

**From Accommodation to Accessibility**

**A Path Forward**

**A Review of the Glenn Roy Blundon Centre**

**Memorial University of Newfoundland**

**August, 2016**

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
Preamble .....	2
Background .....	3
Mission of the Blundon Centre and alignment with the university's vision, mission and values .....	4
Programming and Service Delivery .....	7
Organizational Structure .....	11
Communication and Reporting Lines Regarding Accommodations, Collaborative Practices between Relevant Units .....	12
Internal and External Stakeholder Relations .....	13
Resource Requirements, including Human, Financial, Technical or other Operational Resources .....	19
Policies and Procedures .....	20
Recommendations .....	24
Appendix 1 Interviewees	
Appendix 2 Universal design links	
Appendix 3 Student Health and Wellness Review Panel, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2014	
Appendix 4 Report of the Blundon Centre Review Panel, Memorial University, 2007	
Appendix 5 CAS Self-Assessment Guide	

## **Executive Summary**

The Glenn Roy Blundon Centre has served students needing accommodations since 1992. The number and range of accessibility needs have increased and have become more complex. The Centre provides education sessions throughout Memorial, advocates for students and engages with external and internal stakeholders.

The Centre has had a mission statement since 2007. It is timely to reconsider the mission statement and its alignment with the University's Mission Statement and to develop a Vision and Values Statement. The Blundon Centre has an opportunity to explore and reconceptualize its mandate. In particular, the involvement of academic units in understanding and providing appropriate accommodations will be an essential first step in reformulating the vision of the Blundon Centre.

The addition of new staff (professional and administrative) and an education officer will enable the Blundon Centre to address current student requirements and to involve academic units. Technical and operational resources will also be required to support the work of the Blundon Centre and to enable students to access accommodations more efficiently.

Minor clarifications in the accommodations for students with disabilities policy, procedures along with improved web information will enhance access to and use of the policy and procedures.

## Preamble

The accessibility movement originated with the profession of architecture at a time when social norms demanded accessible buildings. Architects realized that it is easier to design barrier free buildings than to make buildings accessible after they have been constructed. Educators borrowed the accessibility concept by designing curriculum and evaluation that was barrier free and responsive to multiple learning needs. The text book industry led the way by designing and producing texts in audio format, electronic versions, larger print, visual representation and other accessible modes. Today's adaptive technologies, ever expanding, provide leading edge approaches and solutions for accessibility in learning and evaluation. Additionally, individuals, groups and organizations are promoting inclusive and accessible practices.

This report invites the Memorial community to imagine a path forward from the present focus on disabilities and accommodation to accessibility for all learners.

One of the most notable examples at Memorial of forward thinking is the School of Human Kinetics and Recreation (HKR). The core values of this academic unit are accessibility, flexibility and inclusivity. Faculty and staff do not ask what accommodations students need but rather "what do you need to be successful". In 2016, HKR received the Glenn Roy Blundon Award for fostering an

accessible learning environment for students with disabilities at Memorial University.

The student who nominated HKR for the Award wrote:

"Every professor (in HKR) was welcoming and helpful. Their attitude created a positive attitude for me throughout my degree and a desire to learn as much as possible without any barriers to stop me. Therefore, I am truly grateful for the experience I had while completing my degree. Wherever I end up in the future, it is a result of their willingness and understanding to teach. They gave me an environment where my disability was never an obstacle. I never felt excluded or at a disadvantage. It was an honour to be a part of the Human Kinetics and Recreation Society."

## **Background**

The Glenn Roy Blundon Centre was established at Memorial University in February 1992 and is dedicated to the memory of Glenn Roy Blundon, a former Memorial student and resident of Bay de Verde, Newfoundland. Glenn is remembered for his leadership and his commitment to equality and accessibility issues. His family continues to attend the annual Glenn Roy Blundon Awards Ceremony.

## **Terms of Reference**

The purpose of this review is to consider the following Terms of Reference and to provide recommendations within the scope of these Terms:

1. Mission of the Centre and alignment with the university's vision, mission and values;
2. Programming and service delivery;
3. Organizational structure;
4. Communication and reporting lines regarding accommodations, collaborative practices between relevant units and attention to timeliness in serving student needs;
5. Internal and external stakeholder relations;
6. Resource requirements, including human, financial, technical or other operational resources, and;
7. Policies and procedures.

## 1. Mission of the Blundon Centre and alignment with the university's vision, mission and values

The Board of Regents approved the [Vision, Mission and Values Statements of Memorial](#) in 2013.

### **Vision:**

Memorial University will be one of the most distinguished public universities in Canada and beyond, and will fulfill its special obligation to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

### **Mission:**

Memorial University is an inclusive community dedicated to innovation and excellence in teaching and learning, research, scholarship, creative activity, service and public engagement. Memorial welcomes and supports students and scholars from all over the world and contributes knowledge and expertise locally, nationally and internationally.

### **The Values of the University include**

- *“Responsibility to learners”* - Recognizing students as a first priority and providing the environment and support to ensure their academic and personal success
  
- *“Inclusiveness and diversity”* - Embracing and acting on responsibility to guarantee diversity and equity.

## Blundon Centre Mission Statement

“The mission of the Blundon Centre is to provide and co-ordinate programs and services that enable students with disabilities to maximize their educational potential and to increase awareness of inclusive values among all members of the university community. We assist students by facilitating access to information, services, and campus facilities in accordance with the university's [Policy on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#). The Centre carries out its mission in collaboration with faculty, staff, and students at Memorial University and off-campus agencies, including disability community organizations.

The Centre serves prospective and current students on the university's St. John's campus whose disabilities involve conditions affecting mobility, vision, hearing, learning (disabilities), chronic illnesses, or mental health. Support is also provided to students with documented temporary illnesses and injuries”.

The mission statement of the Blundon Centre was approved in 2007 and reflects the operations and day-to-day work of the Centre. It is timely to re-conceptualize the mission statement and to consider a vision and values statement which reflect those of the university

along with the special and unique work and responsibilities of the Blundon Centre.

The exercise should be a comprehensive one considering the philosophy of service and its meaning in a university community where the needs of learners are of the highest priority. Two of the values of the University [“Responsibility to learners” and “Inclusiveness and diversity”](#) are synergistic with the purpose of the Blundon Centre.

There is opportunity for the Blundon Centre and Memorial University to embrace a major change in direction from a narrowly defined service model of providing accommodations to a fully professionalized Centre that embraces a mandate to move Memorial University to a multi-dimensional accessible university. Directions at other Canadian universities and recent reports<sup>1</sup> at Memorial depart from a focus on disability and accommodation to a focus on accessibility. The Student Health and Wellness Report (2014) recommended “that the priority of the Blundon Centre be directed toward establishing strong relationships with the individual faculties and schools... [providing access to all students] in their curriculum.” (p. 11-12)

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<sup>1</sup> Student Health and Wellness Review Panel', Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2014; Philpott, D. and Chaulk, E. (2013), 'Accommodating Students with individual learning needs associated with disabilities and/or mental health issues. A shared conversation between the College of the North Atlantic and Memorial University of Newfoundland'; and, 'Report of the Blundon Centre Review Panel', Memorial University, 2007.

A first step in creating the Blundon Centre of the future would be to adopt the suggestion of the Student Health and Wellness Report that the Blundon Centre be renamed from “The Glenn Roy Blundon Centre for Students with Disabilities to The Glenn Roy Blundon Centre for Accessibility” (p. 11-12). Parallel to this would be the change of name of the [Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities \(St. John’s Campus and Marine Institute\)](#) to the Advisory Committee on Student Accessibility (St. John’s Campus and Marine Institute).

The new Blundon Centre would:

- a) be the undisputed location of providing service to students with complex and multiple accessibility needs;
- b) collaborate with academic units to initiate transition of accessibility from the Blundon Centre to the academic units where such arrangements can be achieved; and,
- c) provide leadership that would allow Memorial to realize and actualize its institutional responsibility for accessibility through educational outreach.

### **Recommendation 1:**

That the Glenn Roy Blundon Centre for Students with Disabilities be renamed the Glenn Roy Blundon Centre for Student Accessibility.

Rationale: To signal the change in direction from a focus on disability to one of accessibility.

### **Recommendation 2:**

That the Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities (St. John's Campus and Marine Institute) be renamed The Advisory Committee for Student Accessibility (St. John's Campus and Marine Institute).

Rationale: To align with the re-naming of the Blundon Centre.

### **Recommendation 3:**

That the Mission Statement of the Blundon Centre be re-conceptualized and revised, a vision statement and a values statement be developed.

Rationale: To consider the Mission, Vision and Values Statements of the Blundon Centre and their alignment with those of the University and to envision the Blundon Centre of the future.

## **2. Programming and Service Delivery**

The purpose of the Blundon Centre is to provide services to students requiring accommodation in all programs of study at Memorial.

From 1992 when the Centre started to Fall, 2015, the number of students requesting accommodations has increased from approximately 30 to 500 per year. The range of accommodations has changed considerably to requirements for physical disabilities, multiple mental health conditions, autism spectrum disorder, vision and hearing impairments and other conditions.

The large and growing numbers of students and the complexity of conditions requiring accommodation are the responsibility of the three staff members of the Blundon Centre. The staff is engaged in multiple services to students and the University community. (See Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Self-Assessment Guide, Disability Resources and Services 2015)

In addition to arranging accommodations for students, the Blundon Centre staff advocates for students, works with internal and external stakeholders, promotes the use of adaptive technologies and universal design, seeks funding for technical supports (e.g., ClockWork database), and engages in a broad range of activities in support of students requiring accommodations. The manager liaises with faculties and schools, MUNSU, GSU, the Student

Wellness and Counselling Centre, Facilities Management, Campus Enforcement and Patrol, The Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities, external stakeholders and others.

The Blundon Centre of the future will continue to be the undisputed location for arranging accommodations for students at Memorial University. Complex and multiple ability/accessibility needs will remain the sole responsibility of the Blundon Centre, which will have the expertise and experience to assess, determine and implement accommodations improving accessibility for students.

As Memorial moves toward an accessible campus, the Blundon Centre will provide educational support to academic units as they become more involved in providing accommodations.

Human, technical and operational resources will be required to support students requiring a broad range of accommodations and to involve academic units in creating accessibility.

## **Staff**

There are (3) three categories of staff requirements.

a) The Blundon Centre requires professional staff with knowledge of and experience in the full spectrum of ability conditions and requirements. (See '*Student Health and Wellness Report*', 2014, p. 11-12). These

professional staff members (e.g. educational psychologists) will have knowledge in ability studies, experience and expertise in assessing and implementing accommodation needs and providing support to students. (Ratios for professional staff vary at universities and are dependent on the range of assessed needs.)

Reporting to the manager of the Blundon Centre, the professional staff members will have the following responsibilities:

- serving as support coordinators for students registered with the Blundon Centre
- reviewing test assessments, documentation and implementing appropriate accommodations
- re-testing where appropriate and re-assessing accommodations
- ensuring timely arrangement of accommodations
- ensuring faculty members and immediate academic administrators are apprised of accommodations required
- undertaking regular follow up with students, and if needed, with instructors.

Some of these services are being provided by a part-time psychologist and this arrangement should continue until professional staff members are appointed to the Blundon Centre.

#### **Recommendation 4:**

That up to four professional staff members (e.g. educational psychologists) be appointed to the Blundon Centre.

Rationale: To enable the Blundon Centre to support the full range of accommodations required by students.

- b) The Blundon Centre requires a staff person with experience in providing professional development, is knowledgeable in teaching and learning strategies, including technologies, and understands multiple learning needs. This will require that an education officer be appointed to the Blundon Centre.

Reporting to the director of Student Life, the education officer will collaborate with academic units at Memorial in promoting the goal of accessibility across the institution. (See 'Review of the Blundon Centre', 2007, Recommendation 2 and, 'Student Health and Wellness Report', 2014, p. 11-12.) This direction will give Memorial a platform to ensure "the focus of learning supports ... be closely aligned with the [academic] units to support their curriculum in their programs." ('Student Health and Wellness Report', p. 11-12).

Responsibilities will include:

- working with academic units to enhance their capacity of providing accommodations (e.g., space and extended time for final exams, and others as appropriate)

- collaborating with academic units to reduce barriers in the curriculum and to make student evaluation more accessible
- discussing with the Chairs in Teaching and Learning the potential for introducing Design for Learning (as envisioned by the [Teaching and Learning Framework](#), 2011), adaptive technologies, and other teaching and learning tools and strategies to advance curriculum accessibility.

### **Recommendation 5:**

That an education officer be appointed to the Blundon Centre.

Rationale: To support academic units in becoming more involved in providing accessibility.

c) Administrative Staff – the addition of two administrative staff (in progress).

### **Recommendation 6:**

That two additional administrative staff be appointed to the Blundon Centre .

Rationale: To provide administrative support in the Blundon Centre.

## **Technical**

There are (3) three technical requirements.

**a) Improve efficiency by streamlining registration and notification**

Students reported that registering for accommodations and receiving notification of the arrangement is time consuming, inefficient and stressful.

The Blundon Centre is working with Information Technology Services on an electronic form (ClockWork) which, after evaluation, will be part of a larger pilot with the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science in the fall of 2016 with full implementation intended for winter/spring semesters of 2017. This will streamline accommodation registration with notification to students and instructors that the arrangement has been made.

**Recommendation 7:**

That electronic forms for requesting and arranging accommodations be implemented upon completion of the ClockWork project.

Rationale: To eliminate multiple paper forms and increase efficiency of registration and notification of arrangement of accommodations.

**b) Provide information through CITL for on-campus students**

The Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL) uses Banner Student to provide information to students in Memorial Self Service for all courses

delivered on-line by CITL. The information includes location and time of an exam and any accommodation that has been arranged for students. This information is not available for on-campus courses.

**Recommendation 8:**

That the Office of the Registrar and the Blundon Centre, with the assistance of CITL, provide the same information for on-campus courses in Student Banner for students requiring accommodations that they receive for on-line courses.

Rationale: To provide the same efficient and seamless process for on-site courses that is provided for on-line courses.

**c) Collaborate with Office of the Registrar to record accommodation information through Student Banner**

To reduce the inefficiency of registering accommodations every semester, the Registrar's Office and The Blundon Centre, where possible, should collaborate on recording student information regarding accommodations in Banner Student to be updated by the Blundon Centre as needed.

**Recommendation 9:**

That accommodations be recorded and updated in Banner Student.

Rationale: To reduce for students, where possible, the requirement for registering accommodations every semester.

## **Operational**

There is one operational requirement:

### **Space**

The Review of the Blundon Centre Report' (2007) recommended an increase in the space for the Blundon Centre (Recommendation #17) and the test area be fully soundproofed (Recommendation #18). The Centre occupies the same space as in 2007. Soundproofing was completed (UC-4007c) but was placed only on three interior walls, missing the fourth exterior wall where most sound transfer occurs. The CAS Self-Assessment Ratings Guide (Sections 11.1 and 11.3) identifies the unacceptable high levels of noise during testing.

### **Recommendation 10:**

That additional space be allocated to the Blundon Centre and the soundproofing in the testing area be completed.

Rationale: To complete the recommendations on space and soundproofing from the Review of the Blundon Centre Report, 2007.

### **3. Organizational Structure**

The Blundon Centre is one of six units that comprise Student Life, the others being Career Development and Experiential Learning, Student Support and Crisis Management, the Aboriginal Resource Office, International Student Advising and Answers. Managers of each of these units report to the director of Student Life. Student Life is part of the Office of the Deputy Provost (Students) and Associate Vice-President (Academic) Undergraduate Studies.

It is not within the scope of this review to consider the six units and their relationship to each other.

The recommendations on organizational structure are limited to the Blundon Centre within Student Life.

#### **Recommendation 11:**

That the professional staff (e.g., educational psychologists) report to the manager of the Blundon Centre.

Rationale: The work of the professional staff is directly related to the present core work of the Blundon Centre of providing accommodations to students.

#### **Recommendation 12:**

That the education officer of the Blundon Centre report to the director of Student Life.

Rationale: The work of the education officer is parallel to but distinct from the core work of the Blundon Centre of providing accommodations.

#### **4. Communication and Reporting Lines Regarding Accommodations, Collaborative Practices between Relevant Units (Attention to Timeliness in Serving Student Needs – addressed in #2)**

There are examples of collaborative practices between the Blundon Centre and internal and external stakeholders. (See Term of Reference #5, Internal and external stakeholder relations)

Some of these collaborations include:

- The Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities (St. John's Campus and Marine Institute)
- Hard of Hearing Association
- Learning Disabilities Association NL
- Coalition of Persons with Disabilities NL
- Newfoundland Co-ordinating Council on Deafness
- Administrative units at Memorial, for example, Facilities Management
- Office of the Registrar
- Student Life (other units)
- Faculty of Engineering, Medicine and Centre for Nursing Studies

[The Advisory Committee on Students with Disabilities, Memorial University \(St. John's Campus and Marine Institute\)](#) has broad outreach and opportunity for collaboration across Memorial and with external stakeholders. The Committee usually meets twice a year though this is not mandated in the Terms of

Reference. The Committee comprises of twenty-five representatives. It is timely to review the Terms of Reference and membership.

### **Recommendation 13**

That the terms of reference and membership of the Advisory Committee on Students with Disabilities, Memorial (St. John's Campus and Marine Institute) be reviewed.

Rationale: To ensure the terms of reference reflect the focus on accessibility and to review stakeholder representation.

The Advisory Committee does not have academic administrator representation. As the Blundon Centre becomes more actively involved, through the education officer, with academic units in advancing accessibility, the presence of an academic administrator at the decanal level, is essential.

### **Recommendation 14:**

That an academic administrator at the decanal level be a member of the Advisory Committee.

Rationale: To enhance the ability of the Blundon Centre to connect with academic units.

## **5. Internal and External Stakeholder Relations**

The process was consultative throughout the university community and with external stakeholders. There was a high degree of concurrence of responses on the services of Blundon Centre.

### **External Stakeholders**

External stakeholders reported a good relationship with the staff of the Blundon Centre, particularly with the manager who has always been available to address inquiries and respond to issues.

Individuals who spoke on behalf of four organizations, namely:

- The Learning Disabilities Association of NL
- Coalition of Persons with Disabilities
- Newfoundland Co-ordinating Council on Deafness
- The Hard of Hearing Association of NL,

Members of the Advisory Committee on Disabilities, MUN, raised the following:

- a) the Blundon Centre is under resourced
- b) there are no staff members with background in accessibility for persons with disabilities
- c) distribution of resources is sometimes inequitable across the continuum of accessibility issues for persons with different forms of disability
- d) there is no educational focus and outreach to the university community

- e) Memorial is not an inclusive community
- f) academic units are not as involved as they should be
- g) ASL interpretation is unavailable to students needing this support
- h) assistive technology is often unavailable and is usually not leading edge
- i) transitional support for students entering Memorial, especially in terms of learning assessments, is unsatisfactory and not timely
- j) facility planning is poor (e.g. all rooms of the new residences were not accessible and students with disabilities were segregated)
- k) students writing exams in the Blundon Centre are segregated and accommodation should be made where they take their courses
- l) there is no universal design approach at Memorial.

### Comments:

“The Blundon Centre has helped many students but I don't think they get what inclusion or the drive for disability rights is all about. This is a social justice movement yet I really feel that Blundon follows a charity model. It's like they're doing a favour for the student. The approach isn't holistic and the message the university community sends is that they don't value disability.... [Let the] Convention on the Rights of Persons with

Disabilities be the guide.” (Paul Walsh, Coalition of Persons with Disabilities)

“The Centre is sometimes an advocate for students, sometimes for instructors (based on anecdotal reporting). An issue for students with LD is they have to pay for assessments or updates of their assessments if they have LD (the largest group) but this is not the case for other students needing accommodation.” (David Banfield, Executive Director of the Learning Disabilities Association, NL)

Jack Jardine, Newfoundland, Co-ordinating Council on Deafness had unqualified praise for the staff of the Blundon Centre from its inception to the present. Despite the increasing numbers of students seeking accommodation through the Centre, staff “make sure students are accommodated in the various settings of the University, from classroom, to labs, to experiential learning situations outside of the standard classroom setting. The system has not been cluttered with a lot of administrivia and the student has been the focus of the accommodations. A second strength of the system to date has been the willingness of almost every faculty member to accommodate the students as they enter their classes.”

Mr. Jardine recommends that there be extra funding for the Blundon Centre in order to continue the high level of service.

Leon Mills, executive director, Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, NL, stated: “We have always had a very positive relationship with the Centre and its Director ... [They] have always tried their best to support students with disabilities.”

## **Internal Stakeholders**

### **Student Responses:**

Two students attended a group session open to all registered students of the Blundon Centre. Fifteen students requested individual meetings/interviews.

Students who are registered at the Blundon Centre are satisfied with the service for the most part. Every student interviewed stated that having the need for an accommodation is stressful and causes a level of anxiety. Students want a seamless process that minimizes anxiety and stress. Generally they want to register their need for accommodation and receive a timely resolution and confirmation that the accommodation has been arranged.

Students raised the following regarding the Blundon Centre:

- more training in mental health issues needed
- too many forms required

- staff do not have background in accessibility for persons with disabilities
- staff often very busy and unable to respond as quickly as needed
- need to feel the Blundon Centre is advocating
- resistance to accommodation because of cost
- space is not private
- Harlow space is inadequate
- space is not optimal for writing tests (noisy and cramped).

Some students have raised concerns which were specific to their situation. These are not documented here and have been relayed to the Blundon Centre and the director of Student Life for immediate response and attention.

### **Memorial University of Newfoundland Student Union (MUNSU):**

The student union is supportive of the work of the Blundon Centre and works closely with the manager in various capacities; for example, lobbying for policy change, eligibility for Dean's List, scholarships and student advocacy.

MUNSU provides space, if available, for testing, although MUNSU should not have to do this; the Blundon Centre should have sufficient space and staff.

## **Memorial Undergraduate Career Experience Program (MUCEP) Students:**

Students who work at the Blundon Centre appreciate the experience and knowledge they acquire and the increasing responsibility they are given. They feel more broadly educated about accommodation needs which they “will take to their workplace”. The Centre uses a peer led approach which is student centered. The Centre allows for intimacy and confidentiality.

Some issues addressed:

- too many forms;
- under resourced Centre, especially staff;
- students writing exams often do not have someone to accompany them to washrooms;
- students writing in the Blundon Centre are not always advised of changes in the exam or extensions of time because professors are in another building and may not think about the students writing in the Blundon Centre.

The MUCEP students fully support the move to electronic forms despite the challenges associated with the Winter 2016 semester e-forms.

## **Academic Units:**

The Blundon Centre and the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science work together on accommodations for students needing quiet space and extra time when writing final exams. The Centre advises the Faculty of

Engineering about the students needing accommodation, and the academic program administrator in Engineering ensures the accommodation is made and an invigilator is engaged. The room is arranged in close proximity to the course instructor who is invigilating the same exam.

The Faculty views the arrangement as "good for students and professors". Other examples of accommodation being provided for final exams occur in the Faculty of Medicine and the Centre for Nursing Studies. (Note: there may be other units providing this service for students not registered with the Blundon Centre.)

The Blundon Centre is supportive of these arrangements in academic units and staff suggests that over time there may be other accommodations for which academic units might accept responsibility, for example, scribing.

### **First Year Success Program:**

The staff work closely with the Blundon Centre and are able to advise on transition concerns and academic supports needed for new students. They suggest that the transition to first year be sustained throughout their university career for students needing support.

### **Facilities Management:**

The director of Facilities Management and the director of the Blundon Centre work closely together in the following ways:

- on a case-by-case basis for individual students

- through membership of the director of Facilities Management on the Advisory Committee of the Blundon Centre
- by Facilities Management receiving advice for renovations from the Advisory Committee which provides a priority list to Facilities Management.

### **Senior academic administrators:**

Senior academic leaders acknowledge there are issues to be addressed at Memorial in providing accommodation, and something “more than band aid” is needed.

Expressed concerns included: Blundon Centre is under resourced:

- absence of professional staff with background in disabilities and accommodations at the Blundon Centre
- a lack of leadership at senior levels to support accessibility education across Memorial

One senior academic administrator suggested there may be a role for Chairs in Teaching and Learning in providing leadership on curriculum accessibility in academic units.

### **Office of the Registrar:**

The Office of the Registrar and the Blundon Center work together in the following ways:

- to ensure that appropriate furniture is included in classroom renovations
- to schedule classes in rooms with appropriate technologies for specific accommodations

- to provide students, on the recommendation of the Blundon Centre, with early registration times
- to review and update the information included in the undergraduate “Calendar” each year pertaining to the Blundon Centre and students with disabilities
- to recommend and facilitate priority registration for students with disabilities on a case-by-case basis with supporting documentation
- to receive and provide information and advice on various matters pertaining to students with disabilities including regulations and proposed regulations in the University Calendar
- to link students with disabilities with academic advisors for academic advice pertaining to course selection and registration.

## **Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning**

Over the years, the Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL), in collaboration with the Blundon Centre, has provided support to students on the St. John’s Campus who require accommodations (for example, a quiet space, specialized software, wheelchair accessible, reader/scribe, extended time and others) when doing exams for online courses. While this likely began as a periodic request, it has grown significantly, to the point in the fall 2015 semester that there were nearly 150 separate accommodations coordinated by CITL. This entailed the arrangement of suitable spaces and rooms and appropriate equipment which included, at times, the use of staff offices; additionally, all invigilation fees are paid by CITL.

With the anticipated involvement of academic units in providing space and some other accommodations, the need for space at CITL should dissipate. The practice of requiring CITL to provide accommodations should not be expected or required. It is an anomalous historical arrangement.

CITL offers its expertise to the Blundon Centre in the following ways:

- supporting the Blundon Centre and the Registrar's Office in developing for on-campus courses the information system available for online courses for students requiring accommodations (See Programming and Serving Delivery, Section 2, Recommendation #8.)
- continuing the CITL mandate of installing and maintaining educational technologies when adaptive and assistive technologies are incorporated into classrooms.

## **Educational Partnerships**

The manager of the Blundon Centre has partnered with administrative units to provide education and outreach on issues of accommodations.

The manager has collaborated with the information services librarian and chair of the Sub-Committee on Library Service for Students with Disabilities. The manager presented the work of the Blundon Centre to the

Librarians Academic Council. Both the manager and the information services librarian have worked on assistive technologies available at libraries and alternate format requests made by students.

With the education and policy officer for the Office of the General Counsel, the manager has provided information sessions (up to fifty-five to date) to academic and non-academic units since January 2014 on the Accommodations Policy for Students with Disabilities.

### **Biology Lab Instructor:**

This lab instructor has worked with the Blundon Centre for twenty years and states:

“I feel that with the help from the center and [the manager], we (the Biology department) have been able to help hundreds of students to succeed in first year biology that may not have been as successful without the availability of the Centre...

Some accommodations are more challenging...[than others]. As an example, in the past we have modified our lab procedures for a number of visually impaired students. Sometimes we have had to modify our lab equipment for students in wheelchairs or students who require special seating. I think that through communication between this department and the Blundon Centre we have been able to avoid many problems and pitfalls that can

sometime arise when dealing with such a diverse student body”.

## **6. Resource Requirements, including Human, Financial, Technical or other Operational Resources**

See Term of Reference #2 (Programming and service delivery) for recommendations and rationale.

### **Human:**

- Appoint up to four professional staff (e.gg educational psychologists)
- Appoint an education officer
- Appoint two administrative staff)

### **Technical**

- Implement electronic forms (ClockWork) for student registration.
- Provide information in Banner Student for all on-site courses indicating
  - accommodations have been arranged (as provided by CITL for online courses).
- Record and update accommodations in Banner Student.

### **Operational**

- Allocate additional space to the Blundon Centre
- Complete the soundproofing of testing area in the Blundon Centre

## **7. Policies and Procedures**

Memorial University's [Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Policy](#) was approved in 2013 and will be

reviewed in 2017. The policy ensures “an environment of understanding and respect for the dignity and worth of each student and also.. [supports] inclusive education based on the principles of equity, accessibility and collaboration”. The purpose of the policy is “To establish principles, guidelines and responsibilities respecting access to University services, facilities and housing for students with disabilities in accordance with the [Human Rights Act, 2010](#).”

The renewal of the accommodations policy in 2017 should occur in tandem with the renewal of the Mission, Vision and Values Statements of the Blundon Centre with a focus on accessibility.

### **Recommendation 15:**

That the renewal of the [Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Policy](#) in 2017 focus on accessibility.

Rationale: The University can affirm its focus on accessibility with renewal of the Accommodations Policy.

### **Policy and Procedures Web Access**

In addition to the [Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Policy](#), there are three documents on Procedures for Students seeking Accommodations.

- [Procedure for Arranging Student Accommodation](#)
- [Procedure for Documentation Regarding a Student's Accommodation Request](#)

- [Procedure When a Student Accommodation Request Cannot be Arranged](#)

The accommodations policy and procedures documentation on the web site are cumbersome and disconnected and require greater clarity and navigation tools for those seeking information on and access to the documentation.

**Recommendation 16:**

That the Blundon Centre and the Policy Office of the university improve web information and access to the accommodations policy and procedures documents.

Rationale: To improve web access.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Glenn Roy Blundon Centre for Students with Disabilities be renamed the Glenn Roy Blundon Centre for Student Accessibility.
2. That the Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities (St. John's Campus and Marine Institute) be renamed The Advisory Committee for Student Accessibility (St. John's Campus and Marine Institute).
3. That the Mission Statement of the Blundon Centre be re-conceptualized and revised along with developing a Vision and a Values Statement.
4. That up to four professional staff members (e.g. educational psychologists) be appointed to the Blundon Centre.
5. That an education officer be appointed to the Blundon Centre.
6. That two additional administrative staff be appointed to the Blundon Centre.
7. That electronic forms for requesting and arranging accommodations be implemented upon completion of the ClockWork project.
8. That the Office of the Registrar and the Blundon Centre, with the assistance of CITL, provide the same

information for on-campus courses in Banner for students requiring accommodations that they receive for online courses.

9. That accommodations be recorded and updated in Banner Student.
10. That additional space be allocated to the Blundon Centre and soundproofing in the testing area be completed.
11. That the professional staff (eg, educational psychologists) report to the manager of the Blundon Centre.
12. That the education officer of the Blundon Centre report to the director of Student Life.
13. That the terms of reference and membership of the Advisory Committee on Students with Disabilities, Memorial (St. John's Campus and Marine Institute) be reviewed.
14. That an academic administrator at the decanal level be a member of the Advisory Committee.
15. That the renewal of The Accommodations Policy for Students with Disabilities in 2017 focus on accessibility.

16. That the Blundon Centre and the Policy Office of the University improve web information and access to the accommodations policy and procedures documents.

## Appendix 1

### Blundon Centre Report Interviewees

1. Ruth North, Manager, Blundon Centre, Memorial University
2. Kathy Skinner and Debbie Hickey, Staff, Blundon Centre
3. Blundon Centre MUCEP students
4. Student Group Meeting
5. Individual meetings -17 students
6. Sheila Singleton, Registrar
7. Dr. Cecilia Reynolds, Deputy Provost (Students) and Associate Vice-President (Academic) Undergraduate Studies
8. Dr. Jennifer Massey, Director, Student Life
9. Dr. Noreen Golfman, Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
10. Dr. Sean Cadigan, Associate Vice-President (Academic) Faculty Affairs
11. David Banfield. Executive Director, Learning Disabilities Association, NL and Member, Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities (Memorial University)
12. Jack Jardine, Post-Secondary Consultant, Newfoundland Coordinating Council on Deafness and Member, Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities (Memorial University)
13. Paul Walsh, Coalition of Persons with Disabilities of NL and Member,
14. Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities (Memorial University)

15. Leon Mills, Hard of Hearing Association, NL, and Member, Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities (Memorial University)
16. Dr. Heather Carnahan. Dean, School of Human Kinetics and Recreation
17. Sue Cleyle, Director, Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning
18. Colleen Collett – Staff, CITL
19. Bonnie Simmons – Staff, CITL
20. Professor Andy Fisher, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Studies, Faculty of Engineering
21. Dr. Rob Shea Associate Vice-President (Academic and Student Affairs) Marine Institute
22. Morgan Cooper, General Counsel, Memorial University
23. Dr. Lorraine Dicks, counsellor for Blundon Centre
24. Dr. Valerie Burton and Beth Ryan, First Year Success Program
25. Dr. Karen Goodnough, Education Chair in Teaching and Learning
26. Kim Myrick, Secretary to Chairs in Teaching and Learning
27. Laura Barron, Communications Coordinator, Office of the Deputy Provost (Students)
28. Deena Riggs, Marketing Co-ordination, Office of the Deputy Provost (Students)
29. Dr. Dave Philpott, co-author, Report: 'Accommodating Students with individual learning needs' (2013)
30. Amy Wyse, Acting Director, Faculty Relations
31. Dr. Peter Cornish, Director, Student Wellness and Counselling Centre
32. Darryl Miles. Director, Facilities Management
33. Roxanne Rideout Scott, Coordinator, Student Support and Crisis Management

34. Leah Robertson, Vice-President (Advocacy), Memorial University Student Union (MUNSU)
35. Matthew Barter, MUNSU, Representative, Students with Disabilities
36. Adam Daniels, Staff, MUNSU
37. Sheila Divine, Education and Policy Officer
38. Jeannie Beal, Information Services Librarian, MUN
39. Ed Whalen, Biology Lab Instructor

## **APPENDIX 2**

### UNIVERSAL DESIGN

[https://ssbp.mycampus.ca/www\\_ains\\_dc/Introduction3.html](https://ssbp.mycampus.ca/www_ains_dc/Introduction3.html)

<http://www.udlcenter.org/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bDvKnY0g6e4&feature=youtu.be>

## **APPENDIX 3**

Student Health and Wellness Review Panel, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2014

### **Student Health and Wellness Review Panel**

**Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador**

**June 24-25, 2014**

#### **Panel Members**

- David McMurray, Vice-President, Student Affairs, Wilfrid Laurier University
- Laeeque Daneshmend, Deputy Provost, Office of the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic), Queen's University
- Linda Hensman, School of Pharmacy, Memorial University
- David Philpott, Faculty of Education, Memorial University
- Melanie Greene, Research Assistant

**Submitted September 15, 2014 with the unanimous support of the Panel**

#### **Material Considered (See Appendix A)**

An extensive series of documents, reports, and self-studies was assembled by the Office of the Deputy Provost and

reviewed by the Panel prior to the site visit. This included a literature review and environmental scan completed for the Panel by a graduate research assistant. The Panel thanks those individuals who were involved with compiling this valuable information.

### **People Consulted (See Appendix B)**

The Panel met with a wide variety of individuals during the two-day period and would like to express its sincere appreciation to them for taking the time to meet, to provide valuable information on the services they provide as well as for their openness, honesty and thoughtful comments.

### **Context**

Memorial University has seen significant growth and expansion in recent years as the profile of the student population changes and diversifies. While such expansion has positioned Memorial as a world-class institution, it also carries a commitment to remain attuned to the needs of all those who work, live and study here. Memorial prides itself on maintaining a high level of commitment to academic excellence through a culture of connectedness and community building. Central to achieving this mandated goal is making sure that students feel welcomed and supported on their journey towards becoming independent thinkers and innovative leaders. Memorial's three frameworks: research, public engagement and teaching & learning - guide this process by guaranteeing that initiatives are informed by research, engaged with the public and create an inclusive and effective learning environment. Perhaps nowhere is this

balance more essential than with student health and wellness programs.

Recent growth at Memorial has increased demand for supports at both the student health centre and the counselling centre. This growing demand reflects international trends that have necessitated other post-secondary institutions to redesign health and wellness programs to ensure optimal supports for students in best practice models of wellness. An environmental scan of other Canadian universities, as well as a literature review and recent site visits to six university campuses, identifies a growing trend to merge campus health and counselling centres into an interdisciplinary student wellness centre. Such a model optimizes efficiencies and collaborations between counsellors and health services providers, and facilitates continuity of care, while affording a greater range and diversity of supports for students.

At Memorial, recent studies have called for a similar review of our programs. Most recently, a “Visioning Group”, charged with exploring the organizational structure of the two centres (Counselling and Health), recommended a review Panel be established so as to ensure that changes will prioritize supports for students. That Panel came after a report on students with individual needs associated with disability and/or mental health issues which emerged from 265 consultations with key informants as well as from an extensive literature review and environmental scan. It explicitly called for a proactive, ecological model of student well-being through the adoption of a *“Healthy Campus”* model (Philpott & Chaulk, 2013). A 2013 report by the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services and the Canadian Mental

Health Association (CACUSS/CMHA) entitled *Post-secondary Student Mental Health - A Guide to a Systemic Approach*, further informs a need for a radical new articulation of student health supports and counselling. In 2013, another review Panel exploring the portfolio of the Deputy Provost at Memorial explicitly recommended “consolidating what is now the counselling area and a separate health centre and placing these under one director of a newly combined unit” (MUN, 2013. P.2)

Collectively, these reports challenge Memorial to reexamine, rethink and perhaps redesign existing programs to reflect current best practice models, as well as Memorial’s three strategic frameworks, to encourage greater balance and efficiency in program delivery. It is against this overwhelming documentation advocating for change, and amidst this wealth of knowledge and discussion, that this Panel is charged with exploring a path toward action.

## **Background**

As outlined under the *Terms of Reference for the Student Health and Wellness Review Panel*, the mandate of the review Panel was to investigate and consider existing arrangements and initiatives, and to recommend structures and strategies designed to support and enhance the broad health and wellness needs of students at Memorial University.

The Panel was presented with a wealth of documentation (See Appendix A) to review prior to the consultations. During two days (June 24 and 25, 2014) members of the Panel met with the Deputy Provost and key internal and external

stakeholders including students, faculty and staff, as well as those who asked to meet the Panel in response to a general invitation to the Memorial community (See Appendix B).

The Panel's recommendations, outlined in this report, are aligned with Memorial's core mission, as follows:

*Memorial University is an inclusive community dedicated to innovation and excellence in teaching and learning, research, scholarship, creative activity, service and public engagement. Memorial welcomes and supports students and scholars from all over the world and contributes knowledge and expertise locally, nationally and internationally (Memorial University, 2013).*

This report investigates student needs associated with multiple determinants of health, including mental health, as well as health and wellness promotion and “*Healthy Campus*” community development. It also relies heavily on current research, existing knowledge, programs and practices at other institutions, exploring Memorial's model through an informed and critical lens. Recommendations envision the integration of health and counselling supports at Memorial, and enhanced engagement and collaboration with other academic units, as well as with community and regional health supports. It calls for development of a rigorous assessment culture in wellness programs that will track and inform models of care so as to remain attuned to the evolving needs of students. More

critically, it prioritizes the needs of students within a concept of best practice, as articulated in existing knowledge. The Panel quotes a representative of Memorial University of Newfoundland Students' Union (MUNSU) who told the Panel:

*“Students are the greatest stakeholders and whatever changes that might happen should be about improving front-line student support”.*

It is against this backdrop that the Panel offers the following recommendations. The Panel chose to focus on what the evidence suggests is both needed and feasible for Memorial to establish at this point, given changing student needs and evolving diversity on campus, rather than to be critical of the existing models and service offerings. All recommendations were informed by both the consultations and the data reviewed and are presented unanimously by the Panel.

## **Recommendations**

### Overall Vision and Rationale

Memorial's recent move toward a Provostial model affords the institution the opportunity to reposition student support programs closer to the research and academic environment of the institution. Memorial teaches the professions typically associated with wellness programs, encouraging both inter-professional collaboration and research to inform best practice. The

academy espouses rigor in curriculum development, teaching, training and program evaluation that informs the broader

community. Positioning “student services” within this milieu would assist and strengthen teaching in the academic units, optimize research opportunities to direct programs, and engage with the broader community, while also strengthening supports for the student community. Viewing supports for students as being a part of the university’s core academic and research agenda allows for a flexible, vibrant, informed and contemporary network of support within the broader system of care in the community and sends the message that students are valued.

The Panel unanimously recommends that such a perspective on student support services is best articulated as a “*Healthy Campus*” model which ensures an appropriate environment to anchor student wellness programs. The Panel envisions that a key step toward adopting such a model would be the merging of the health centre and the counselling centre into an integrated, interprofessional model that fosters a circle of care approach, one in which institutional ownership and priority are emphasized. It will link together all three of the institution’s frameworks to encompass a comprehensive strategy focused primarily on, and dedicated to, the student experience through the intersection of student support, research, public engagement and academics. It will also afford stronger links with the academic units, resulting in proactive approaches to wellness and stronger curriculum and research opportunities.

### *Creation of a Student Wellness Centre*

Evidence that emerged from the Panel’s review indicates that both the Counselling Centre and the Student Health Centre are under enormous strain to meet the changing needs of a

growing and increasingly diverse student population. It was equally evident that hiring more physicians and counsellors is not the answer. More critically, Memorial's approach to health and counselling does not reflect contemporary knowledge of best practice as evidenced in the literature review, environmental scan and site visits. A new paradigm is required to respond to the evolving demands and changing needs of today's student population. In order to ensure that Memorial remains a world-class institution, a new, proactive approach to wellness is required that would help characterize a "*Healthy Campus*" model.

The Panel proposes that activities within the Counselling Centre and Student Health Centre be combined within a comprehensive "Student Wellness Centre". The Panel envisions the appointment of a Director of Student Wellness who would co-ordinate three core programs under one umbrella: Student Health, Counselling, and Wellness Education. The Centre would ensure strong and effective programs (as evidenced by ongoing research and appropriate metrics) through a new model that facilitates working closely with a number of academic units to promote proactive

supports for students specific to a range of disciplines. The Centre would be characterized by the following features that typify best-practice in integrated models of student wellness:

### *Shared Space*

The Student Wellness Centre would be consolidated in space on the 5th floor of the University Centre, pending a review by the space committee. The Centre should have a central reception area for processing student's

appointments and concerns, and a common waiting room. A sharing of space encourages collaboration and affords students broader options of care. It simplifies supports, breaks stigma, optimizes efficiencies and allows a greater volume of service.

### *Shared Electronic Files*

Shared electronic files are central to ensuring effective circles of care, anchored in collaborative, interdisciplinary practice. Software solutions are available which have a strong auditing system to assure confidentiality but which also allows for effective information sharing. Students would be advised of the Wellness Centre “confidentiality statement” and encouraged to give signed and informed consent to this record by being advised that it allows the provision of comprehensive care and is the best practice model adopted by the institution. Such a system will also allow easier electronic access to psychiatry and pharmaceutical services, because the physician and/or counsellor working with a student may share the file with another practitioner who may then provide a prescription or virtual referral. This would substantially minimize the need for time consuming and costly face-to-face consultations while expediting service to students. The Panel recommends immediate exploration of implementing such a system.

### *Strong Intake and Triage Model*

An effective intake and triage process is central to an integrated model, where information is collected efficiently and quickly from students to direct appropriate service at the first point of contact. The environmental scan

identified several models of intake and triage, some using standardized instruments, others using a more individual approach to prevent students having to retell their stories. An intake and triage model is the basis for data collection vital to ensuring program effectiveness. The Panel recommends that Memorial's Student Wellness Centre develop and articulate an intake and triage model that will ensure appropriate support, efficient access and data generation that will strengthen service.

### *Defined Parameters of Care*

The Centre must establish strong relationships with regional health authorities as well as other relevant wellness related service providers in the community so as to allow students to both transition into the university as well as to access more intensive services in the community. These relationships establish realistic and pragmatic understandings of Memorial's ability to respond to student need, and provide greater access to the learning environment of the institution

### *Evidence-based Decision-making*

Within the research mandate of the institution, the Centre should reflect a rigorous research environment that will identify the changing needs of students, the effectiveness of its programs and the broader best practice understanding of student wellness that will allow for services to evolve and respond optimally. Metrics should be collected at all points of contact, and analyzed continuously to align programs with the changing needs of a diverse student base. The Panel notes an example of this being the Health Centre's participation in the Student

Health Survey, which provides crucial information to direct programs. The Panel did not, however, find there to be a rich research environment, nor rigorous data collection and analysis to support services. Strong program evaluation must be at the core of a redesigned Centre for Student Wellness.

### *“Hub and Spoke” Model of Supports with the Academic*

#### *Units*

While the Centre will be a hub to support students, programs should be located where the students actually are and where need exists. The Panel envisions a “hub and spoke” approach to service delivery, where the hub of services will be housed at the Student Wellness Centre, with “service spokes” reaching out into the academic units and environments where students live, interact and study. The explicit intention of a Student Wellness Centre is to be malleable enough to direct support outwards and to empower academic units and programs with the skills, knowledge and resources to meet proactively the needs of students before those needs become an obstacle to their success. As much as possible, supports should be specific to the discipline, program/course, and reflect the principles of universal design of learning. Such an approach will also be reflective of the unifying intention of Memorial’s three frameworks.

### *Interprofessional Training Model*

Mirroring the three core frameworks of the university, the Centre will seek to optimize teaching and learning by promoting internships/practicums from a wide spectrum of academic units and disciplines. A Student Wellness

Centre builds on and strengthens synergies so that training of a range of students is an integral function of the Centre. The Panel envisions clinical placements from social work, counselling, psychology, medicine,

nursing, pharmacy, human kinetics and recreation and other wellness disciplines being provided at the Centre through established partnerships with the academic units. The Panel heard that these opportunities are now available for some disciplines, notably medicine, but are under-utilized. Such a model leverages capacity and maximizes diversity of perspectives on student health, expands clinical placements and optimizes teaching in the academic units and links programs with emerging research.

### *Develop a Mental Health Strategy*

The Panel envisions a Student Wellness Centre that is anchored within a “*Healthy Campus*” environment. To ensure linkage, as well as dynamic interactions with the academic units, a “*Healthy Campus*” model is an ecological model – for all who live, study and work here. To realize this, the Panel recommends that Memorial instigate a task force dedicated to the development of an institutionally informed and supported Mental Health Strategy. The Panel notes that there are several university mental health strategies in existence that can help expedite this process at Memorial. This initiative would reflect students, faculty, staff and administration, as well as the report *Accommodating Students with Individual Learning Needs Associated with Disabilities and/or Mental Health Issues*. It will serve to guide the

institution toward a systemic approach to mental health, as articulated in the CACUSS/CMHA report, 2013.

### *Faith/Culture-based Supports*

The Panel recognizes the recent growth of the international population at Memorial and the plans for future growth. With such expansion come intercultural perspectives of health, counselling and diverse faith expressions. The Panel heard a growing need for transcultural medicine, cross cultural counselling, the establishment of an Elders Council to meet the needs of Aboriginal students, and an interfaith centre – all of which should be evidenced in “*Healthy Campus*” model. The Panel was particularly supportive of the establishment of an Elders Council. Likewise, recognizing that international students are often the most frequent practitioners of their faith, the Panel recommends that the Chaplaincy be moved out from the Counselling Centre and be established as an Interfaith Chaplaincy under Student Supports. Having a Chaplaincy situated inside a counselling centre implies stigma, as evidenced by how infrequently the chaplaincy offices are being utilized.

Within the Student Wellness Centre, health services, counselling and wellness will be reorganized into one unit with three components as follows:

## **1. Student Health Component**

While the Student Health Centre was initially established as a primary health facility for relatively healthy young adults, the expansion of the university demographic has morphed it

towards a family practice model, with students presenting with a broader array of health needs. At present, physicians and a nurse staff the Centre. The physicians bill the provincial health plan and 30% of that fee is remitted to the university to cover the expense of administrative support/overhead. While anxiety is the most common medical complaint students present with, health practitioners are limited in their ability to respond. The Centre is experiencing increased demand for obstetric care, pediatric services (predominantly children of international graduate students, our fastest growing group), pharmaceutical consultations, transcultural medicine and psychiatric consultations. There is now a significant need for after-hours support and an on-call system. It is evident that the needs of the student population have surpassed both the capacity and the array of supports currently available.

Repositioning the existing Student Health Centre under a Student Wellness model will help encourage more inter-professional collaboration but it will not effectively address all the challenges that currently exist. A new expression of the model is required to allow it to fit with the overarching goal of linking the service with teaching and learning, and of anchoring student health in a research paradigm. The Panel feels that this can be accomplished by availing of synergies with the Family Practice program at Memorial's Faculty of Medicine.

#### A. Family Medicine Model with the Faculty of Medicine

The Faculty of Medicine has a Family Medicine program offering four teaching clinics in the community utilizing an interprofessional approach to primary health care, in partnership with Eastern Health. Faculty members (who

are required to participate in clinical practice) along with residents and fee-for-service physicians provide the service, in collaboration with other health discipline staff or faculty (e.g., nursing and pharmacy). This model has capacity to provide optimal family health care from multiple perspectives to a significant number of patients. It is a particularly appropriate model for patients who require longer consultations such as those with mental health concerns and/or cultural/second language challenges. It has an on-call and after hours service program which works in close relationship with community and regional health systems. The Panel feels that developing the Student Wellness Centre as a fifth site for this program would optimize efficiencies while expanding service to students. It would also strengthen the health focused academic programs at MUN by giving medical, pharmacy and nursing students as well as residents access to an age group that is often difficult to reach, including greater training in health delivery to international families. Other disciplines, such as social work could also be active service

providers in such a model. It will strengthen the ability of those physicians who wish to continue in a fee for service model to do so, while allowing salaried physicians the opportunity to spend more clinical time with students. It would also permit other disciplines to have faculty engaged in the delivery of care to the student population. This model would give students direct access to specializations such as obstetrics, pediatrics, and psychiatry while also creating the much needed after-hours care. An additional benefit is that the Centre would

be anchored in the research agenda of all participating faculties – forging the relationships with the academic units that the Panel strives toward, while recognizing that student wellness is the paramount objective.

### *B. Lead Physician*

Under a Student Wellness model the Director will be responsible for all three programs, reporting directly to the Deputy Provost. The Panel recognizes a need for a Lead Physician, under provincial health regulations. A Lead Physician will liaise with the physicians and the Wellness Centre Director, coordinate research and data collection, and help ensure a cohesive and efficient administrative unit. The Lead Physician would also have a dual report role to the Chair of Family Medicine in the Faculty. The Panel suggests a 75/25% time split with 75% of time allocated to direct student support. The job description and responsibilities will be determined in consultation with the Deputy Provost and the Wellness Centre Director.

### *C. Inter-professional Approaches to Student Care*

In keeping with the transition toward an inter-professional model that the Panel envisions, and that the Family Medicine program relies on, other disciplines should also be involved in the delivery of health care for students. The Panel recommends that a mental health nurse/case manager, a clinical social worker, a part-time pharmacist, and a part-time dietician eventually join the team in this unit, affording students specialized support and strengthening the inter-professional nature of the program.

#### D. Psychiatric Consultation Program

The Panel heard that physicians must be able to consult with a psychiatrist if the needs of students were to be met effectively. This is an area where strong relationships with community based services and programs become essential and where the parameters of the Centre's supports need to be clearly defined. The Panel recommends that the Centre explore establishing an electronic consultative model similar to that being used by the University of Waterloo, where the electronic file has a messaging system linking to community based practitioners with expertise in certain disciplines, including psychiatry. A contracted psychiatrist can access the file remotely, and consult electronically with the practitioner. This will have a positive impact on Memorial's campuses. While it will not remove a need for face-to-face referrals and consultations, it will help expedite the process for students and optimize a circle of care. An additional consideration should be to establish a similar system of access for family medicine practitioners to the services of a pharmacist with a specialization in psychiatry.

#### E. Shared, Open-Office with Examining Rooms

The environmental scan and site visits identified a growing trend for physicians, nurses and others who provide care to have a shared, open office where they can collaborate with one another and consult on student needs. A number of smaller, examination rooms should be available often arranged in a pod like configuration, on a ratio of two per physician, allowing for fluid movement between patients. The Panel recognizes that additional

space (medical supplies, quiet space, confidential consultation space, etc.) would also be required, and recommends that a space review be conducted to appropriately repurpose space.

## **2. Wellness Education Component**

The Panel felt strongly that it is essential that the new Centre have a significant Wellness Education component. It reflects a proactive, educational approach, versus a reactive illness management model. Given Memorial's unique relationship with the people of the province as its sole university, this perspective should be a central tenet of the Centre: to raise education and promote well-being. Subsequently, once again, a mandate to forge strong relationships with the academic units emerges, to both rely on those disciplines involved in training health professions, as well as empowering the units to encourage wellness in their disciplines. Wellness education should be infused into the curriculum of the academic units, linked with the demands of each program, and be a constant priority of the faculty. While a Wellness Educator at the Centre can serve to coordinate, support and help inform the academic units, the focus should be on building capacity.

Communication should be a central role of the Wellness Education program, unifying all programs and raising awareness and education on the campus. Peer mentorship programs, student led initiatives, student research and training programs can help characterize wellness initiatives, affording inter-professional perspectives and evidence-based approaches including education of the university community under a "*Healthy Campus*" paradigm.

A rigorous research approach should be developed to guarantee that initiatives are evidence-based and fluid, changing and evolving with demand, while leaving a trail of knowledge and skills as it grows. This research should be linked with the faculties, creating and disseminating knowledge into the broader community and academic field.

The Panel noted an existing wellness education effort however, linkages with the academic units or with evidence-based decision-making were not observed. Two prime examples where the priority should be in forging relationships with the faculties and schools and linking supports with specific curriculum and programs of study, are found in the Glenn Roy Blundon Centre for Students with Disabilities and Learning Supports that are currently located at the Counselling Centre. The Panel saw no evidence that either of these programs is linked with health or counselling services. While the Blundon Centre may, at times, need to intersect with health or counselling to establish and support accommodations, the process of ensuring accessibility once the clinical assessment has been registered, is primarily an academic accommodations issue with the faculties and schools.

*A. Reposition the Blundon Centre to Align With the Faculties and Schools*

Reflecting the vision of the Teaching and Learning Framework, as well as the principle of Universal Design for Learning, it is recommended that the priority of the Blundon Centre be directed toward establishing strong relationships with the individual faculties and schools so

as to empower them with the knowledge and skills needed to ensure that all students have access to their curriculum. The thrust of the Centre's work should be seen in collaborating with the faculties and schools to accommodate their students in their programs of study – in a proactive model of embedding supports in the units (this does not imply recruiting staff to be housed in units but to make staff with expertise accessible to the units). While the Panel envisions a role for a strong central hub at the Blundon Centre, there should be strong and effective communication with the faculties and schools. Under this new model, the Blundon Centre would move under the direction/mandate of the Director of Student Supports division, where the International Advising Office, Inter-faith Chaplaincy and Aboriginal Resource Office are also located. In conjunction with each other, these units seek to provide supports to students with diverse needs. The Panel notes that this is consistent with models at other Canadian universities and that it also helps lessen stigma associated with disabilities. The Panel also notes that this new model will require that the staff at the Blundon Centre have credentials in disability studies. Until that happens, a closer relationship with the existing part-time psychologist will be required to manage assessment and develop accommodation plans. The Panel envisions that, in the long-term, this will not be necessary when staff are credentialed in disability studies. It is further recommended that the title be changed from *“The Glenn Roy Blundon Centre for Students with Disabilities”* to *“The Glenn Roy Blundon Centre for Accessibility”*.

### B. Reposition Learning Support to Align With the Units

As with the Blundon Centre, the Panel did not see a reason for Learning Supports to be aligned with either health or counselling. Learning Supports should seize the opportunity to reach into the faculties and schools and forge more appropriate relationships. The Panel envisions Learning Supports be situated in a learning commons where similar supports such as writing, math, and information literacy are currently located. Like the Blundon Centre, the focus of learning supports should be closely aligned with the individual units to support their curriculum in their programs. The Panel did not see evidence of a need for a student seeking help with test taking or study strategies to have to visit a Wellness Centre with physicians and counsellors as it medicalizes the issue. Programs should follow the “hub and spoke” approach outlined above and be physically located in the places and spaces where students are: the Library, Student Housing, the Writing Centre and the units themselves, on a full or part-time basis as needed.

## **3. Student Counselling Component**

### A. Lead Counsellor

As with Student Health and Wellness Education, there will be a lead practitioner. That person will have assigned coordinating duties but will be primarily a direct support provider to students. The Lead Counsellor will communicate with the counselling team and the Wellness Centre Director, coordinate research and data collection, and help develop a cohesive and efficient unit. The Panel envisages a 75/25% time split with the majority being

spent on direct support provision. As with the Lead Physician, the position description and responsibilities will be developed in consultation with the Deputy Provost and the Wellness Centre Director.

### *B. Hub and Spoke Counselling*

The Panel heard a desire to decentralize counselling into a multiple site model, consistent with the hub and spoke approach the Panel recommends. This was particularly evident in student housing, the International Advising Centre, and some of the academic units themselves, where there was a need to have counselors more accessible and responsive to evolving needs and program pressures. These counsellors will remain connected with a strong core at the Wellness Centre but will prioritize greater accessibility for students. This decentralized model of counselling will also provide an opportunity to work with the units and Wellness educators, to build capacity and create proactive networks of support.

There was additional concern over the lack of an on-call counselling service, and the potential for risk after hours and on weekends. The Panel envisions counselling services as being highly accessible, reflecting the schedules and lives of students, not a 9-5 business model. Supports must be malleable and accessible with a strong research component to track need and impact. The Panel recommends the development of an on-call counselling system.

### C. Case Management Approach

Many wellness programs at university campuses utilize a case management approach for students with complex needs, usually managed by a mental health nurse or professional social worker. Memorial has a similar approach but, until recently, a non-credentialed individual managed it and the psychologists were not part of the team. The Panel imagines that students with the highest level of need and risk must be held closest to the Centre with the strongest circles of care possible. The Panel recommends that a Student Wellness Centre include a strong case management model, reflecting an inter-professional approach, linked (where necessary) with community supports, and managed by an appropriately credentialed professional.

### D. Clarify Role of Counselling Services in the Psy. D. Program

The Panel applauds the interaction of the Counselling Centre with the Department of Psychology in the Faculty of Science that offers a Psy. D. program as an opportunity to build on synergies with a faculty. However, at present, a significant amount of the resources at the counselling centre are consumed by teaching in the Psy.D. program. The Panel notes that Article 24 of the current collective agreement defines the duties of the faculty in the Centre and does not include “teaching” as being a responsibility of the unit. The Centre for Institutional Analysis and Planning (CIAP) reports that between 2009 and 2014 only three students have completed the Psy. D. program (with two more to graduate this year). Of the three psychology interns currently at the Centre, only one is from Memorial.

A great deal of physical space at the Centre is devoted to teaching. The Panel members were unanimous in stating that the Counselling Centre's relationship with the Psy.D. program is the single biggest diversion from direct supports to students, and recommends its role with respect to this program be clarified. In particular, the budget and resources that have been allocated for student counseling must cease to subsidize the Psy.D. program. As is the case with health and wellness education, there is a valuable opportunity for interns from a Psy. D. program (or any other counselling program) to be placed at the centre and be supervised by the faculty there and by the academic unit itself. The primary focus of the counsellors at the Wellness Centre must be on direct delivery of counselling supports for Memorial's students. The Panel posits that students deserve to be able to access direct support from the more skilled practitioners as well as supports from interns. The Panel concludes that a Psy.D. program at Memorial should be independent of a student support centre and, more critically, it should not come at the expense of the students.

#### *E. Interprofessional Counselling Supports*

The Panel notes that, excepting one nurse, the approach to counselling at Memorial is exclusively a clinical psychology model. There is significant evidence that current best practice is toward multiple perspectives of counselling supports, which includes social workers and certified counsellors, and lends broader perspectives for student supports. The Panel felt that Memorial's narrow approach to a psychological model is outdated and

limiting for students and that future recruitment should focus on new perspectives and disciplines.

### Need for further targeted consultation

None

### Changes in leadership structure

The Panel recommends the creation of a position of “Director of Student Wellness”. This would be an academic appointment, responsible for all three programs under one Centre.

The title ‘Director of the Counselling Centre’ and the ‘Chief Physician’ would be replaced by the title of ‘Lead Counsellor’ and ‘Lead Physician’. The Wellness Education program would also have a “Lead Wellness Educator”. All three positions would primarily be direct support to students, with coordinating duties and responsibilities, as defined in position descriptions to be developed in consultation with the Student Wellness Director and the Deputy Provost.

Administrative and front desk staff would be cross-trained and shared, with the importance of specialized Medical Office training recognized.

### Changes in organizational structure

See Appendix C

## Changes in space allocations

The Panel enjoyed tours of all facilities under both the Counselling Centre and the Student Health Centre. It therefore recognizes the unique space requirements of physicians, nurses, and counsellors, and recognizes the need for student confidentiality, quiet space for students in distress, as well as spaces in which to conduct case planning and confidential consultations. The Panel recommends a thorough space review for the new centre on the entire 5<sup>th</sup> floor of the University Student Centre should be conducted. An open concept design with shared front desk and waiting room, and shared administrative support space could be arranged. Counselling rooms could be at one end of the space while medical consulting rooms would be located at the other end. Group and meeting rooms could be shared.

## Tentative implementation schedule; timelines

An integrated, inter-professional Student Wellness Centre will be a significant step forward for Memorial University and will strengthen its place as a world-class institution. Given the critical importance of student wellness services, the Panel feels that there is urgency in beginning to address some of the issues facing existing supports and the move to a more integrated approach. Transitioning from existing programs to this new model will take time and careful planning, best done in phases. The Panel imagines a two-year transition phase with a four-year full implementation timeline. It recommends that an Interim Wellness Centre Director be appointed immediately, and that a search be conducted at an appropriate time, most likely near the end of the transition

phase for a permanent Director to solidify implementation. The Interim Director will develop timelines, priorities and processes while beginning to redefine position descriptions, develop a shared electronic filing system, articulate a shared intake and triage system, support a space review, help establish a mental health strategy, and integrate programs and supports with the faculties and schools.

## References

Memorial University (2013). *Face forward: President's Report 2013*. St. John's, NL: Author. Retrieved from: <http://www.mun.ca/presidentsreport/2013/>

Philpott, D., Kennedy, K., & Greene, M. (2014). *Strengthening the value chain: Supporting international students and building intercultural competence at Memorial University*. St. John's, NL: Memorial University. Retrieved from: <http://blog.distance.mun.ca/teachingandlearning/files/2014/06/Strengthening-The-Value-Chain.pdf>

## Appendix A

### Material Considered

- Terms of Reference for the Student Health and Wellness Review Panel, 2014
- External Review Report: Deputy Provost Portfolio, February 2013
- Visioning Group Report: Re-alignment Deputy Provost Portfolio, April 2014
- Report on Student Health and Mental Health Related Services & Academic Programs for Health Care Professionals at Memorial University, June 2014
- Prioritizing Student Health and Wellness at Memorial University Literature Review and Environmental Scan, June 2014
- Post-Secondary Student Mental Health: Guide to a Systemic Approach, 2013
- Accommodating Students with Individual Learning Needs Associated with Disabilities and/or Mental Health Issues, June 2013
- Consultant's Report: Let's Talk About Mental Health, Memorial University, April 23, 2014
- Self Studies: University Counselling Centre, May 2014; Student Health Services, April 2014
- Memorial University's Teaching and Learning Framework, May 10, 2011
- Multi-Year Infrastructure Plan, 2014-2020
- Counselling Centre Research Activity 2009-2014
- Strategic Research Intensity Plan 2014-2020, April 23, 2014 version 3

- Enrolment Plan 2020: Enrolment Targets and Objectives for the seven-year period 2014-15 to 2020-21, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Version 3.2 April 23, 2014
- Internationalization White Paper for Memorial University, February 5, 2014
- Goals and Objectives for Public Engagement,
- Report of the Committee to Review the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs and Services, November 2007
- Proposal Portfolio Realignment Office of Deputy Provost (Students) & Vice President (Academic), Undergraduate Studies
- University Space Schemata
- Written Submissions:
  - Letter from the Executive Directors of MUN Students' Union, June 16, 2014
  - Letter from Ruth North, Manager of the Glen Roy Blundon Centre, June 16, 2014
  - Wilfrid Laurier University's Student Wellness Centre: transitional milestones & achievement indicators.
- Report on Site Visits to Universities with Integrated Student Wellness Clinics, June 2014

## **Appendix B**

### **People Consulted**

Dr. Peter Cornish, Director of Counselling Centre

Dr. Norman Lee, Chief Physician, Student Health Centre

Re: Psy.D. Program:

Dr. Len Zedel, Associate Dean of Science, Research and Graduate

Dr. Beth Whelen, Counsellor, Counselling Centre

Dr. Jacqueline Carter, Co-Director of Clinical Training

Dr. Olga Heath, Associate Professor, University  
Counselling Centre & Director, Centre for Collaborative  
Health Professional Education

Memorial University of Newfoundland Students' Union  
(MUNSU):

Executive Director of External Affairs, Communication  
and Research: Ryan Murphy

Executive Director of Finance & Services: Devin Grant

Executive Director of Student Life: Kimberly Drisdelle

Executive Director of Advocacy: Sean Kennedy

Executive Director of Campaigns: Robert Leamon

Graduate Students' Union (GSU):

Vice President, Communications: Rebecca Stuckey

Staff and Faculty from the Counselling Centre:

Dr. Peter Cornish

Dr. Mike Doyle

Dr. John Garland, Associate Professor

Dr. Olga Heath  
Lester Marshall, Learning Specialist  
Dr. Lisa Moores, visiting Assistant Professor  
Dr. Michelle Neary  
Dr. Beth Whelan  
Kelly Neville, Wellness Coordinator  
Heather Patterson, Psy.D. student, Memorial  
Carla Petker, Doctoral resident from University of Alberta  
Leah Wilson, Doctoral resident from University of British

Columbia

Julie Broderick, Admin. staff  
Patricia Coady, Admin. staff in Counselling Centre  
Wayne Yetman  
Debbie Hickey, Admin. staff in Blundon Centre  
Ruth North  
Kathy Skinner  
David Newman  
Roger Whelan

Physicians and Staff from Student Health Centre:

Dr. Norman Lee  
Dr. Lynn Dwyer  
Dr. Amanda Pendergast  
Dr. Johanne Lacelle  
Missy Power, student health nurse  
Shawna Foley, admin. staff  
Rhonalee Sharpe, admin. staff  
Dayne Cutler, admin. staff  
Lisa O'Brien, admin. staff

Mr. Bruce Belbin, Interim Director of Housing

Consultation re: Special Populations:

Ms. Ruth North, Manager, Blundon Centre

Ms. Sheila Freake, Coordinator of the Aboriginal  
Resource Office

Ms. Juanita Hennessey, Acting Manager, International  
Student Advising Office

Deans and Associate Deans of Faculty of Medicine:

Dr. Cathy MacLean, Chair of Family Medicine

Dr. James Rourke, Dean, Faculty of Medicine

Dr. Donald McKay, Associate Dean of Undergraduate  
Medical Education

Deans of Health Sciences:

Dr. Alice Gaudine, Dean, Pro-tempore, School of Nursing

Dr. Donna Hardy-Cox, Dean, School of Social Work

Representatives from Grenfell Campus:

Janice Galliot, Wellness Coordinator

Shanda Williams, Program Coordinator, International  
Student Services

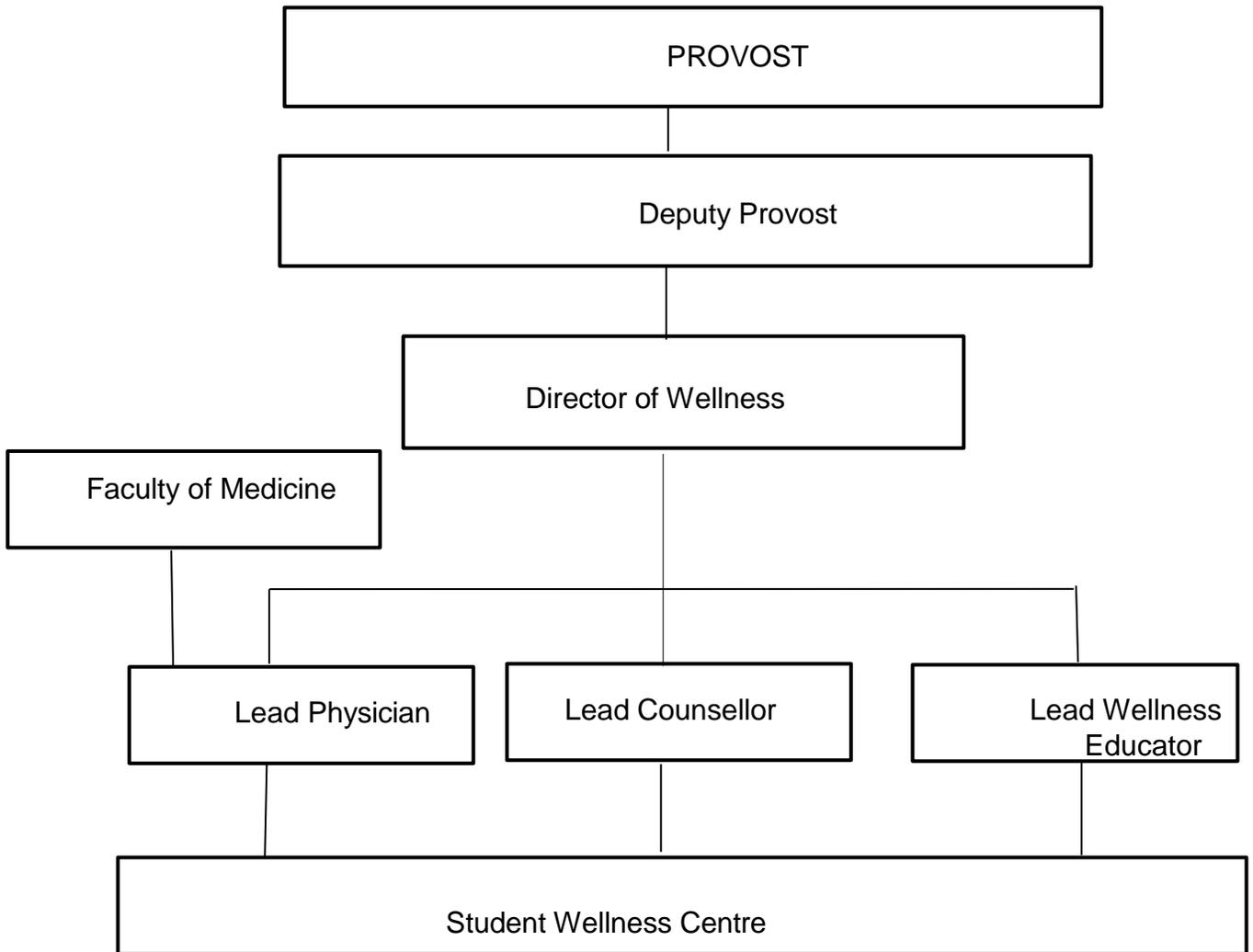
Nicole Noel, Housing

Representative from Marine Institute:

Angie Clarke, Director of Student Affairs

Dr. Noreen Golfman, Dean of Graduate Studies

## Appendix C: Organization Chart



## **APPENDIX 4**

Report of the Blundon Centre Review Panel, Memorial University, 2007

### **Report of the Panel for the Administrative Review of the Glenn Roy Blundon Centre for Students with Disabilities**

**Memorial University of Newfoundland**

**July 25, 2007**

#### **Table of Contents**

Executive Summary	1
Background and Methodology	2
Staffing	3
Community Service	8
Entrepreneurship	12
University Support	12
Plans, Goals and Resource Allocation	14
Supplementary Issues	19

Summary of Recommendations	20
Concluding Remarks	24
Appendix A: Schedule of Site Visit	25
Appendix B: Guidelines for Written Submissions	28
Appendix C: Demand on Services of the Blundon Centre	30
Appendix D: Sample Statement of Faculty Rights regarding Services for Students with Disabilities	32

## Executive Summary

The Glenn Roy Blundon Centre for Students with Disabilities was opened early in 1992 and was named for a former student of Memorial who advocated for the rights of students with disabilities. Glenn Blundon, from Bay de Verde, passed away in 1984 and his memory is kept alive by the hard work and dedication of those who assist students with disabilities every day at Memorial University. Even current student clients of the Blundon Centre who were born since Glenn passed away, respect that memory and are passionate about the Centre being named for him.

In the early days of the Centre, there were very few students who needed or requested services and accommodations. The numbers have grown exceptionally since then and particularly within the past few years.

In November 2005, the University's Senate struck an *ad hoc* committee to review the appeal of a student who had been a client of the Blundon Centre. The review addressed a number of issues around the Senate procedures for appeals, but it also identified that more staffing and expertise may be needed at the Blundon Centre and therefore recommended that this particular issue be addressed. The Dean of Student Affairs and Services accepted the recommendation and expanded it to include a complete administrative review of the unit, following a tailored version of the Procedures for Review of Administrative Units (which are normally followed by

units falling under the Vice-President (Academic), hence the reason they were tailored).

The unit's Self Study was conducted between March and May of 2007 and the site visit occurred in mid-June. The review panel took as broad an approach as possible in gathering information and has made recommendations in the areas of: Staffing, Services, Space, Budget, Technology, Systems, Community Service, Promotion, Facilities, Faculty Rights. These recommendations appear throughout the report and are summarized, for convenience, at the end.

The Blundon Centre is a model of student service delivery. Every in-person or written submission to the review panel described the Centre as exemplary in its service delivery, a real credit to the staff who are employed there. To continue to be one of the areas that contributes so significantly to Memorial University's success, the Centre needs more resources, particularly in the areas of staff, space and budget and these are described in more detail in the sections that follow.

## **Background and Methodology**

The panel conducting the Administrative Review of the Glenn Roy Blundon Centre (hereinafter referred to as the Blundon Centre) comprised:

Donna L. Ball (Panel Chair)  
Senior Policy Analyst  
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Professor Vivienne Kuester  
School of Human Kinetics and Recreation  
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Dr. Allyson Harrison  
Clinical Director, Regional Assessment and Resource  
Centre  
Queen's University

The panel received the Blundon Centre's Self Study on June 5, 2007 and additional documentation following that including: electronic versions of the registration data for the Centre, the University's Policy on Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities, sample forms used in the Blundon Centre, revised tables showing Memorial's benchmark position relative to the eight universities included in the benchmarking analysis, the Blundon Centre's "Guidelines for Invigilators" and "Scribing and Reading Guidelines".

Ms. Robyn Saunders of the Centre for Institutional Analysis and Planning at Memorial assisted in the

coordination of the Site Visit and attended all sessions. The Site Visit occurred on June 18 and 19, 2007, during which time the Panel met with a total of 32 individuals from the University and the broader community, representing many constituencies - senior administration of Student Affairs and Services, staff of the Blundon Centre, staff of the Counselling Centre, student employees of the Blundon Centre, student clients of the Blundon Centre, members of the Dean's Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities, academic administrators, faculty, Registrar's Office, School of Graduate Studies, campus coordinators at the Marine Institute (MI) and Sir Wilfred Grenfell College (SWGC), Facilities Management, Housing, Food and Conference Services, Instructional Development Office, and the Library and Commons area. See complete list in Appendix A.

In addition to personalized invitations to meet with the Review Panel, there was a general call, across Memorial's *Newsline*, for anyone in the University to contact the Chair of the panel to set up a meeting time or to make a written submission. There were 3 written submissions. See Appendix B for the Guidelines for Written Submissions.

The panel is grateful to all those who met with us or made written submissions. Their input was invaluable and their honesty and openness enlightened us. The panel is particularly grateful to the staff of the Blundon Centre for their thorough and comprehensive Self Study.

## **Staffing**

### ***1. How well are staff resources being used?***

The Blundon Centre was established in 1992 with one full time permanent staff member, Student Affairs Officer, a position commonly referred to as the Blundon Centre Coordinator and which we will refer to as the Coordinator. The duties of this position include; strategic planning, advocacy, information dissemination, administrative and clerical functions, consultations with and workshops for faculty, graduate students and staff, arranging diagnosis and accommodations for students and much more. From 1991-1995 there were three contractual positions, supported by external grants, who ran a high school transition programme.

Since 1992 undergraduate students have been employed on a semester basis mostly from MUCEP grants. Over time the numbers employed have increased as more students registered with the Centre. The duties of these student employees include: clerical and reception duties; research; reading; proctoring; scribing tests and exams and assistance to students in using adaptive technology. In 2005 a new contractual position, Academic Programme Assistant (later retitled Academic Programme Administrator), was created to alleviate the workload of the Coordinator. Since 2004 an Assistant Professor in Counselling (Psycho-Educational Testing Service), hereinafter referred to as the Assistant Professor, has been available on a part-time basis through the Counselling Centre. As well, this person

provides learning disability assessments, on a fee-per-service basis. Other staff from the Counselling Centre, including a Learning Specialist, are also available for consultations.

## **A. Use by students**

Students who use the Blundon Centre were unanimous in praising the work of the Coordinator, and the Academic Program Administrator for their hard work, commitment, and dedication to the office. It appears that students with disabilities feel comfortable approaching the Blundon Centre and asking for assistance. The difficulty appears to be that there are far more students needing to use the services of the Blundon Centre than when it was established (See Appendix C), and the staffing complement has not kept pace with this increased demand. As a result, we heard from students that it is difficult to get an appointment with the Coordinator because her days are fully booked already. This creates problems for students who have urgent problems or issues that have to be dealt with in a time-sensitive manner. One student voiced frustration at the fact that the only person on campus qualified to assist with a particular problem has no ability to help when problems need to be solved fairly quickly.

Students described a bottleneck situation in the Blundon Centre, where each student with a disability must register each semester and verify their specific accommodation requirements with the Coordinator, which is through a personal interview for first-time registrants. Given that the Blundon Centre now deals with approximately 200 students a semester, this means that many students are required to wait weeks or months in order to update their profile or register for the first time. While students all seemed to appreciate that this was due to lack of manpower, they remain frustrated by the time needed to deal with their disability-specific needs each term.

Students not only utilize the staff resources of the Blundon Centre as clients, but many of them work there as student assistants, a dual role that has good and bad points. The student assistants working there observe that there is a high staff turn-over rate in the office, not simply because the student assistants are only able to work a certain number of hours/week, but also because many of these students find the pace and demands on staff time in the Blundon Centre to be too onerous and overwhelming. If students working as receptionists feel this way, the panel could only wonder what the permanent staff in the office experience.

Because the Blundon Centre organizes and invigilates all term tests and final exams for students with disabilities, their office is particularly busy during certain times of the year. While student clients again were grateful for the opportunity to write these assessments in a more "disability-friendly" environment, we heard from some students that overcrowding and slow service are significant problems during exam period. Waiting 15-20 minutes to be seated for an exam due to an understaffed office was just one of the complaints voiced, although this same student was quick to praise Blundon Centre staff for being able to handle as many exams as they do without making mistakes.

Students also noted that a centre such as this should be able to help students with disabilities evaluate the latest assistive technology to help them make informed and appropriate purchases of such devices or software. This is not possible, due largely to lack of staff time available for this assistance.

Students also suggested that staff resources could be better utilized if registration for the Blundon Centre were available on-line, so they did not have to fill out their accommodation and personal information forms by hand each term.

## **B. Use by staff for advice**

University staff members whom we interviewed all discussed the willingness of the Coordinator to give of her time and expertise to help with any problem or answer any question posed. The Coordinator offers assistance and advice when issues of student housing are raised. Concern was voiced by staff about the hours that Coordinator must keep in order to meet the demands imposed by the Blundon Centre, including regularly replying to mail late at night or coming in early to deal with issues affecting students with disabilities or with questions posed by staff.

Facilities Management talked about the close working relationship their department has with the Blundon Centre, and the many projects and devices they build or repair for students with disabilities at no cost to either the student or the Blundon Centre. They certainly appear to make use of the expertise available at the Blundon Centre, and communicate regularly about disability-specific physical-plant issues.

The Coordinator also appears to play a key role in assisting indirectly with the provision of disability supports at two other campuses – MI and SWGC. She is available as a resource if any questions about disability-related issues arise. This is especially true when these offices are required to determine if requested accommodations are fair and reasonable given the unique nature of some of the programs offered at the MI, for example.

The panel heard that the Coordinator is too busy at present to provide more general support to many of the staff who deal with students with disabilities on a daily basis, and who hoped that this review would allow time to be freed up so that she could offer more staff training and information sessions.

### **C. Use by faculty (including academic administrators) for advice and expertise**

Faculty reported that in general they rely on the Blundon Centre to make appropriate and reasonable recommendations regarding accommodations for students with disabilities in their programs or courses.

Issues arose, however, with respect to whether or not the accommodations recommended were always equitable, especially when this meant that the professor had to make up a different (but hopefully equivalent) exam for students who write exams "every other day", or when extra time is provided for students in exams/tests who will not then be permitted additional time for tasks when they graduate and become employed or during their work terms.

Another contentious issue was identified with respect to accommodating students with severe behavioural problems. While faculty at the MI are notified ahead of time if a student with high needs will be in his/her class (although the student is not specifically named), and faculty at SWGC are given more specific information ahead of time about various students with specific disabilities in their upcoming classes, no such system exists at the main campus. If a student with a serious disability chooses not to identify him or herself to the professor, the faculty member in question can be "blindsided" by in-class behaviours that threaten not only the physical plant of the class, but also the welfare of other students. One academic administrator interviewed was particularly worried about the ability of the Blundon Centre to set limits on the types of behaviours that needed to be accommodated by faculty.

The Blundon Centre has attempted to deal with such behavioural issues by instituting a "triage committee", comprising representatives from the Blundon Centre, a counsellor with expertise in the areas of learning and behavioural issues, and the Learning Specialist from the Counselling Centre. This team has focused mainly on providing support services to the one student about whom we heard who has a significant behavioural problem and would respond to "calls for help" from faculty members and administrators who tried to manage this student's disruptive and worrisome in-class behaviour. Reportedly, there were six such "calls for help" this past year, where the professor and/or departmental administrators were at their wit's-end and needed advice. Faculty still seemed to feel that more help is required if they are to deal with such students on a more regular basis as part of their teaching load. It was noted that the University's Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities was void of any statement of faculty rights.

**Recommendation #1** A statement of faculty rights with respect to students with disabilities be developed in consultation with the Director of Faculty Relations and MUNFA. This could be incorporated into the University's Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities or be developed separately. Appendix D contains a sample statement of Faculty Rights from the University of Wisconsin – Platteville, adapted from a document produced by Dr. Harrison, which could be used as a guide or a starting point for discussion.

Faculty wished that more disability-specific training, advice and support was available from the Blundon Centre, but appreciated that the Coordinator currently does not have the time to devote to such activities. Nevertheless, the general feeling was that the expertise of the Coordinator could be better utilized in a role of educator and advisor to the University, by hiring additional staff to tend to the day-to-day running and managing of the Blundon Centre itself. Faculty felt that the Coordinator's expertise could be directed towards activities such as the new faculty orientation, so that incoming faculty could receive some specialized training in the most appropriate ways to accommodate and support students with disabilities. At present, such input is not possible.

***2. How successful is the unit in implementing University employment equity policies?***

**As far as the panel could tell, the Blundon Centre is implementing the University's employment equity policies appropriately. They have hired international students and students with disabilities (both visible and invisible in nature). Reasonable job accommodations have also been provided for some of these individuals.**

***3. Are staff workloads equitable and appropriate to the unit's mission?***

**Compared to other Disability Offices at comparable-sized universities, the panel unanimously felt that the staff workloads at the Blundon Centre were neither appropriate nor equitable. Although there is a question as to exactly how other similar-sized institutions actually count the number of students they served, it was clear from the benchmarking survey undertaken by the Coordinator (Appendix C of the Self Study) that the Blundon Centre is woefully understaffed and underfunded. Although the Blundon Centre provides all the same services offered at other similar-sized institutions, they do so with 33% of the staffing complement available at these other universities, and with a fraction of the operating budget. To put this in perspective, the average operating budget for the two comparable institutions responding to this question was \$381,538. By contrast, the operating budget for the Blundon Centre in 2006-07 was \$141,639.**

**In this national benchmarking survey, which was answered by 8 institutions, the total number of employees in their disability offices ranged from 3 to 13. When looking at the 4 institutions that were deemed to be most similar in size to Memorial University, the average number of full-time permanent staff working in disability services was 5.5. Of interest was the fact that, even though these offices have far more staff than does the Blundon Centre, one of their main concerns identified was staff workload, which was increasing in proportion to the growing number of students with disabilities attending university.**

**The panel was surprised and concerned to learn of the amount of overtime required of the Blundon Centre staff in order to meet the needs of students with disabilities. At present, the office has been able to meet the University's human rights obligations to reasonably accommodate students with disabilities mainly by working inappropriate, excessive amounts of overtime. While some of this overtime is "regular", meaning that the Coordinator and her one staff member take equivalent time "in lieu", even this is not enough to meet the demands placed upon the office. The panel learned that the Coordinator and Academic Program Administrator work 60-hour weeks for more than 26 weeks of the year and 80-hour weeks for at least four weeks of the year. They describe this as "volunteer overtime". Especially at times when students with disabilities are writing exams proctored and run by Blundon Centre, the Coordinator and the Administrator must be available well beyond the normal work day to deal with any issues or crises that arise in a timely manner. They carry a cell phone for this on call.**

With the increase in the numbers of students being identified as having a disability, including other categories of disability e.g. autistic spectrum disorders, this workload pressure can only increase. The overwhelming evidence from the Self Study and site visit sessions is that the Blundon Centre staff are overworked and stressed and that more permanent staff are needed to more effectively deliver services. When

staff are working long days in order to do everything that needs to be done it must reduce their efficiency to meet all needs. In addition, the University has placed itself at enormous risk in that if one or more of the staff became ill for any period of time, the Blundon Centre would in effect, have to shut down. There would be no services to meet the University's human rights obligations.

**The panel agrees that at least 3 new permanent positions should be established, and additional funds should be identified to increase the number of days the Assistant Professor is available to serve students with disabilities.**

**Recommendation #2: Hire a permanent full-time Learning Strategist (or facilitator or advisor). This professional should have a background in Education, Occupational Therapy or Psychology. Establish the position as a staff position, so as to reduce any conflict of interest should there be disputes about accommodations or supports recommended to faculty. This position should work with and report directly to the Coordinator, and should provide counselling and support to students registered with the Blundon Centre and work with faculty on students' needs and accommodations.**

**Recommendation #3** Confirm the contractual Academic Program Administrator position as a permanent position to deal with accommodation issues and technical support questions and to

assume full responsibility for supervision of student assistants.

**Recommendation #4** Hire a permanent full-time Administrative Assistant to assume clerical responsibilities, answer telephone, take appointments, file, collect and copy tests and exams, etc.

**Recommendation #5 Increase to two the number of days per week that the Assistant Professor is working out of the Counselling Centre. The panel felt it was vital that this position be seen as operating at "arms-length" from the Blundon Centre, especially since this person will be doing assessments of students referred from the Blundon Centre for documentation of a disability. The panel was also of the opinion that this person should undertake the vetting of any disability-related documentation of a psychological nature.**

**Recommendation #6** Re-title the Coordinator position as Manager of the Blundon Centre and provide the incumbent formal professional development training in the area of managerial skills and delegation of responsibilities. The position should be less involved in the daily operations (leaving those duties to the Administrative Assistant and the Academic Program Administrator) and more responsible for oversight of the Centre and the University's policies

and plans for students with disabilities. Specific responsibilities would include: managing the operations of the Centre, promoting the Centre, advocating for students with disabilities, training University faculty and staff in disability-related issues, advising the University community appropriately, liaising appropriately with external groups, researching retention/graduation rates of students with disabilities, etc.

**Recommendation #7:** The Director of the Counselling Centre, who is in effect the Director of the Blundon Centre, take a lead role in managing the staffing growth recommended in this report. The staff has become entrenched in operating the Blundon Centre with excessive amounts of overtime. With the addition of new staff positions, the overtime can be reduced and perhaps eliminated, but transitioning away from the longstanding practices will be a challenge, which should be spearheaded by the Director.

***4. Are administrative decisions made and administrative tasks carried out efficiently and effectively?***

**When the only full-time permanent employee at the Blundon Centre is regularly required to invest 12 hours a day in order to keep up with demands for services and supports, one would assume that administrative decisions and tasks would not be carried out efficiently or effectively. While the panel felt it was astounding that the Blundon Centre could complete all that it does, it is our opinion that this office is not presently working in the most efficient and effective manner possible. Even the student comments cited earlier indicate that the use of the University's on-line student system, Memorial Self Service, for registering and requesting accommodation would greatly increase the efficiency of the unit.**

***5. Are the staff associations with regional, national, and international units compatible with the mission of the unit?***

The mission of the Blundon Centre is:

*To coordinate services and programs that enable students with disabilities to maximize their educational potential and to increase awareness of inclusive values among all members of the university community. The Centre assists students by facilitating access to information, services, and campus facilities. It carries out its mission in partnership with faculty, staff, and students at*

*Memorial University and off-campus agencies including disability community organizations.*

This mission statement specifically encourages and indeed obliges partnerships within and outside the University. The Blundon Centre has representation on a number of University committees and working groups and in some cases has initiated the establishment of committees to fulfill its mandate. Regionally, the Centre is represented on the provincial government's new Working Group for Disability Services, a White Paper initiative and the Learning Disabilities Association of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Blundon Centre staff has participated in national associations as well: the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services, the Canadian Association of Disability Service Providers in Post-Secondary Education, the National Educational Association of Disabled Students and the Association on Higher Education and Disability.

The panel concludes that the staff associations are quite appropriate to the Centre's mission and therefore should be maintained. International opportunities could be explored once the Centre's under-resourcing issues are addressed.

## **Community Service**

*1. Is the unit fulfilling opportunities to serve the community? (MUN community and greater community - schools, province etc.)*

### **A. Service to Students**

Throughout the discussions and reading the Self Study there is a strong sense that the Blundon Centre is serving the student community well, considering its minimal staffing levels. As one student client said 'The Blundon Centre gives students with disabilities confidence'. Today the Centre is serving more students than it did 10 years ago and has attracted some students with disabilities from outside the province. Though the majority of students served have learning disabilities the number of students identified with other conditions e.g. mental health conditions and autistic spectrum disorders has risen which is consistent with other Canadian centres

The present structure of reporting within the Counselling Centre has enhanced the Blundon Centre's ability to serve students. This new organizational structure has meant better coordination of services leading to better student experiences. For example, the Coordinator and the Counsellors have been able to offer group workshops on coping and/or learning strategies where students can share their ideas and help one another.

Students pointed out that the current system of registering for test accommodations is outdated and cumbersome (“antiquated” was the term used), necessitating that a student make at least 4 trips to the Blundon Centre in order to arrange for 1 exam. With many courses a semester, students felt this took up too much of their time.

**Recommendation #8** Students be permitted to register (or withdraw their registration) with the Blundon Centre and each semester be able to request their accommodations through the on-line system they currently use, Memorial Self Service.

There are a number of benefits of this recommendation. The data collection would be streamlined for students, using technology that they are already comfortable with and the services of the Centre can be promoted. For example, if at the end of a student’s first time registering for course at Memorial, there were a message about the Blundon Centre and the University’s services for students with disabilities, students could become registered with the Centre and have their accommodations established before classes begin. Routinely now, accommodations are not established until at least five or six weeks into the semester and many new students take at least one semester (often a difficult semester) to discover the Blundon Centre and the disability services that exist. Also, class rosters could be used to indicate, with or without anonymity (with appropriate permissions), that there are students

registered in the course with behavioural or other disabilities.

### **B. Service to Faculty and Staff**

On campus, information needs to be available not only to students, but to faculty and staff as many may not be aware of the available services. Workshops are offered for faculty and graduate students but more needs to be done to educate faculty, graduate students and staff about the Blundon Centre as well as specific disabilities and how to facilitate student learning by making adaptations to teaching strategies. Through DELT's Instructional Development Office, graduate teaching assistants receive information on the services of the Blundon Centre and disability issues from the Coordinator. The feedback from the graduate students is very positive. Faculty/staff need forewarning about certain disabilities e.g. autistic spectrum disorder so that they can implement strategies to help students. The Coordinator is willing to help faculty/staff and has been able to assist some instructors to help students but more of this should occur. Information re Blundon Centre services and disability issues should be included as a part of the orientation process for new faculty and more seminars should be available to all faculty and staff.

The Centre should provide greater service to faculty in training them to be prepared for students with disabilities. It does a very good job now through the Instructional Development Office. The student clients of the Blundon Centre, in particular stressed the need for

faculty to become more aware of types of disabilities, types of needs and accommodations and the University's Policy on Academic Accommodations.

**Recommendation #9:** The Coordinator continue providing training sessions through the Instructional Development Office, begin giving training sessions during the orientation for new faculty, and develop plans to ensure all instructors, including lab demonstrators, sessional lecturers, graduate teaching assistants, etc. are better informed about and prepared for students with disabilities.

### **C. Service to other University units**

As a result of collaborations between the Blundon Centre and the Library there are more adaptive technology services available for students but there is a need to ensure that duplication of equipment by the Blundon Centre and the Library is avoided.

Part of the mandate of the Blundon Centre and the Dean's Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities is to advocate for an accessible environment on campus. Members of the Committee feel that they are effective and are currently conducting an accessibility audit. However, environmental accessibility/modification issues are limited by the level of funding. Together they have been instrumental in achieving many environmental improvements thus ensuring greater accessibility. Much of this involves close collaboration with Facilities Management and whenever funding becomes available, improvements

are made according to their priority 'wish list'. These adaptations have been many and include: the making of accessible student tables/chairs; emergency evacuation adaptations for the hearing impaired; ramps and elevators; changes to some residence spaces to accommodate students with disabilities; door handles and automatic doors.

Recently the University announced funding over a five-year period for new elevators and renovations to existing elevators. The panel applauds the senior administration for this commitment. The University also announced new monies for a new residence. It will be important for the Blundon Centre to continue to work with Student Housing on the design of the new building.

**Recommendation #10:** Funding be made available on an annual basis from the University budget so that planned modifications to existing infrastructure, as identified through the accessibility audit and advocated for by the Blundon Centre and the Dean's Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities, can be made on an ongoing rather than *ad hoc* basis.

As well as the work with Facilities Management, Housing, Food and Conference Services, the Library and the Instructional Development Office, the Blundon Centre is currently involved in a legal and risk assessment of the accessibility of the Harlow Campus. The evidence is clear that the Blundon Centre is doing a great deal to enable students with disabilities to access

and receive appropriate services, by liaising with other units within the University.

### **D. Service to Prospective Students**

From 1991-1995 as a result of external funding three individuals were employed to run the Blundon Centre's high school transition programme, GOAL - Get out and learn. The panel heard that the University needs to reinstate such a transition program for students with disabilities. Other provinces successfully provide on-line programs which utilize supervised teacher-candidates. This would be an opportunity to help students become aware of the Blundon Centre and its many services before they begin classes.

**Recommendation #11:** The Blundon Centre partner with the Faculty of Education to establish an online (or in-person) transition program for students with disabilities entering Memorial University. To reduce the need for additional resources, the program could utilize supervised teacher candidates who benefit by learning more about on-line teaching and learning, and by being introduced to adaptive technologies currently used by students with disabilities.

We also believe that the Blundon Centre should be doing much more to communicate with applicants. We learned from the Registrar and the Manager of the Academic Advising Centre of the recent institutional efforts toward applicant-to-student conversion,

specifically the Establishing Student Relationships project which has a number of communications with applicants. The Blundon Centre message needs to become part of these communications, to promote Memorial as a University with excellent and committed services for students with disabilities and to help students become aware of those services much earlier in the cycle. We also learned that many students who were diagnosed with learning disabilities in the school system are reluctant to share that information with the University, for a variety of reasons (some believing that once they graduate high school, they no longer have a disability). The messages in the communications should consider the sensitivity of this.

**Recommendation #12:** The Coordinator work with the applicant-to-student conversion projects to promote, through appropriate communications, the services of the Centre as an attractive feature of life at Memorial and to encourage students with disabilities who decide to attend Memorial to contact the Blundon Centre for consultation as early as possible.

### **E. Service to the High School System**

We learned that the extent to which the Blundon Centre can work with the high school system is the mailing of a Blundon Centre brochure to guidance counselors. There are many communication access points to the high school system. It is important that the Blundon Centre avail of these to increase awareness, among parents and guidance counselors.

**Recommendation #13:** The Coordinator work with the Academic Advising Centre and the Office of Student Recruitment and Promotion to increase the profile of the Blundon Centre in the High School system through activities such as Mainsail newsletter, Parents Nights, conferences with Guidance Counsellors, the high school interview process, etc.

## **F. Service to the Province**

As part of the White Paper Initiatives, the provincial government recently established the Public Post-Secondary Student Services Advisory Committee and that Committee's Working Group for Disability Services. The Blundon Centre is represented on both of these. Since these formed only recently it is too early to assess their success, but the panel saw these as good partnerships for learning, networking and for leadership opportunities for the Blundon Centre.

## **G. Service to Community Disability Groups**

Unfortunately, there was very little representation from Community disability groups during the site visit, so it is difficult to comment comprehensively on the Centre's Service to the disability community. However, we note that there is very good and broad representation of community groups on the Dean's Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities. The one community organization representative who spoke with the panel had high praise for the Blundon Centre's relationship with his group and believed strongly the University has a

leadership role to play in disability services and programming in this province.

*2. How does the unit's mission respond to the needs and priorities of the community?*

As noted earlier, the Blundon Centre's mission statement encourages community partnerships, within the University and with external agencies. From the input we received we conclude the mission does respond appropriately to the community's needs and priorities. We also acknowledge that with more staff the Blundon Centre can strengthen its relationships with external community groups.

## **Entrepreneurship**

*1. Is the unit seeking and pursuing appropriate opportunities for entrepreneurial activities?*

Presently, the unit cannot seek and pursue many such opportunities due to lack of time and resources. The Coordinator has attempted to maintain collegial ties with other similar disability offices, both by electronic means and by attending conferences when feasible, but she lacks time to do more than this.

*2. Is the unit seeking a wide variety of activities in order to generate external funding appropriate to its mandate?*

There are very few places where external funding for this office could be accessed. The Coordinator appears to have done her best to identify any funding agencies to which she could appeal, as reflected in her track record of obtaining funds to pay for a number of services, supports and programs in the past. In addition, she also utilizes student assistants to offset personnel costs in the office. The panel is not aware of any other types of activities in which the Coordinator could be engaging in order to generate additional, externally-provided funds. However if there are funding opportunities, with existing staff workloads, we cannot see how staff at the Blundon Centre could find time to investigate and pursue these for additional programs and services.

We did learn that there are funding opportunities for students with disabilities. The staff try to keep apprised of these to guide student clients to seek them and apply for them. Again, with existing staff levels, this is a challenge.

## **University Support**

*1. Is the unit receiving adequate resources from its Division and from the University at large?*

Without an in-depth analysis of the budget of the Student and Affairs and Services, it is difficult to know whether the Blundon Centre is receiving adequate resources from the Division. It is our understanding that budget planning is done by the senior directors of Student Affairs and Services using a consensus-type model. If this is the case, the senior directors should take a very careful look at redistribution of the Division's limited budget dollars. It was noted in the Self Study that \$24,865 was transferred from one unit's budget within the Division into the Blundon Centre's budget one year. This raises the question of whether the Student Affairs and Services budget could be distributed differently across its five or six units. If one unit can "afford" to give up that amount of money, can the scarce budget dollars be distributed more equitably? More analysis is needed to answer this.

**Recommendation #14** The senior administration of Student Affairs and Services, through its consensus model of budgeting, review and analyze the growth of the Blundon Centre, compared with growth in its other areas to assess the difficult question of whether opportunities exist to redistribute any of the Division's budget allocation.

The Blundon Centre is definitely not receiving sufficient resources from the University and consequently the University is at risk for human rights violations. The services of the Blundon Centre are mainly around academic accommodations. They relate very directly to completion of course requirements whether that is a

service to a student or assistance to a faculty member who has students with disabilities in his/her course. These services are quite different from those of other units within Student Affairs and Services, say, Career Development or Student Success Programs. These latter units provide important services and supports for students, but they are extracurricular, in nature, i.e., if these units and services did not exist, course and degree requirements could still be met. This is not the case with the services of the Blundon Centre. Students availing of academic accommodations could not, in most cases, complete their course and degree requirements (with a “level playing field”) without the support of the Blundon Centre. It is probably the only unit within Student Affairs and Services that provides direct academic support and service. This raises the important question of whether part of the funding for the Blundon Centre should come from the academic envelope.

**Recommendation #15:** In recognition of the significant growth in the numbers of students needing services of the Blundon Centre, to ensure the University meets its obligations under human rights legislation and its own policies in providing direct academic support to students with disabilities and in keeping with the five core values and principles of the strategic plan, particularly Equity, Equality, and Diversity and Accessibility the senior administration of the University increase resources to the Blundon Centre as recommended throughout this report.

The alternative is to take the purely academic supports and services of the Blundon Centre and assign them either within academic units themselves (which is the case for some services at SWGC) or place them within a central academic support unit. The latter is the case at other Canadian universities, where for example, the unit responsible for exam scheduling and invigilating is also responsible for the exam accommodations for students with disabilities. The panel believes that the test/exam service that the Blundon Centre provides should remain with that unit (there are many benefits to keeping services for students with disabilities centralized) but that adequate funding be allocated for this and other academic services. If a suitable arrangement cannot be made, then the Dean of Student Affairs and Services may need to consider “downloading” test and exam services to academic units, to manage the workload demands of the Blundon Centre staff, brought on by large increases in students with needs.

*2. Are its facilities adequate? Attention should be paid to space, equipment, computing, laboratory and library resources.*

The student services building was designed around the former organizational structure of Student Affairs and Services. The Blundon Centre was part of the Department of Student Development, at that time. Around the time that the building was opened, the organizational structure changed such that the Blundon

Centre became part of the Counselling Centre, however, it remains physically within the Career Development area. With the increase in demand on services of the Blundon Centre, the facility is far from adequate. On any given day as many as 60 students may pass through the Centre, many of them waiting in an area that can hold perhaps two or three at a time.

An area of the Counselling Centre was converted recently into space that could be commandeered for tests and exams. While students appreciated that the Blundon Centre staff do the best they can with the rooms available, one student talked about the "less-than-ideal" conditions present in some of these rooms, including temperature problems, poor ventilation and noise. Could more test/exam space be assigned within the Counselling Centre area such that all the staff could be assigned to the current Blundon Centre area? Is more space available in the Counselling Centre for the recommended additional staff? Alternatively, could all the staff of the Blundon Centre (current and proposed) be moved to the Counselling Centre and the current Blundon Centre space be used for test and exams and/or other services or would some combination of these be feasible? Can space from other areas of Student Affairs and Services be repurposed for the use of Blundon Centre services?

**Recommendation #16** In the long term, greater physical space be allocated for the Blundon Centre and to determine the amount and its layout the University fund a functional space study such that

the specific needs can be determined and that options for expansion can be identified and then pursued.

**Recommendation #17** In the immediate, the test area within the Blundon Centre be fully soundproofed. It seems that when soundproofing was added, it was placed only on three (interior) walls, missing the fourth exterior wall where most sound transfer occurs.

### *3. Is it adequately staffed?*

There has been significant growth in the numbers of students needing accommodations (see Appendix C) and there has been diversity in the disabilities which means diversity in the types of accommodations needed. Yet, the staff complement has remained virtually unchanged. The Centre's coordinator has been employed there since 1992. An additional staff position was created in 2005, on a contractual basis. Financial administrative support is provided within the Counselling Centre and a psychologist was hired part-time (20%) in 2004.

The benchmark survey conducted during the Self Study (Appendix C of the Self Study) concludes that for comparable size- and scope- universities, there are on average 5.5 full-time staff in the equivalent centres. Memorial's FTE complement is 2.2, clearly understaffed.

*4. Does the reporting structure ensure managerial efficiency and administrative effectiveness within the unit?*

In reading the Self Study, the panel was initially skeptical about the new reporting structure (i.e, the Blundon Centre reporting within the Counselling Centre), thinking there had been little integration of the two units. However, it became clear through the site visit sessions, that having the Blundon Centre within the Counselling Centre is mutually beneficial to both Centres and more importantly, beneficial to the students who are served by both units. The Counselling Centre administrative staff position does all the financial transactions and manages the budget for the Blundon Centre. This seems to work very well. The Counselling Centre is growing into an inter-professional clinic, where specialists in many areas can rely upon each other's expertise for service to students. We believe it is to the benefit of students with disabilities if the Blundon Centre continued reporting within the Counselling Centre to avail of these important linkages.

**Recommendation #18:** The Blundon Centre continue to report within the Counselling Centre.

### **Plans, Goals and Resource Allocation**

*1. Are the objectives of the unit appropriate to the mission of the University?*

As stated earlier, the mission of the Blundon Centre is:

*To coordinate services and programs that enable students with disabilities to maximize their educational potential and to increase awareness of inclusive values among all members of the university community. The Centre assists students by facilitating access to information, services, and campus facilities. It carries out its mission in partnership with faculty, staff, and students at Memorial University and off-campus agencies including disability community organizations.*

Strategic objectives are set for the Blundon Centre on an annual basis as part of the annual planning and accountability process of all units within Student Affairs and Services.

The new mission of the University is:

*Memorial University is an inclusive community dedicated to creativity, innovation and excellence in teaching and learning, research and scholarship, and to public engagement and service. We recognize our special obligation to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Memorial welcomes students and scholars from all over the world and contributes knowledge and shares expertise locally, nationally, and internationally.*

What is perhaps more pertinent in the University's strategic plan is the Vision, an extract of which states:

*Above all, Memorial will remain a highly accessible and comprehensive institution that is true to its core values. It will be an exciting place to work and study and will boast of a highly supportive environment where students, faculty and staff can thrive. It will be inclusive but at the same time sufficiently focused so that the university builds on its natural advantages/strengths and on the needs of the province.*

The terms “highly accessible” “highly supportive” and “inclusive” are very encouraging to those responsible for the delivery of student services at Memorial and particularly important to those delivering services for students with disabilities. It appears, the Coordinator was instrumental in getting these phrases added to the statements. The mission of the Blundon Centre aligns very well with the University’s mission and because of its long history of success at Memorial, the Blundon Centre is very well positioned to support the University’s new Mission and Vision.

**Furthermore, in reviewing mission statements of many other disability offices across Canada and the United States, it is clear that the mission of the Blundon Centre is compatible and consistent with offices providing similar services.**

*2. Is the unit trying to do too much?*

There are those who believe that in service to students one can never do too much. The staff of the Blundon

Centre practice this tenet, every day. It is admirable and makes the Blundon Centre and its staff well respected throughout the University. A better question might be: *Is the unit trying to do too much given the resources it has?* Unequivocally, the answer is yes and the issues regarding increasing those resources are addressed in various sections of this report. It must be stressed here, though, that there is very little the Centre does that strays from ensuring that basic rights of students with disabilities are met. There are ways to accomplish their work more efficiently, which are described in other sections of this report, but the Centre's main focus on students with disabilities is honoured.

*3. What has been the “value-added” of the unit in the context of the overhead and other costs borne by the University on behalf of the unit?*

The Review Panel heard numerous accolades for the Centre's provision of services for students with disabilities. The staff of the Blundon Centre are not only hard working and compassionate, but they are highly responsive to students' needs and to newly-identified needs and to changing needs. When it appears a solution does not exist for a student with a particular need, they create a solution. We have every reason to believe that students served by the Blundon Centre have had positive experiences.

One student client's story is particularly revealing. She described that she initially enrolled in another university

within Atlantic Canada on the basis that that university had advertised itself as having excellent services and programming for students with disabilities. Within a few days of attending she discovered there was little truth to the ads and she could in fact find no services for her disabilities. She then enrolled at Memorial, only because it has the lowest tuition in the area. From the first day, she discovered staff who were knowledgeable and understanding of her particular circumstances and a unit committed to meeting her needs. There is no doubt in our minds that she will be lifelong friend of Memorial, because of the Blundon Centre.

Although, this is but one story, it is very representative of many students' stories. The Blundon Centre is quite beneficial for Memorial's reputation. This needs to be exploited with respect to recruitment of new students (which is addressed in another section of this report.)

Persons with disabilities often struggle with having their rights recognized or understood. Memorial clearly recognizes and understands these rights. Without the Blundon Centre's focus on and due diligence toward these rights, the University would be at risk for human rights violations and complaints. The fact that the University has had none or very few of these and yet thousands have required services and accommodations is another clear demonstration of the value-added the Blundon Centre provides Memorial.

*4. How might the unit resources be redistributed to realize its goals and those of the University?*

The resources of the Centre cannot be redistributed. The Centre simply needs more resources. Some of its responsibilities could be redistributed, though.

With the increase in hours of the Psychologist in the Counselling Centre, the Blundon Centre should transfer the vetting of documentation to the Counselling Centre, as recommended earlier.

We learned that adaptive/assistive technologies are becoming increasingly mainstream and increasingly blended. For example, commonplace MP3 players are used as assistive technology for students with hearing impairments and reading software is used by the visually impaired as well as those with reading disabilities. Currently, much of the institutional responsibility for adaptive/assistive technology, outside the Blundon Centre, rests with a MUCEP student in the Commons area. There are too many risks associated with this and yet it is an extra burden for staff in the Blundon Centre to become technology experts along with everything else they do. By assigning responsibility for adaptive technologies to another unit, the University will promote inclusiveness, one of the objectives of the new Mission and Vision.

**Recommendation #19:** Institutional responsibility for adaptive/assistive technology be assumed by either the Learning Technologies division of DELT or by Computing and Communications through the Commons, in recognition of the blending of these

types of technologies with mainstream learning technologies. This will promote inclusiveness and will ensure that overall responsibility is properly assigned to other than a student assistant (whose knowledge and expertise leave when she graduates). This responsibility should include maintaining current knowledge of advances in adaptive/assistive technologies; training students in use of these; maintaining software and hardware and identifying and sourcing solutions as various students' needs are presented, etc. The Blundon Centre should maintain close ties with the unit by referring students and advising on new technology needs as they present.

#### *5. Should the unit continue in its present form?*

The Blundon Centre should continue offering the high quality services and support that it does. However, changes will be needed in a number of areas. The number of students needing services and accommodations has grown and will continue to grow significantly. The diversity of types of accommodations required will grow as well. The University plans to grow its overall enrollment, which means even if the proportion of students with disabilities remains the same (and it is not predicted to do so), the total number of students with disabilities will grow. The stigma historically attached to persons with disabilities, all kinds of disabilities, is disappearing. Students (although not all) are no longer timid or nervous about self identifying. The school systems have changed radically in that they

are graduating students with disabilities who are meeting eligibility criteria for postsecondary study and society in general has become more knowledgeable and understanding and therefore more inclusive and welcoming of persons with disabilities. Collectively this means that the demands and pressures on the Blundon Centre will increase. Its volume of work has increased from 7 test-exam services provided in the 1991-92 academic year to over 2100 services in 2006-07.

In order to meet this increasing demand, the Centre will need more staff (as outlined throughout this report). Also it will need more space and purposed space. The Centre cannot be expected to accommodate over 2000 test-exam services and its many other services from the 700 sq. ft. area in which it is currently housed. The students physically do not fit there.

**We were concerned by the use of so many student assistants, especially students who in turn were also users of the Blundon Centre. This would seem to be a dual relationship, and it was interesting that the only two long-time student employees of the centre were themselves also clients of this service. There are in excess of twenty-five students working within the Centre every semester. It is almost a full-time job to recruit them, train them, supervise them and account for their schedules and time reports. Few of them are re-employed from semester to semester, increasing demands for training. There are also risks associated with having so many students employed there, such as violations of privacy and discomfort on the part of students needing the Centre if they know that their classmate or dorm mate works there. While it may be that student assistants can fulfill a variety of roles within the Blundon Centre, we felt that they should not be staffing the front office or dealing with confidential information about their fellow classmates.**

**Recommendation #20:** To reduce the risks associated with the dependence on student assistants the student employee complement should be reduced by at least half, which can be accomplished by the recommended increases in staff positions. Student assistants should not be staffing the front office or dealing with confidential information.

The Centre should reconsider its business processes and automate its record-keeping and information management which is currently completely paper-based.

**Recommendation #21** Modules be designed and built within BANNER Student to accommodate the record keeping and information management required by the Blundon Centre.

With the current paper-based system, access to students' records is completely controlled by the staff of the Blundon Centre and confidentiality and protection of privacy are of utmost importance to them. Storing records on BANNER Student will raise concerns regarding this protection. On the other hand, one academic administrator advised us that if she had had access to a student's disability information, she could have provided greater assistance to that student and in a more timely manner. The question of who has a right to this private information will need to be addressed and a balance will need to be found between access by those who should know and protection of the student's privacy and this balance should be adopted by the any new business processes.

**We learned there are very few opportunities for students in the Corner Brook area to be assessed for learning disabilities.**

**Recommendation #22: Once or twice a year, establish an assessment "team" to go to SWGC to assess learning disabilities for students at that campus. The team should comprise the Assistant Professor and graduate students in Psychology who could provide supervised assessments for students needing testing.**

Even though there has been enormous increase in the number of students with disabilities, concern was expressed about how aware students are about the University's services and whether the Centre is reaching all students who need services. The Centre needs to promote its services more effectively. Some earlier recommendations addressed this (e.g. communicating messages through Student Recruitment, Academic Advising Centre and high school connections), however, a formal effort toward marketing and promotion should be undertaken.

**Recommendation #23:** The responsibility for promotion and marketing of the Blundon Centre rest with the Coordinator and an innovative, creative communications plan be formalized through collaborations with Marketing and Communications.

Students told us that it was not appropriate to have messages about disabilities as part of the application form and that the reference to “Special Needs” on the form was meaningless, as it could be referring to special dietary needs, for example. Rather, messages about the Blundon Centre should be part of the recruitment and promotion efforts of the University and be obvious at the time of registration as well. The wording should be very direct and specific. The Centre can also be promoted better through the University Calendar. The on-line version allows easy access by keying “disabilities” into the search feature, but there is no similar index reference in the paper version. Two specific recommendations regarding promotion are:

**Recommendation #23a:** Reference to the Blundon Centre and “Special Needs” be removed from the paper application for admission form as well as the on-line application, as other recommended methods for promotion are implemented.

**Recommendation #23b:** Indexing of the Blundon Centre and services for students with disabilities be added to the printed University Calendar with clear identification of the campus coordinating centres.

It is our opinion that the Blundon Centre should be adequately supported, through increased staff, space and budget, so that it can continue to provide the superior service that it has for so many years. It should increase its activity in the areas of recruiting students, promoting the Centre and the University’s services,

liaising with the high school system, training and informing faculty and staff, automating its administrative functions, pursuing funding opportunities and conducting research on success/graduation rates of students with disabilities.

## **Supplementary Issues**

- 1. Should the University establish a full-time, permanent position in the capacity of a consultant/facilitator/strategist with expertise in learning disabilities and other special needs?*

The benchmarking study showed that most disability offices have learning disabilities strategists or specialists. This coupled with the growth in the numbers of students with learning disabilities are the reasons our earlier recommendations on increasing staffing levels include the establishment of a Learning Strategist position. (See Recommendation #2).

- 2. If the answer is “Yes”, should this appointment be made as a faculty member, a staff member, or as an independent consultant?*

As recommended earlier this position should be a staff member, reporting to the Manager of the Blundon Centre.

- 3. Should the University continue to contract out the on-campus transportation service to a local company?*

Presently, on-campus transportation for students with mobility disabilities is provided contractually by Wheelway Transportation Ltd. The costs of this service are met by the Department of Facilities Management and over the past two years this was \$1,112. Recently, a community representative on the Dean's Advisory Committee requested the University restore the previous practice of having Campus Enforcement and Patrol provide the service.

Since contracting out began over ten years ago, there have been no complaints received by the Blundon Centre about the service and it has had minimal demand. Only four students used it in the academic year 2006-7. Feedback to the panel by students and Facilities Management was that the present system works. Having an 'in-house' system might mean that students would be served in a more timely fashion as presently students must avail of the Wheelway timetable.

The present system seems to be cost effective whereas the purchase of a specially adapted van or retrofitting of an existing van would be an expensive proposition, considering maintenance, depreciation, and salary of a full-time driver. There appears to be little reason for the present system to be changed.

**Recommendation #24:** The University continue to contract out the on-campus transportation service for students with mobility disabilities.

## Summary of Recommendations

The recommendations appear throughout the report and are numbered sequentially. They are summarized below into functional categories.

### A. Staffing

**Recommendation #2: Hire a permanent full-time Learning Strategist (or facilitator or advisor). This professional should have a background in Education, Occupational Therapy or Psychology. Establish the position as a staff position, so as to reduce any conflict of interest should there be disputes about accommodations or supports recommended to faculty. This position should work with and report directly to the Coordinator, and should provide counselling and support to students registered with the Blundon Centre and work with faculty on students' needs and accommodations.**

**Recommendation #3** Confirm the contractual Academic Program Administrator position as a permanent position to deal with accommodation issues and technical support questions and to assume full responsibility for supervision of student assistants.

**Recommendation #4** Hire a permanent full-time Administrative Assistant to assume clerical responsibilities, answer telephone, take appointments, file, collect and copy tests and exams, etc.

**Recommendation #5** Increase to two the number of days per week that the Assistant Professor is working out of the Counselling Centre. The panel felt it was vital that this position be seen as operating at "arms-length" from the Blundon Centre, especially since this person will be doing assessments of students referred from the Blundon Centre for documentation of a disability. The panel was also of the opinion that this person should undertake the vetting of any disability-related documentation of a psychological nature.

**Recommendation #6** Re-title the Coordinator position as Manager of the Blundon Centre and provide the incumbent formal professional development training in the area of managerial skills and delegation of responsibilities. The position should be less involved in the daily operations (leaving those duties to the Administrative Assistant and the Academic Program Administrator) and more responsible for oversight of the Centre and the University's policies and plans for students with disabilities. Specific responsibilities would include: managing the operations of the Centre, promoting the Centre, advocating for students with disabilities, training University faculty and staff in disability-related

issues, advising the University community appropriately, liaising appropriately with external groups, researching retention/graduation rates of students with disabilities, etc.

**Recommendation #7:** The Director of the Counselling Centre, who is in effect the Director of the Blundon Centre, take a lead role in managing the staffing growth recommended in this report. The staff has become entrenched in operating the Blundon Centre with excessive amounts of overtime. With the addition of new staff positions, the overtime can be reduced and perhaps eliminated, but transitioning away from the longstanding practices will be a challenge, which should be spearheaded by the Director.

**Recommendation #18:** The Blundon Centre continue to report within the Counselling Centre.

**Recommendation #20:** To reduce the risks associated with the dependence on student assistants the student employee complement should be reduced by at least half, which can be accomplished by the recommended increases in staff positions. Student assistants should not be staffing the front office or dealing with confidential information.

## **B.Space**

**Recommendation #16** In the long term, greater physical space be allocated for the Blundon Centre

and to determine the amount and its layout the University fund a functional space study such that the specific needs can be determined and that options for expansion can be identified and then pursued.

**Recommendation #17** In the immediate, the test area within the Blundon Centre be fully soundproofed. It seems that when soundproofing was added, it was placed only on three (interior) walls, missing the fourth exterior wall where most sound transfer occurs

## **C. Budget**

**Recommendation #14** The senior administration of Student Affairs and Services, through its consensus model of budgeting, review and analyze the growth of the Blundon Centre, compared with growth in its other areas to assess the difficult question of whether opportunities exist to redistribute any of the Division's budget allocation.

**Recommendation #15:** In recognition of the significant growth in the numbers of students needing services of the Blundon Centre, to ensure the University meets its obligations under human rights legislation and its own policies in providing direct academic support to students with disabilities and in keeping with the five core values and principles of the strategic plan, particularly Equity, Equality and Diversity and Accessibility the senior administration of the University increase resources to the Blundon Centre as recommended throughout this report.

## **D. Technology**

**Recommendation #19:** Institutional responsibility for adaptive/assistive technology be assumed by either the Learning Technologies division of DELT or in Computing and Communications through the Commons, in recognition of the blending of these types of technologies with mainstream learning technologies. This will promote inclusiveness and will ensure that overall responsibility is properly assigned to other than a student assistant (whose knowledge and expertise leave when she graduates). This responsibility should include maintaining current knowledge of advances in adaptive/assistive technologies; training students in use of these; maintaining software and hardware and identifying and sourcing solutions as various students' needs are presented, etc. The Blundon Centre should maintain close ties with the unit by referring students and advising on new technology needs as they present.

## **E. Programs and Services**

**Recommendation #9:** The Coordinator continue providing training sessions through the Instructional Development Office, begin giving training sessions during the orientation for new faculty, and develop plans to ensure all instructors, including lab demonstrators, sessional lecturers, graduate teaching assistants, etc. are better informed about and prepared for students with disabilities.

**Recommendation #11:** The Blundon Centre partner with the Faculty of Education to establish an online (or in-person) transition program for students with disabilities entering Memorial University. To reduce the need for additional resources, the program could utilize supervised teacher candidates who benefit by learning more about on-line teaching and learning, and by being introduced to adaptive technologies currently used by students with disabilities.

**Recommendation #22:** Once or twice a year, establish an assessment "team" to go to SWGC to assess learning disabilities for students at that campus. The team should comprise the Assistant Professor and graduate students in Psychology who could provide supervised assessments for students needing testing.

**Recommendation #24:** The University continue to contract out the on-campus transportation service for students with mobility disabilities.

## **F. Systems**

**Recommendation #8** Students be permitted to register (or withdraw their registration) with the Blundon Centre and each semester be able to request their accommodations through the on-line system they currently use, Memorial Self Service.

**Recommendation #21** Modules be designed and built within BANNER Student to accommodate the record keeping and information management required by the Blundon Centre.

## **G. Promotion**

**Recommendation #12:** The Coordinator work with the applicant-to-student conversion projects to promote, through appropriate communications, the services of the Centre as an attractive feature of life at Memorial and to encourage students with disabilities who decide to attend Memorial to contact the Blundon Centre for consultation as early as possible.

**Recommendation #13:** The Coordinator work with the Academic Advising Centre and the Office of Student Recruitment and Promotion to increase the profile of the Blundon Centre in the High School system through activities such as Mainsail newsletter, Parents Nights, conferences with Guidance Counsellors, the high school interview process, etc.

**Recommendation #23:** The responsibility for promotion and marketing of the Blundon Centre rest with the Coordinator and an innovative, creative communications plan be formalized through collaborations with Marketing and Communications.

**Recommendation #23a:** Reference to the Blundon Centre and “Special Needs” be removed from the paper application for admission form as well as the

on-line application, as other recommended methods for promotion are implemented.

**Recommendation #23b:** Indexing of the Blundon Centre and services for students with disabilities be added to the printed University Calendar with clear identification of the campus coordinating centres.

## **H. Facilities**

**Recommendation #10:** Funding be made available on an annual basis from the University budget so that planned modifications to existing infrastructure, as identified through the accessibility audit and advocated for by the Blundon Centre and the Dean's Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities, can be made on an ongoing rather than *ad hoc* basis.

## **I. Faculty Rights**

**Recommendation #1** A statement of faculty rights with respect to students with disabilities be developed in consultation with the Director of Faculty Relations and MUNFA. This could be incorporated into the University's Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities or be developed separately. Appendix D contains a sample statement of Faculty Rights from the University of Wisconsin – Platteville, adapted from a document produced by Dr. Harrison, which could be used as a guide or a starting point for discussion.

## **Concluding Remarks**

The focus of our review and report was the Blundon Centre, which we realize is a unit within the larger Division of Student Affairs and Services. We also recognize that it is only one of three campus coordinating centres for students with disabilities, as defined in the Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities and therefore we spoke with the coordinators at SWGC and the MI during the site visit. Some of the recommendations made in this report may be able to be applied at the other two campus as well, e.g. the systems recommendations, since students from all three campuses use Memorial Self-Service; faculty rights because these may be built into the Policy on Academic Accommodation or the faculty collective agreements; research into retention, graduation, success rates of students with disabilities; training for faculty (perhaps training materials could be shared.) While it was not within our mandate to review the services at MI or SWGC, we believe, that for the benefit of all students, these campuses should be given due consideration as the recommendations, specifically those which can be institutionally applied, are implemented.

Respectfully submitted,

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Donna L. Ball (Panel Chair)  
Memorial University of Newfoundland

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allyson Harrision". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

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Dr. Allyson Harrision  
Queen's University

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Professor Vivienne Kuester  
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Appendix A  
Schedule of the Site Visit

Site Visit Schedule for Blundon Centre Review – June 18-19, 2007

**JUNE 18**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Activity</b>
8:00 – 9:00 am	UC401 1	Dr. Lilly Walker (Dean, Student Affairs and Services) (breakfast provided)
9:00 – 9:15 am	UC401 1	Review Panel meets
9:15 – 10:00 am	UC401 1	Dr. Peter Cornish (Director, Counselling Centre)
10:00 – 10:30 am	UC400 7	Toured the Blundon Centre and related areas lead by Ms. Ruth North
10:30 – 12:00 pm	UC401 1	Ms. Ruth North (Coordinator, Blundon Centre), Ms. Kathy Skinner (staff member)
12:00 – 1 pm	UC401 1	Mr. Lester Marshall, Dr. Lorraine Dicks (Counselling Centre)
1:00 – 2:00 pm	II2015 P	Lunch (provided)
2:30 – 3:00 pm	II2015 P	Dr. Noreen Golfman (Associate Dean of Graduate Studies)
3:00 – 3:45 pm	II2015 P	Dr. Bob Davis, Head of Chemistry Department

4:00 – 4:30 pm	II2015 P	Staff/faculty members - Janet Benger
4:30 - 5:00 pm	II2015 P	Dr. Bob Hollett, Head of English Department
5:00– 5:30 pm	II2015 P	Student employees and volunteers of Blundon Centre
5:30 – 6:00 pm	II2015 P	Dr. John Quaicoe, Associate Dean of Engineering

## JUNE 19

<b>Time</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Activity</b>
8:30 – 9:00 am	II2015 P	Mr. Cliff Chaytor, Facilities Management
9:00 – 9:30 am	II2015 P	Dr. Maureen Dunne, Ms. Elaine Crocker, Instructional Development Office
9:30 – 10:00 am	II2015 P	Ms. Angie Clarke on behalf of Mr. Gary Green (Guidance/Student Affairs Office at the Marine Institute and coordinator of disability services)
10:15 – 10:45 am	II2015 P	Ms. Lorna Payne (Learning Centre at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College and coordinator of disability services) via telephone
10:45 – 11:45 am	UC200 1	Student clients of Blundon Centre
11:45 – 12:00 pm	UC200 1	Ms. Darren Newton, Student Housing
12:00 – 1:00 pm	UC200 1	Dean's Advisory Committee on Students with Disabilities
1:00 – 1:30 pm	II2015 P	Lunch (provided)

1:30 – 2:00 pm	II2015 P	Mr. Glenn Collins, University Registrar; Ms. Roxanne Preston, Academic Advising Centre
2:00 – 3:00 pm	QE301 6	Library/Commons staff – Mr. Shawn Pendergast, Ms. Karen Lippold, Ms. Shannon Gordon, Ms. Melissa Prunte Tour QEII Library/adaptive technology areas
3:00 – 4:00 pm	II2015 P	Panel met alone
4:00 – 4:30 pm	II2015 P	Dr. Walker for concluding remarks
4:30 – 5:00 pm	II2015 P	Wrap-up and next steps

## Appendix B Guidelines for Written Submissions

Questions to consider in making a written submission to the Review Panel of the Glenn Roy Blundon Centre.

Feel free to answer any or all of the questions below and to add any comments you feel appropriate. Alternatively, you may simply write your comments in free format. Send your written submission via email to [dlb@mun.ca](mailto:dlb@mun.ca), preferably before June 20, 2007.

### **General:**

What is/has been your relationship with the Blundon Centre?

The Centre's mission is:

*To coordinate services and programs that enable students with disabilities to maximize their educational potential and to increase awareness of inclusive values among all members of the university community. The Centre assists students by facilitating access to information, services, and campus facilities. It carries out its mission in partnership with faculty, staff, and students at*

*Memorial University and off-campus agencies including disability community organizations.*

Do you feel the Centre is meeting its mission? If not, why not?

How would you assess the programs and services the Centre delivers?

Are there services or programs it could be delivering but which it is not?

**Specific:**

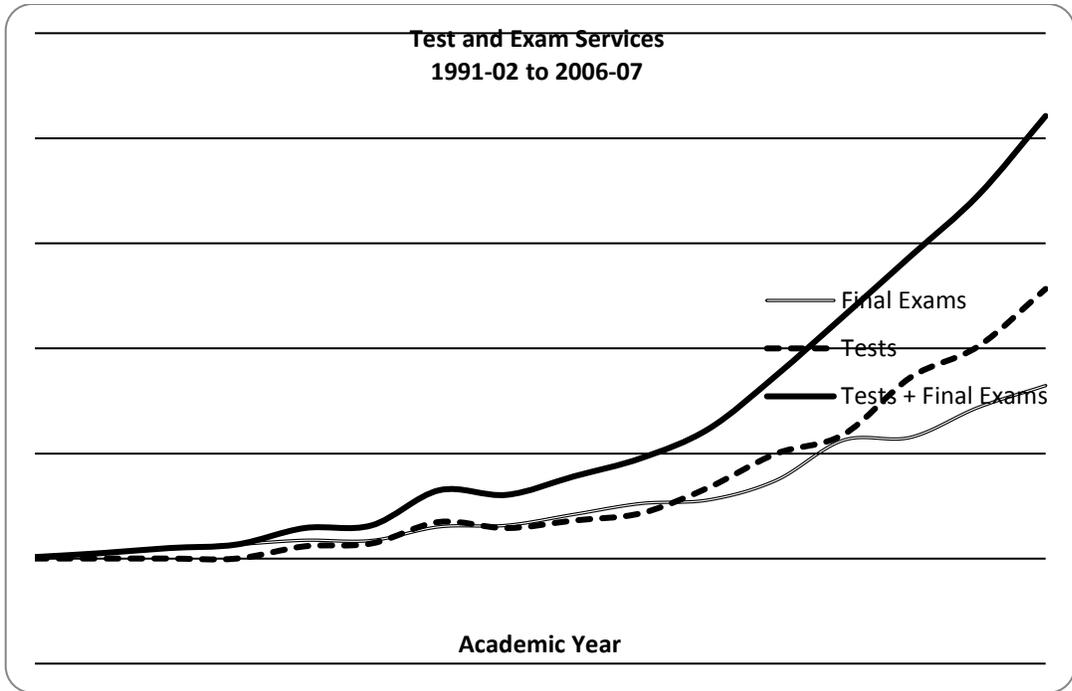
Should the University establish a full-time, permanent position in the capacity of a consultant/facilitator/strategist with expertise in learning disabilities and other special needs?

If the answer is “Yes”, should this appointment be made as a faculty member, a staff member, or as an independent consultant?

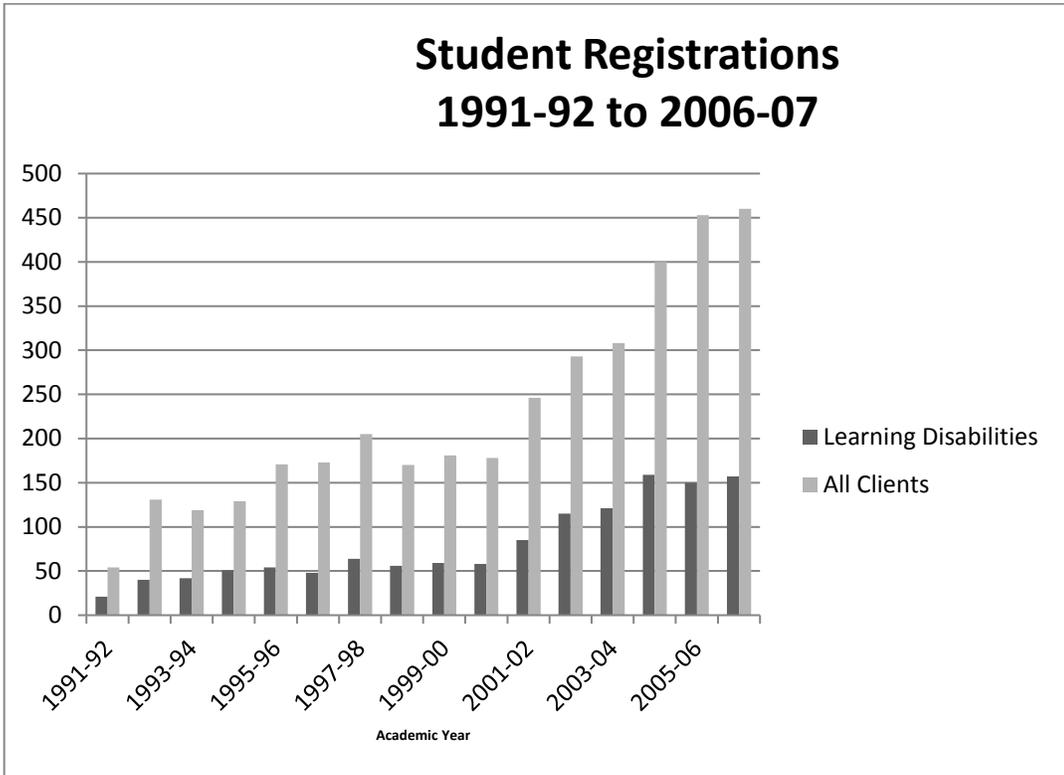
Should the University continue to contract out the on-campus transportation service to a local company?

# Appendix C

## Demand on Services of the Blundon Centre



Data projected for 2006-07



Students register each semester with the Blundon Centre; The data represent all registrations across the academic year.

Appendix D  
Sample Statement of Faculty Rights regarding  
Services for Students with Disabilities

*End of Appendix 4*

## **APPENDIX 5**

### CAS Self-Assessment Guide

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## **DISABILITY RESOURCES AND SERVICES 2015**

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Council for the Advancement of Standards in  
Higher Education. (2015). *CAS self-assessment  
guide for disability resources and services*.  
Washington, DC: Author.

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## **Table of Contents**

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### **Contextual Statement**

Gives a functional and historical perspective to the area

### **Instructions**

Instructions for conducting self-assessment using the SAG

### **Self-Assessment Instrument**

Instrument comprised of criterion statements, rating scales, and evaluation forms to be used in self-assessment

### **Work Forms**

Offer direction for developing an action plan (e.g. identify strengths, weaknesses, recommendations, benchmarks for achievement, resources, timeframe, and responsible individuals)

### **Appendix A: CAS Standards for Disability Resources and Services**

1 11.1 Design of Facilities

- Disability Resources and Services (DRS) facilities are intentionally designed and located in suitable, accessible, and safe spaces that demonstrate universal design and support the program's mission and goals.
- Facilities are designed to engage various constituents and promote learning.
- The design of the facilities guarantees the security and privacy of records and ensures the confidentiality of sensitive information and conversations.

*Rationale:*

The Blundon Centre is located in Room 4007 of the University Centre. The three external doors leading into the building at the main (front), east, and west entrances have automatic-door openers on them. An automatic-door opener is also included on the door at the south entrance of the building on level 2 near the CHMR radio station. Elevators are located nearby once inside all these entrances.

The Blundon Centre is housed inside a suite of offices in UC-4000 that are occupied by other staff in Student Life and the Scholarships and Awards Office (Office of the Registrar). There is a security alarm system in place on the main door to UC-4000. There is a multisensory emergency device (fire alarm with a strobe light for

persons with hearing loss) immediately inside UC-4000. The bathrooms have an open concept (no doors): the sinks, counters, hand dryers, paper towel and soap dispensers, and garbage cans are wheelchair accessible.

The Blundon Centre measures approximately 964.28 square feet. The space was intentionally designed by the Manager during the construction phase of the University Centre, which opened in 2000, within the space allocated for this areas of the project. All the doors that lead into the Blundon Centre on level 4 of the University Centre (off the elevator) have automatic door openers. As well, an automatic-door opener is installed on the door leading into the multi-purpose room in UC-4007c where some test and exam accommodations are provided. This room is also used for meetings. It has desks and computers for writing tests and exams, including a height-adjustable wheelchair desk and a height-adjustable computer desk. This room is soundproofed, including the exterior wall that is shared with UC-4000. However, there is still some noise transfer into the room from the general office, in particular, because it is a high-traffic area.

The design of the general office in UC-4007 does not guarantee privacy even though the Secretary's desk includes a raised counter and a privacy screen attached to the computer monitor. A conscious effort has to be made to cover up files when people arrive for tests or appointments or drop by for other purposes. This can be time consuming and reduce efficiencies. It can also be

challenging to secure the privacy of sensitive information when students and visitors start sharing personal information about the nature of their disability or situation in front of other people. As well, students could be waiting for appointments or to write a test or exam when faculty, staff, and members of the general public arrive at the Centre, which does not ensure their privacy.

Dimmer light switches are installed in all the offices at the Blundon Centre. There are also blinds on all the windows, to accommodate individual needs around lighting. As well, the brochure rack mounted on the wall in UC-4007 is lowered for wheelchair access. In addition, there is a panic button on the Secretary's desk that connects directly to Campus Enforcement and Patrol.

An additional 103.97 square feet is located in UC-1017L and designated as a wheelchair and scooter storage and recharging facility. Two to three students at a time can store and recharge their chair or scooter there instead of having to bring it home at the end of the day. They borrow a key for the semester. The area is under video surveillance. Parking accommodations are arranged when necessary (e.g., there is a blue zone parking space located immediately outside the door).

Sufficient space is not available at the Blundon Centre to implement test and exam accommodations and most have to be relocated. It is a time-consuming challenge to find other suitable and accessible spaces close to the

Blundon Centre, which is essential for logistical reasons (travel time for staff to get to the room and back if there are any issues, to deliver and collect tests and exams, and to escort students to the bathroom). This problem will increase substantially when the pending construction begins to relocate the Student Health clinic to the fifth floor of the University Centre to merge with the Student Wellness and Counselling Centre. The space within the Counselling Centre will also be renovated, which will mean that the Blundon Centre will lose access to the rooms it has been using to implement testing accommodations. Also, this problem will be further compounded if the number of students who self-identify for accommodations continues to rise. Support is required from the senior administration if the institution is to change the way test and exam accommodations are provided (i.e., one option is to return them to the academic units with the necessary training and resources to implement them at those locations).

There is also no space at the Blundon Centre for students to socialize or study together, to promote learning and development.

## 1 11.2 Work Space

- Personnel have workspaces that are suitably located and accessible, well equipped, adequate in size, and designed to support their work and responsibilities.
- Personnel are able to secure their work.

## *Rationale:*

The Manager and the Academic Program Administrator each have a private office located immediately off the general office in UC-4007. The general office is a high-traffic area, and there are numerous interruptions during the day (e.g., students coming by for meetings or to write or book their tests and exams; faculty dropping off and picking up tests and exams, other people attending meetings, making enquiries, etc.). The Academic Program Administrator's office (89.33 square feet) can really only accommodate meetings with one other person at a time as noted previously in this document. Also, there is not enough space for a wheelchair or scooter user to enter and turn around to leave, so those meetings have to be relocated which is challenging at times. Staff have to secure their work throughout the day, which is particularly challenging and time consuming for the Academic Program Administrator because of limited space and the abundance of accommodation forms she is working on at any one time. This problem will disappear once the ClockWork program is fully implemented.

The Secretary has a privacy screen on her computer and has to routinely cover up her work or put it away when leaving her desk or when people stand near her desk. This is also challenging at times and time consuming.

All filing cabinets with students' files are kept locked at all times. The keys to the student files are placed in a

locked cabinet, and the key to that cabinet is kept in a locked filing cabinet drawer. All files that contain sensitive information are locked away at the end of the day.

There is no student employee work space available at the Blundon Centre. This is a serious concern especially when there are upwards of 24 students employed at one time (e.g., during the 2016 winter semester). Also, there is no place for them to store their belonging, etc., during their shift.

### 1 11.3 Accessible Spaces

- DRS includes accessible offices, program spaces, and parking convenient to the facility.
- DRS includes adequate and appropriate spaces for alternative media production and administering accommodated exams.
- DRS includes conference room and training space adequate to accommodate persons who use wheelchairs and scooters.
- DRS includes nearby availability of accessible restrooms, water fountains, elevators or ramps, and corridors, and multisensory emergency warning devices.

#### *Rationale:*

Five metered wheelchair-accessible parking spaces are located in front of the University Centre. There is also a designated wheelchair-accessible drop-off zone at both the east and west entrances to this building.

See information in 11.1 above regarding the accessibility of office and program space.

Accessible water fountains are available on levels 1, 2, 3, and 5 of the University Centre. As noted elsewhere in this document, the Blundon Centre was consulted on the proper height to mount these fountains throughout campus so they are wheelchair accessible.

There is no designated space for alternative media production (e.g., braille transcription and scanning textbooks with Kurzweil 3000 screen-reading software), and there is insufficient space to administer accommodated tests and exams (**See E-mail to the Interim Director of Student Life from the Manager of the Blundon Centre dated March 6, 2015, attached**).

Also as noted previously in this section of this document, there is a multisensory emergency device in UC-4000. Consideration should also be given to installing one of these devices in UC-4007 and UC-4007c although this is not required under the existing Building Code. All staff who currently work at the Blundon Centre are able to hear the alarm which is located immediately outside the Centre's main entrance.

UC-4007C has been used as a training space for student employees in the past depending on the number of participants. However, it will not accommodate, at one time, the 20+ student employees who will be hired during each of the 2016 fall and 2017 winter semesters.

As noted in this section of this document, there is insufficient work space for student employees and for their coats and backpacks. Likewise, there is not enough space for students who are writing tests and exams to store their personal items.

Students are not always provided with an optimal environment to write their tests and exams at the Blundon Centre, due to noise transfer from UC-4007 (and the outer offices), particularly for those who need a quiet, distraction-reduced environment.

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#### 11.4 Equipment Acquisition and Facilities Use

- DRS incorporates sustainable practices in use of facilities and purchase of equipment.
- Facilities and equipment are evaluated on an established cycle and are in compliance with codes, laws, and accepted practices for access, health, safety, and security.
- When acquiring capital equipment, DRS takes into account expenses related to regular maintenance and life-cycle costs.
- DRS has access to the institutional student database, as well as database resources for DRS record keeping and report generation.

#### *Rationale:*

As noted elsewhere in this document, the Centre uses recyclable printer toners. It also shreds a small quantity of confidential documents in-house and places other

non confidential print documents in recyclable containers for Custodial staff to collect along with beverage containers. The confidential files of students who are inactive at the University for more than three years and other confidential materials no longer required are sent to a professional, bondable shredding company.

Staff turn off their computers and turn back the heat during the Christmas holiday period.

Staff will consider employing sustainability practices when purchasing computer and other equipment in consultation with staff in the Computer Purchasing Centre, particularly if such a policy is adopted within that unit or by the institution.

Extended warranties are purchased with new computers and other technology unless it is not deemed prudent (i.e., the cost is excessive compared with the expected shelf life of the equipment).

Staff of the Blundon Centre have access to the Student Banner records system.

The Blundon Centre has purchased the ClockWork database and test-scheduling software program, as noted elsewhere in this document, which includes record keeping and report generation features. It will eliminate the use of paper forms and the need to print other paper documents. Statistical reports (prepared in Excel) showing the number of students, by disability,

registered with the Centre and the number of tests and exams, by academic unit, administered at the Centre since it opened in the 1992 winter semester are saved on the Centre's shared computer drive and are not typically printed.

Facilities Management, Environmental Health and Safety, and Campus Enforcement and Patrol, are responsible for reviewing facilities on an established cycle to ensure they are in compliance with codes, laws, and accepted practices for access, health, safety, and security.

**Overview Questions:**

1. How are facilities inventoried and maintained?
2. How does DRS integrate sustainable practices?
3. How does DRS ensure that facilities, workspaces, and equipment are considered in decision-making?
4. How is DRS intentional about space allocation and usage?