial portion of trades training for web delivery and the opportunity exists ultimately to develop a partnership between the College and the Red Seal Program to design or purchase existing WebCT apprenticeship programs that could be delivered across Canada.

10.6.6 College-University Harmonization and Articulation

Considerable progress has been made in the effort to facilitate course laddering and transfer of credit for students who complete College courses or programs and who wish to apply these credits toward a university degree. This information is summarized annually in the Transfer Guides published by the Atlantic Provinces Community College Consortium and the Newfoundland and Labrador Council on Higher Education. Further collaboration between the College of the North Atlantic and Memorial University will help to ensure maximum portability of learning and credits thereby encouraging students to stay in the province to complete their post-secondary education.

³⁴ Gear, Diane, Labrador City Economic Development Officer. Personal communication, May 4, 2006.

11.0 Labour Market Factors

While employment is not the only purpose of education, for most people it is one of the primary objectives. As noted earlier, labour market studies in this province do not provide reliable occupational data at the regional and zonal level in Labrador due to the large numbers of occupations and the small number of people in this region. There are a number of developments in the region which do offer some indication of current and future employment opportunities. These include:

- large numbers of retiring mining workers combined with two new mines proposed in the vicinity of Labrador West and expanded production at existing mines and additional housing construction imply increased employment for skilled trades in Labrador West.
- mineral exploration work in the Churchill River and elsewhere in Labrador may generate additional employment in the exploration and mineral testing and analysis fields.
- the current and forecast worsening shortage of nurses at the national level makes recruiting for remote, northern places like Labrador even more difficult. As in other fields, the skill set required for work in Labrador is specific to the region and must be incorporated into the training. The INAP program will address Inuit needs for the immediate future but it does not address the future needs in the rest of Labrador.

11.1 Specific Requirements

In Zones 1,3, north coast and central Labrador:

- The formation of the Nunatsiavut government in December 2005 has resulted in demand for Inuit with public administration and business management skills, in addition to natural resource, such as fishery and wildlife, management skills.
- There is a strong demand for math, science, and, with the increasing fragility of the Innu-Aimun and Inuktitut languages, bilingual Inuktitut/English and Innu-Aimun/English teachers and curriculum materials for them to use.

In Zone 2, Labrador West:

- Millwright, electrical, heavy equipment repair, welding and construction trades and human resource management skills are required with rapid expansion in the mining industry.

- Programs such as the Degree in Post Secondary Education for relatively young, retiring mining professionals who wish to pursue a second career.

11.2 *Employment Constraints*

The low educational levels that prevail throughout most of coastal and central Labrador imply a strong need for preparatory/bridging/access type programs to enable people to pursue further training and education that will lead to employment. The Impact and Benefit Agreements that were signed by the Innu and Inuit stipulate that Voisey's Bay employees must have a high school education and this has meant that many Aboriginal people are unable to access employment at the Voisey's Bay development due to their limited education and skills.

12.0 *Post Secondary Success Stories in Labrador*

A number of post-secondary education, training and research projects have been notable success stories in Labrador and much can be learned from them.

12.1 *Integrated Nursing Access Program*

In January, 2005, the College of the North Atlantic Happy Valley-Goose Bay campus launched the Integrated Nursing Access Program (INAP) which was developed in collaboration with the BN (Collaborative) program at Memorial University with funding primarily from the Nunatsiavut government. This program integrates Adult Basic Education/high school content with first year nursing content and specific university skills and is being delivered using a case based approach over a two and half year period. It was developed specifically for Inuit students and the content incorporates culturally relevant material. After completing INAP, students will go on to second year of the BN (Collaborative) program in Happy Valley-Goose Bay before proceeding to do third and fourth year at the Corner Brook site. Students are 16 months into the program and an evaluation project is underway at this time. The results to date, in terms of student retention and performance, have been very encouraging. The INAP model has the potential to serve as a template for Social Work and Teacher Education in Labrador

12.2 *Northern Family Medicine (NORFAM) Program*

The NORFAM program is a seven month component of Memorial University's Family Medicine residency training program that is delivered in Labrador. It was developed by a

Labrador physician in collaboration with the Family Medicine Unit at the Faculty of Medicine. The objective of the program is to expose residents to rural, northern, Aboriginal family practice during their training in the hope that more will choose this type of practice after graduation and that those who do choose it will be well prepared for the unique requirements of this type of practice. It has been in place for 15 years and many of its graduates have returned to work in Labrador, making it one of the few rural regions in this country that is not suffering from a severe shortage of family physicians.

12.3 *Innu Environmental Guardianship Program*

The Innu Nation began work with Saint Mary's University and the Gorsebrook Research Institute on the Ashkui research project in 1998 and as the Innu assumed an increasing role in environmental monitoring work with the Voisey's Bay development, the Trans-Labrador Highway construction and the District 19 forestry co-management agreement, they worked with Saint Mary's university to develop training modules designed to address their employment related educational needs. Five modules have been delivered covering such topics as ethnography, statistics, fisheries and language and participants have received a half-credit for each module through the Continuing Education department at St. Mary's University. The two week modules have been delivered on site in Labrador, at times "on the land" where the work is being done, and have been very well received by the Innu Nation and the participating employees.

12.4 *Makkovik Archaeology Project*

The Central Coast of Labrador Community Archaeology project began in 1999 when a Smithsonian Institute archaeologist, Dr. Stephen Loring hired five students from Makkovik to help him with an archaeological dig at Long Tickle, just outside of Makkovik. The work continued for five years at Long Tickle and a new dig is scheduled for summer 2006 further up the coast, with four more students from Hopedale and Makkovik to be hired. In addition to a summer job, the students gained an understanding of what archaeology is all about and had hands on involvement in digging up their own history. The results of the study were presented each year to the community of Makkovik and a book, Anguti's Amulet was produced as a result of the project. The work inspired several of the students to pursue post-secondary studies and one of the students who was involved has just completed her degree in anthropology and archaeology. Among Labradorians, it is considered a model research project with significant involvement of and long lasting benefits to local residents.

13.0 Post-Secondary Failure

As much or more can be learned from failure as success, particularly when it occurs despite the best intentions of all parties involved. There is general agreement in Labrador that the Teacher Education Program in Labrador (TEPL) has been a failure and it is important to consider the reasons for this.

13.1 *Teacher Education Program in Labrador*

The importance of training Innu and Inuit teachers for work in Labrador has long been recognized. The Teacher Education Program in Labrador (TEPL), a 20 credit diploma program linked to the Native and Northern option of Memorial's Bachelor of Education, was developed by Memorial to address this need almost 30 years ago. It has been revised twice since its inception however, to date, it has been less than optimally successful with 33 graduates in 27 years³⁵. The Innu have withdrawn their participation in it, opting to explore options with McGill University which has had some success in teacher training for the Cree in northern Quebec.³⁶ The Inuit have only two students remaining in the program and there have been no courses delivered in Labrador for the past three years. There is considerable frustration expressed by both Innu and Inuit over the failure of the program to meet their needs. Planning for significant program revision is currently underway and students who are interested in the program have been encouraged to wait for its launch. The pace of reform however leaves much to be desired.

It is worthwhile to consider the reasons why the TEPL program has not been as successful as expected. Educators and Aboriginal groups agree that the TEPL program was not successful in identifying or ensuring a consistent academic level of incoming students and consequently, students were faced with courses for which they did not have adequate academic background. Despite the high priority of language training for Inuit and Innu teachers, there are only four language related credits in the program. The TEPL history also highlights the significant challenges associated with developing and delivering relevant and appropriate post-secondary programming in Labrador, particularly when educators are based outside the region and do not have a full understanding of the local needs. In its final report, The Baseline Study for Human Development in Labrador states that "Memorial University is seen as being inflexible, unresponsive to community needs and insensitive to the realities of Labrador."³⁷ The TEPL program is considered to be one of the reasons for this perception.

³⁵ Memorial University Faculty of Education, 2006-12-17

³⁶ Penashue, Peter. Personal communication. 2006-04-27.

³⁷ The Institute for the Advancement of Public Policy, Inc. (2004) Final Report Baseline Study Human Development in Labrador. Submitted to the Labrador Strategic Social Plan.

14.0 Research Opportunities

There is a long history of research being conducted in Labrador in a broad range of fields including health, education, social sciences, fishery, earth sciences, biology, archaeology, anthropology, ethnography and linguistics. The bulk of this research has been initiated by researchers based outside the region and often, outside the province. The extent to which the subjects of the research and their communities have benefited from the research that has been conducted in their midst varies considerably and has depended largely on the approach of individual researchers. The Makkovik archaeology and Ashkui and environmental guardian projects described above indicate the extent to which local residents and communities can learn and benefit from research by developing their own research skills, learning about themselves and their region and experiencing the inspiration, education and confidence building effect that comes with active participation in the process.

14.1 Regional Coordination

Despite the long history of research in Labrador, the research activity and its benefits to the region have not been well publicized, to the detriment of both the region and Memorial University. To date, there has been no mechanism to ensure that information about Labrador research activities, even from one institution such as Memorial, is readily accessible within Labrador or at the university. Neither has there been a formal mechanism to ensure that the information that emerges from research is disseminated to those who are directly affected and is made available to the remainder of the region and other researchers. The need for regional coordination of research activities was identified fifteen years ago and two proposals for research centres in Labrador have been submitted since then, the Labrador Ecosystems Analysis Facility and the North West River Research Centre. Neither has been successful and the need for research coordination and information dissemination persists. For Memorial University based researchers, a simple process such as copying all ethics review decisions involving research in Labrador, including abstract, title and researcher contact information, to the Labrador Institute at the time approval is granted, would ensure this information gets to Labrador. The Labrador Institute is then in a position to disseminate information about the research activities and to follow-up with information about the results. Considerable benefit and publicity could also be derived by having researchers who are working in the area providing formal and informal presentations to the public and in schools. As an example, in the Straits region, fisheries researchers based at the Bonne Bay Marine Centre who travel to the Straits communities to conduct their work, could arrange to make a public presentation while they are in the communities. Liaison with other research oriented agencies such as the National Research Council office at the Happy Valley-Goose Bay Campus of the College and the Institute for Environmental Monitoring and Research would enhance interest in and the benefits from Labrador based research.

14.2 Northern Research Network

2007-2008 has been designated International Polar Year and research themes and funding have been identified, including \$25 million from the Canadian Institute of Health Research. The Social Economy of the North project recently funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council provides a model for the type of connections Labrador can and should be making with other northern researchers. In the absence of a designated, Labrador based research facility, this region is not represented in this effort despite its obvious northern connection.

14.3 Aboriginal Research

Aboriginal groups in the region and nation wide have learned from their experiences with research and they and the bodies that fund research in Aboriginal populations are becoming much more proactive about ensuring that they are active partners rather than passive subjects in the process. Comprehensive draft guidelines for research in Aboriginal communities have been established and when finalized, will be applied where relevant to all projects funded by the Canadian Institute for Health Research, the Social Science and Humanities Research Council and the Natural Science and Engineering Research Council of Canada.³⁸ Some of the key points that have been learned about research in Labrador were summarized at the conclusion of the Ashkui project and they are:

1. Ensure inclusion of the community in every aspect of decision making, from start to finish. Create a solid presence in the community, establish a physical office on site and employ local people.
2. Agree to a set of operating principles. Ownership of data residing with the community, for example, is an important principle upon which the Ashkui project operates.
3. Communicate. Establish clear forums and formats for ongoing communication between community members and the other project participants.
4. Educate. Share what you're learning with senior management and other influential stakeholders.
5. Value a broader range of project outcomes. Relationships with partners, popular media coverage, and tools for information management are as valuable to the goals of the project as scientific papers are.

³⁸ Canadian Institute of Health Research. Accessed on line 2006-05-01.
http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/documents/CIHR_ethics_guidelines_V1_e.pdf

15.0 Summary of Issues

The issues identified in this report can be summarized as follows:

- vast northern geography, isolated communities, transportation limitations and multi-cultural demographics
- young population, young families, daycare an issue for students attending post-secondary education
- multiple factors contribute to low success rates in elementary and secondary schools in Innu and Inuit communities
- retention of Inuktitut and Innu-Aimun languages a high priority, culture/language specific teacher training, instructional strategies and curriculum development required
- small numbers of high school graduates annually and population projections do not suggest future large increases
- very few honours and academic status high school graduates eligible for post-secondary education in virtually all of Labrador with the exception of Zone 2, western Labrador
- large number of adults with less than high school education who cannot access post-secondary education without upgrading
- specific skill set required for work in Labrador in many fields (teaching, nursing, medicine, social work) and this must be incorporated into education and training
- research opportunities exist in Labrador and with a coordinated approach to research, the region can benefit to a much greater extent from current and future projects
- economic boom in Labrador West and relative affluence of the community present significant opportunity for expanded range of local post-secondary options

15.1 Zonal Differences

The issues that affect post-secondary education in Labrador differ in their nature and the extent of their impact among the five economic zones in the region. The primary distinction lies between Zone 2, Labrador West where the relative success of the secondary school system, high education, employment and income levels, and the boom in the iron ore industry signal significant opportunities for enhancing on site post-

secondary offerings, and Zones 1, 3, 4 and 5, the remainder of Labrador where, to varying degrees, cultural issues, lower education levels and a less than successful secondary school system limit current post-secondary potential and demand immediate attention. In eastern Labrador, the constraints to post-secondary education are most pronounced in the Innu and Inuit communities in the north coast and central zones, and less prominent, although still an issue in south coast and straits communities.

16.0 Implications

The significant differences between Labrador West and the remainder of the region imply a different approach to post-secondary education and different roles for post-secondary education institutions such as Memorial University and the College of the North Atlantic.

16.1 Social Accountability in Eastern Labrador

In 1995, the World Health Organization defined social accountability from a health perspective³⁹ and since that time, there is an increasing awareness in many fields of education and research that there is an obligation to direct education, research and service activities towards addressing the priority concerns of the community, region, and/or nation that is being served.

The education data and the qualitative information that have been gathered for the purpose of this report highlight the fact that education itself is a priority concern for this region. The primary and secondary education system is producing very few Aboriginal graduates who are equipped to proceed to post-secondary education. Together with the large number of adults who have less than a high school education, the pace of future social and economic development in the region is severely constrained. Identifying the reasons for the problem and potential solutions requires a multi-disciplinary approach. Curriculum development for the purposes of language preservation and increased cultural relevance, has been identified as a necessary component and further research is required to identify other components. This issue needs to be tackled both from the bottom up (i.e. from the preschool level through primary, elementary and secondary education) and from the top down, to reach the large number of adults who have less than a high school education. It will require a Labrador based, education, linguistics, ethnography, and community health research focus and a collaborative effort from all levels of the education system and Labrador stakeholders. Maximum educational benefits must be derived from all research activity in the area through public presentations by researchers, employing local people to assist with research and disseminating the results to the greatest extent possible.

³⁹ Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada. Accessed on line 2006-05-01.
http://www.afmc.ca/search_tool/index.html

In Labrador, social accountability also translates into the need to have as much on site education and training as possible. It facilitates access for local people and ensures that the education and skill acquisition is relevant to the work people will be doing. It allows adaptation to local cultures and attitudes for those who come from outside the area and provides local mentorship to inspire all learners to remain in the area. The value of on site learning applies to many professional fields including teachers, social workers, nurses and physicians who, ideally, should do some, if not all, of their academic work in Labrador and as much of the clinical/work experience time as possible. For Labrador residents, it means less time away from home and for outsiders, it means time to acquire the skills and knowledge that are specific to the requirements for work in Labrador. For working professionals, it means reduced cost and easier access to professional development.

16.2 *Post-Secondary Opportunities in Labrador West*

A roundtable session on educational needs was held in Labrador West in 2004 and many of the opportunities identified at that time persist today. There are a number of opportunities for post-secondary institutions to collaborate with private industry in Labrador West. The College has designated its Labrador West campus as a Centre for Mining Excellence and is actively pursuing applied research initiatives in collaboration with the Iron Ore Company (IOC). Opportunities exist for Memorial to participate in research activities in addition to utilizing the IOC mine site for co-op engineering program work terms and providing specific, on site management training to IOC personnel. Engineering license renewal/re-certification and professional development training are also an option in this area. IOC personnel have an annual training allowance of \$1 500 each and senior managers are currently reviewing the training strategy for the organization and are open to proposals from post-secondary institutions. Flexibility in terms of meeting the specific content and timing needs for training, and a willingness to provide training on site in Labrador West are necessary components to meeting the training needs in this area.

16.3 *Zone Specific Implications*

Zone 1: North Coast

Post-secondary preparation for students and adults is a significant challenge in this zone and will require a broad based investigation of and search for improvements and modifications to the primary-secondary, adult basic education programs and access/bridging programs. Immediate needs for Nunatsiavut government management training can be addressed with custom designed, ad-hoc certificate or non-credit programs that take into account the educational and cultural background of participants.

Zone 2: Labrador West

The high school graduates in this zone are small in number but are generally well prepared for post-secondary education. Enhanced recruitment efforts may increase the number who opt to attend Memorial however transportation logistics give other Atlantic universities an edge and local training and trades related job opportunities are also attractive to high school graduates. Mining industry management training opportunities exist and close collaboration with industry representatives will be required to meet their specific needs.

Zone 3: Central

With the largest Aboriginal population of all the zones and existing college and residence infrastructure and Aboriginal education expertise, this is the logical base for education related research and delivery of transition and Labrador based post-secondary education programs such as teacher training.

Zone 4: South Coast

From a transportation perspective this zone is currently better connected to the west coast of the island than with central Labrador and might benefit from stronger ties to and more recruitment efforts from the Corner Brook campuses of both the college and the university. This may change when the final portion of the Trans-Labrador highway is completed in several years' time, particularly given that, from a cultural perspective, the Métis population has its headquarters in central Labrador. Educationally, post-secondary preparation is a challenge in this region as well and education related research offers potential benefits to it.

Zone 5: Labrador Straits

Proximity to the west coast of the island is very much a factor in this zone and with no local post-secondary facilities, links with the Corner Brook facilities of the college and the university are the logical approach from a geographic perspective. At the same time, family connections to central Labrador suggest that post-secondary options emanating from there would also be an option.

17.0 Summary of Needs

In general, Labrador needs:

- Formal post-secondary institutional **commitment to the north** and the attendant concept of collaboration through shared resources, facilities and expertise to build and offer post-secondary education programs that are relevant and accessible to northern students, and that empower northerners and northern communities through education and shared knowledge. Memorial University's recent decision to join the University of the Arctic and the soon-to-be co-location of the College and the University offices in Happy Valley-Goose Bay are steps in the right direction. The details of how the College-University collaboration will be further enacted in Labrador need to be formalized.

- A strong, **Labrador based, research capacity** to address issues of concern in Labrador and to participate fully in established and future northern research networks.
- **Collaboration** among the Department of Education/Labrador School Board, the College, the University, the Innu, the Inuit and the Métis to conduct research addressing the problems in primary-secondary education in Labrador.
- **Education programs that are relevant to the Labrador context** and that focus on doing as much as possible in Labrador, thereby increasing accessibility, reducing the drop out rate, and improving recruitment and retention of professionals such as physicians, teachers, nurses, social workers and managers.

18.0 Recommendations

While the purpose of this study was to examine post-secondary education in Labrador, the findings clearly indicate that multiple factors are contributing to secondary school problems such as low student retention and a high proportion of general status graduates. The end result is a substantially reduced number of post-secondary eligible students. Despite significant efforts on the part of the Department of Education and the Labrador School Boards to devise and implement strategies to address this issue, the problem persists and the solution is beyond the scope of the Department of Education and School Boards alone. A successful K-12 system is a critical component to ensuring access to post-secondary education and employment, and ultimately the overall development of the region. High birth rates and the youthful demographic profile in Labrador provide further rationale for tackling this situation immediately. Close collaboration among the Department of Education, the Labrador School Boards, the College of the North Atlantic and Memorial University will be required to address this issue.

It is recommended that:

1. The Department of Education, the Labrador School Boards, the College of the North Atlantic and Memorial University work together to identify and assess strategies to improve success rates in high school.

Possible strategies to consider and/or assess include:

- a) Teacher recruitment and retention incentives such as paid internships.
- b) Enhanced guidance counselling services in coastal Labrador schools.
- c) Incentives such as summer camps to encourage secondary school students to stay in school.
- d) Investigation of educational best practices from other northern jurisdictions.

2. Memorial University Faculty of Education reassess teacher training for teachers intending to teach in northern/rural schools.

High school success in Aboriginal communities is further constrained and complicated by socio-cultural and health issues including concerns about Innu-Aimun and Inuktitut language preservation, the need for linguistically and culturally relevant curricula and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

It is recommended that:

3. Memorial University, in collaboration with the Aboriginal groups, undertake multi-disciplinary research (education, linguistics, ethnography, social work and community health) to identify reasons for and potential solutions to the failure of the primary-secondary education system in Aboriginal communities.
4. Researchers be based in Labrador and establish connections to other northern research networks.
5. Research activities involve active participation of local residents and optimal information and research skill transfer.
6. Aboriginal groups work together with Memorial University Faculty of Education and/or other universities to develop an Aboriginal teacher education program, including an access component, for delivery in Labrador.

The cumulative effect of many years of low success rates in high school is a large pool of adults who have not completed high school and who are therefore ineligible for post-secondary education. Efforts to address this issue with Adult Basic Education programming have met with limited success, particularly in Aboriginal communities. Again, the relative youth of Labrador's population in comparison with the province as a whole demands that this situation be addressed to ensure young adults have access to post-secondary education and employment. Aboriginal self-government is imposing immediate demands for trained workers and training programs must address the education gap of participants.

It is recommended that:

7. The Department of Education, Memorial University, College of the North Atlantic and the Aboriginal groups work together to develop post-secondary access programs which meet the needs in Labrador.
8. Memorial University and the College of the North Atlantic work together with the Aboriginal groups to identify specific, employment related training needs in areas such as public administration, business and natural resource management which could be addressed through short, credit or non-credit, Labrador based training courses.

Anecdotal reports suggest that there are many qualified adults who would like to pursue university courses but who cannot leave Labrador to attend due to work and family commitments. With a small and widely dispersed population, it is important to quantify the nature and extent of the demand to determine if additional offerings are viable.

It is recommended that:

9. Memorial University and the College of the North Atlantic consult closely with economic development organizations, industry, chambers of commerce, students and ad-hoc citizens' groups to identify courses and programs with sufficient demand to be viable.
10. Pending the results of the consultation, that Memorial University consider offering evening courses and an expanded intercession so that these students can obtain as many courses as possible in Labrador. Where student numbers permit, expanding the College University Transfer Year to include second year courses should also be considered.
11. Memorial University investigate ways of providing courses for adults who have university degrees and who are retiring early and seeking a second career or who would like to pursue higher qualifications in their chosen career, particularly in Labrador West.

The transition to post-secondary education outside of Labrador is often difficult for Labrador students and supports for them are important. The St. John's campus of Memorial University and the city itself represent a significant leap for students from coastal communities in particular. Additional supports in St. John's and increased promotion of the Corner Brook campus where the magnitude of the transition is somewhat reduced, may increase post-secondary success rates for Labrador students.

It is recommended that:

9. In consultation with Innu, Inuit and Métis representatives, Memorial University enhance the services offered by the on-campus help centre for Aboriginal students at the St. John's campus.

Possibilities include:

- a) peer mentoring
 - b) orientation/familiarization tours
 - c) Aboriginal social events
 - d) Aboriginal tutoring services
10. The Sir Wilfred Grenfell campus be promoted to Labrador students.

For students who are unable to move to attend post-secondary education, distance education is also an option. Given the additional challenges associated with this mode of study, it is important that it be accompanied by optimal levels of flexibility and support.

It is recommended that:

11. Memorial University increase distance education flexibility (for example, with continuous entry), improve student support and course variety and promote improved distance education offerings to adult learners in particular.

19.0 Conclusion

Access to post-secondary education is compromised to varying degrees in Labrador by a number of factors including geography, demographics, cost and culture. This is a reality that Labrador shares with most of northern Canada and the circumpolar region as a whole and consequently, Labrador can benefit from connections to other northern education and research institutions involved in seeking solutions to similar challenges. In Labrador West, expansion in the iron ore industry and a strong elementary-secondary school system provide opportunities and demand for professional development and enhanced local post-secondary options. Eastern Labrador faces the additional challenges of a secondary school system that is producing very few post-secondary ready, Aboriginal graduates and a large number of adults who require upgrading to access post-secondary education. A multi-faceted approach and strong collaboration among the educational institutions and Aboriginal groups are required to address this issue. Labrador based research focussed on the priority educational needs of the region and an assurance that Labrador residents extract the maximum educational benefits of research are key components to improving post-secondary access. Expanded, Labrador based, post-secondary offerings including professional programs designed to meet Labrador needs are also required. These are ambitious but necessary undertakings, the first steps in a long-term process that will bridge the existing educational gaps, leading ultimately to seamless access to post-secondary education for Labrador residents.

Appendix 1: Interviews Conducted

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| John Graham | Atlantic Aboriginal Health Research Program Coordinator |
| Martha MacDonald | Researcher, Labrador Institute |
| Tim Borlase | Former Director, Labrador Institute |
| Bob Simms | Campus Administrator, CNA, Happy Valley-Goose Bay |
| Winnie Montague | Campus Administrator, CNA, Happy Valley-Goose Bay |
| Cindy Fleet | Director, Labrador School Board |
| David Yetman | Harris Institute, MUN |
| David Natcher | Canada Research Chair in Aboriginal Studies |
| Valerie Courtois | Innu Nation Forest Ecosystem Planning Analyst |
| Kanani Penashue | Director of Education Sheshatshiu Innu Band Council |
| Aidan Downey | ABE Instructor, CNA, Natuashish |
| Marguerite McKenzie | Professor of Linguistics, MUN |
| Derek Wilton | Professor, Earth Sciences Division, MUN |
| Agnes Rumbolt | Regional Director, Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, Happy Valley-Goose Bay |
| Dawna Lee | Literacy worker, Happy Valley-Goose Bay |
| Maxine Budgell | Literacy worker, Happy Valley-Goose Bay |
| Barbara Burnaby | Literacy consultant, St. John's |
| Robert Greenwood | Director, Harris Institute, MUN |
| Ron Sparkes | Labrador Institute |
| Beatrice Dickers | Labrador Institute |
| Tim McNeill | Deputy Minister of Education and Economic Development, Nunatsiavut Government |
| Brian Lyall | Community Justice Coordinator, former Social Policy Worker, Nunatsiavut Government |
| Cal Patey | Education Consultant, Sheshatshiu Innu Band Council |
| Peter Penashue | former President, Innu Nation |
| Carol Best | Director, Central Labrador Economic Development Board |
| Leander Baikie | Central Labrador Economic Development Board |
| Waylon Williams | President, Combined Councils of Labrador |
| Murdena Kolanko | Guidance Counsellor, Menihek High School, Labrador City |
| Wayne Strickland | Guidance Counsellor, Mealy Mountain Collegiate, Happy Valley-Goose Bay |
| Joan Andersen | White Elephant Museum, Makkovik |
| Trudy Sable | St. Mary's University |
| Jodie Lane | Nunatsiavut Education Counsellor |
| Lucy Brennan | Director, Nunatsiavut Post-Secondary Student Support Program |
| Jean LeStage | Guidance Counsellor , CNA Labrador West |
| Laura Dawn Angnatok | Guidance Counsellor, Jens Haven School Nain |
| Debbie Earle | College of the North Atlantic, Business Development Officer |
| Francis Schwab | College of the North Atlantic, Labrador West, Director of Instruction |

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| Ed Downey | College of the North Atlantic, Labrador West, Instructor |
| Jill Power | Director, Hyron Regional Economic Development Board |
| Diane Gear | Economic Development Officer, Town of Labrador City |
| Sonya Belben | Labrador Straits Regional Development Corporation |
| Bernadette Power | Faculty of Education, MUN |
| Jeanette Russell | Guidance Counsellor, St. Mary's All Grade School, Mary's Harbour |
| Judy Pardy | South East Aurora Development Association |
| Jamie Snook | Métis Business Development Centre |
| Catharyn Andersen | Torngasuk Cultural Centre |
| Azmy Aboulazm | Labrador West Campus, College of the North Atlantic |
| Leanna Brinson | Innu upgrading program instructor |
| Mina Campbell Hibbs | Labrador Institute Advisory Committee member |
| Kim McCarthy | Labrador Institute Advisory Committee member |
| Roxanne Notley | Labrador Institute Advisory Committee member |
| Darrell O'Brien | Chair, Labrador Institute Advisory Committee |
| Gerald Anderson | Marine Institute |
| Linda Nuotio-Flynn | Labrador Institute, Labrador West |
| Michael Barnes | Post-Secondary Committee |
| Trina L. Caines | Labour Market Research and Policy Analyst |
| | Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment |
| Robin Hill | College of the North Atlantic Instructor, North West River |