



*Venture Validation Program, a thirteen-week training program for local entrepreneurs*



# **Societal Impact Successes**

*Social Impact and Entrepreneurship Programs*

**Business Schools Association of Canada - 2022 Conference**  
**November 12 – 15, 2022**

The Faculty of Business (FOB) at UNB Saint John is respected for our positive impact on society and for being a force for good. Our curriculum and intellectual contributions contain components focused on societal impact, and we are fostering and promoting curriculum and curricular stakeholder activities that seek to make a positive societal impact. The FOB is engaged in mission-driven activities which have a meaningful impact on society. The FOB empowers aspiring change-makers to put their ingenuity into action by creating an experiential learning environment uniquely embedded in Saint John's community that fosters the innovative thinking required to make an impact locally and globally. The FOB is focused societal change and is increasingly relying on formative methods to access its impact.

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

The FOB incorporates societal impact into its strategic plan. The FOB believes that the opportunity to reinvent our society is within our power and that the future doesn't invent itself. In particular, the strategic plan allocates both human and financial capital to support the school's purpose to make a positive contribution to society. The FOB has set three strategic initiatives that will deliver transformational change, which is critically important to our and the world's future success: 1) Enabling Learners to be Successful, 2) Building Knowledge to Attract Students and Faculty, 3) Connecting and Delivering Value within our Communities

Here are a few ways we are creating positive impact:

- Cultivating a position at the intersection of academia and practice. The FOB has reached agreements with Human Resources New Brunswick (CPHRNB), Project Management Institute New Brunswick chapter (PMI-NB), Supply Chain Canada, and are the first MBA Program in Canada to offer a Canadian Professional Sales Association (CPSA) focus.
- Our health program is unique in Canada, offering an interdisciplinary core curriculum that integrates arts, science, and business. Launching in the 2021 – 2022 academic year, the FOB led the development and execution of a certificate in Nursing Leadership and Management.
- Driving innovation in higher education we have created: 1) A home-grown accelerator and incubator program; 2) A shared collaborative space for the MBA program, start-ups and businesses of all sorts; 3) A new applied research chair in Business Development and Professional Sales; and 4) A very early-stage venture fund. The FOB has long collaborated with the local economic development corporation, Envision Saint John, which supports an incubator located on the second-floor annex of the MBA building.

### **CURRICULUM**

The FOB's curricular elements foster and support students' ability to have a positive impact on society. In our BBA students must successfully complete at least 120 credit hours of course work. Candidates for the degree must successfully complete the following credit hours: a) 57 cores, b) 18 Business electives, c) 6 Social Science electives, d) 6 Humanities and Languages electives, e) 33 options, of which a maximum of 18 may be chosen from Business. Further to this our BBA offers classes that dedicate a large part of the curriculum to environmental, social, and governance including: BA 3123 Issues in Business and Society uses the applied social sciences as a theoretical framework for analyzing the contemporary business organization in its environment. ECON1013 and ECON1023 Introduction to Macroeconomics, the class focuses upon: income/wealth distribution and climate change and the role Economists and students can have in addressing these issues. Additionally, the FOB has worked with Social Science in Practicum courses. SOCS 4501 managed to place 26 students in academic year 2020-2021 with a variety of groups such as Elizabeth Fry, Bee Mee Kidz, and the Saint John Newcomers Centre, Community Food Basket, Brilliant Labs, and Chroma.

Our MBA 7102 International Business Ethics class is dedicated to cover environmental, social, or corporate governance. We also have a course dedicated to Social Entrepreneurship MBA 7170. In MBA 7003 Prices and Markets course content dwells upon the economy as a social construct and the class discusses land acknowledgement as a different way of constructing an economy. ECON 1013 Intro to Microeconomics

and MBA 7003 Prices and Markets have active learning exercises incorporating Hoffman (2020) and the students are asked to write at least one exam question from that paper with a focus upon the role of economics in a way forward<sup>1</sup>. We have developed innovative approaches to business education that meet our student's needs and help them earn high-quality degrees. This has included an emphasis on experiential learning and providing opportunities for students to acquire work experience through the very successful BBA Co-op Work Program and MBA Business Consulting Project (BCP).

### **ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIETAL IMPACT**

We aim to identify, encourage, and promote both curricular and co-curricular activities and best practices which can have positive societal impact. One of the defining characteristics and strengths of the FOB lies in the energetic connections with local industry, government, non-profit organizations, and community groups. Members of Faculty and professional staff serve on the boards of companies and non-profit organizations, undertake applied research consulting projects for government and industry, and contribute in numerous ways to the broader community. This on-going relationship has created valuable experiential learning opportunities for our students, valuable career opportunities for our graduates, and has enabled the FOB to play an active and impactful role in mentoring new businesses in the city, such as through the Venture Validation Program (VVP) a thirteen-week training program for local entrepreneurs. Our faculty member Rob Moir is the Director of the Urban and Community Studies Institute which enables the institute's researchers to work with many community partners to: 1) explore pressing civil concerns, 2) enrich public dialogue on the region's future, 3) identify possible policy solutions to social issues which may be applied in the region or in similar-sized Canadian cities. The FOB and the Saint John Newcomers Centre (SJNC) recognize the value newcomers bring to our communities. Together, UNB and the SJNC, have developed a training program called Skill Up for Success to help international students transition into the Canadian workforce. The FOB places great value on the practical application of its expertise, to addressing the economic and social problems of the region. This commitment is written into the mission of the FOB; as a result, we play leadership and advisory roles in non-profit organizations, including: advisor to the Saint John Community Loan Fund, as President of the Atlantic Canada Economics Association, as expert-in-residence with Dialogue New Brunswick, as volunteers through YMCA Settlement Services, as board members for community groups like the Saint John Multicultural and Newcomers Resource Centre, the New Brunswick Conservation Council, the New Brunswick Elementary Literacy Program, Habitat for Humanity, Saint John Waterfront Foundation Inc., Asian Heritage Society of NB, Canadian Society for training and development, The Saint John YMCA, Kingston Farmer's Market Co-operative, Research and Productivity Council New Brunswick, the Saint John Jewish Historical Museum, Fundy Food Festival, and on committees like the Town of Hampton Health Care Committee, Greater Saint John United Way, Living SJ, Atlantic Canada Economics Association, and the Saint John Animal Shelter.

### **CONCLUSION**

The FOB is recognized for its innovative programs, quality education, and consistency in producing future business leaders. We provide an inspiring and inclusive environment for learning, discovery, and service through engagement, and we develop innovative, entrepreneurial leaders. Our faculty is committed to hands-on learning. Our partnerships with industry give students valuable experience through our Co-op program and internships in Canada and abroad. We are a small, friendly, and dedicated with a mission to enhance our students' understanding of the world in which they live and work. Our student-focused culture, along with an emphasis on real-world problem-solving, engagement with the community and how the Saint John campus has embraced interdisciplinary approaches to both established and new, innovative programs makes the FOB one that is well positioned to continue to create positive change in society.

---

<sup>1</sup> Hoffman AJ. Business education as if people and the planet really matter. *Strategic Organization*. 2021;19(3):513-525. doi:[10.1177/1476127020967638](https://doi.org/10.1177/1476127020967638)