

# A CULTURE OF ENTITLEMENT

## MEDIA BACKGROUNDER

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In October 2011, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act requests were sent to Acadia University, the Atlantic School of Theology, Cape Breton University, Mount Saint Vincent University, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design University, St. Francis Xavier University, Saint Mary's University, and Université Sainte Anne. Each requested the salaries, bonuses, severance, and other monetary benefits given to the universities' presidents, vice presidents, assistant/associate vice presidents, directors, and equivalent staff members outside of the bargaining units at the universities over the period 2004-05 to 2010-11.

Many universities took considerably longer than the mandated 30 days to deliver the data, and one university, NSCAD, initially refused the request. Some universities claimed to have limited staff capacity to carry out such requests, and complete data for all requests was not received until six months after the request was sent.

## KEY FINDINGS

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- The eight surveyed universities collectively spent \$16.4 million on salaries for the Presidents, VPs, Associate/Assistant Vice Presidents, Deans and Directors in 2010-11, an increase of 27 per cent since 2004.
- Administrator salary costs at NSCAD increased 62 percent from 2004/5 to 2010/11. At St. FX, these costs increased by 77 per cent over the same period.
- The value of administrator bonuses at MSVU has more than doubled since 2004. In 2010-11, the university paid administrators bonuses ranging from \$2700 to \$16,800 and the total cost of bonuses was over \$110,000.
- In 2010-11, Sean Riley, President of St. FX, was the highest paid President of the universities included in the data for this report. Riley's compensation increased 52 per cent between 2004-2005 and 2009-2010. Even with a pay cut last year, today he receives 37 per cent more than what he received in remuneration in 2004-05.
- In 2010-11, Colin Dodds, President of Saint Mary's University, was paid \$35,700 for teaching in addition to his salary and housing and car allowances. If he were receiving the maximum compensation given per course to part-time instructors, he would have had to teach 3.25 full credits worth of classes. Based on the demands of the Presidents' role, it is safe to assume he was paid well above what part-time instructors at the university are paid.
- Acadia paid former presidents \$210,000 in 2004-05 and 2005-06, \$235,873 in 2008-09, and \$232,000 in 2009-10 administrative leave pay at the same time as paying their current president. In total, Acadia paid \$907,627 in administrative leave pay to Presidents between 2004-05 and 2010-11. Over this same time, the university paid \$1,476,882 in salaries to Presidents or acting Presidents at the university.
- In 2004-05, the universities surveyed spent \$2.2 million on salaries for VPs. By 2010, that number had reached over \$3 million, an increase of 37 per cent.
- At the Université of Sainte-Anne, compensation for their VP Administration increased 48 per cent between 2004 and 2011. Between 2005 and 2010, the compensation for their VP Academic



increased by 30 per cent.

- In 2010-11, the highest paid VP, the VP Finance at St. FX, had received \$212,507 in compensation, an increase of 54 per cent since 2004.
- MSVU's VP Administration was paid \$184,141 in 2010-11, an increase in compensation of 46 per cent from 2004-05. In 2009-10 and 2010-11 this position's compensation increased 12 and 14 per cent, respectively.
- Associate or assistant vice presidents' salaries totaled to about \$983,500 in 2010-11, an

increase of 27 per cent since 2004-05, even with a reduction in the number of associate or assistant vice-presidents from nine to seven.

- In 2009-10, compensation for three of MSVU's Associate VPs increased by over 18 per cent in a single year. Compensation for the MSVU Associate VP of Communications and Marketing increased an additional 15 per cent compensation the following year.
- The number of directors making over \$100,000 has increased from 7 in 2004-05 to 29 in 2010-11.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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Over the 2011-2012 academic year, the government and the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents (CONSUP) negotiated a third MOU on university funding. While students and some business leaders were involved in discussions around the negotiations, faculty and staff continued to be shut out of the development of this very important piece of government and university policy. In an attempt to contribute to this conversation, this report makes several recommendations.

1. In consultation with universities, faculty, support staff, and students determine a set of regulations on university expenditures, including:
  - Limiting the portion of a university's budget that can go to funding senior administrative expenses, including salaries, office expenditures, and travel;
  - Prohibiting the use of public funding or user fees for fundraising activities, lobbying, establishing public-private partnerships, or the provision of private services that may be reasonably completed within the university, such as head-hunting services; and
  - Establishing a set of common reporting mechanisms for university expenditures that clearly depict university spending, especially

on how much the university is spending in the areas of instruction and research.

2. Review each university act, and amend board composition to better reflect the interests of faculty, staff, students, and the public. Many of these acts have not been amended since the organizing of unions for clerical staff and/or part-time faculty and teaching assistants. New board composition should include representation for these stakeholders. Board composition should limit voting powers of senior administrative staff that sit on the board.
3. Ensure that in any consultation the government undertakes with universities, faculty, part-time instructors, and staff are meaningfully included as stakeholders.

These recommendations are one part of a larger discussion about strengthening and expanding public post-secondary education in the province and should not be seen as suggesting universities are not in need of additional government investment.

