





2013-2014 Annual Report

Executive Summary

Since its inception NBSPRN has attracted nearly 1000 members, half from the four public Universities, and has supported 140 completed projects of which 125 involved NB universities.

NBSPRN has been successful in enhancing collaboration among NB universities and between academia and government. Since 2010, the Network has hosted networking events and meetings that facilitated countless relationships and which have lead to 79 project-based connections between researchers and policy-makers.

NBSPRN has helped to inform policy with evidence; aiding academics to achieve impact outside of the academy. Seventy-six (76) per cent of policy-makers surveyed report NBSPRN has improved access to research used to develop policy1.

In 2014-15, NBSPRN will increase its outreach activities. In an effort to facilitate greater member engagement, NBSPRN will host a series of networking events on all campuses. These events aim to recruit and inform members, and to foster continuous communication between researchers and policy-makers.

The student awards and the Research2Impact program will increase student involvement and improve student research capacity through funds, training, and mentorship.

Further, this Summer NBSPRN will develop a Community Research Priorities Document. This effort will create greater value for our community members and for social scientists focused on community action and community-based research.

NBSPRN is developing an NB Policy Research Database to help mobilize existing knowledge and improve responsiveness to knowledge user requests. In an effort to attract more external funding for policy research, NBSPRN will increase research proposal support for our academic members engaged in policy research, through the newly created position of Research Coordinator.

Finally, in an effort to improve the quality of information used in policy-making, NBSPRN is working with the NB Research and Innovation Council to coordinate a platform-supported shared data partnership to track innovation and entrepreneurship. It is our intention that the initiative will include the social sector.

¹ 2012 NBSPRN membership survey

NBSPRN fosters inter-sectoral, inter-institutional, and inter-disciplinary collaboration, and promotes and tracks research impact on policy. It is because of the commitment of the province and each of the four publicly-funded universities that we have been able to achieve this made-in-NB innovation. Over the next few months we will be seeking multi-year contribution agreements with our academic institutions and a memorandum of understanding with GNB to see this project scale and implement a more financially sustainable service-delivery model.

In this annual report you will find some examples of our accomplishments this past year and ways we will achieve our mission and demonstrate value into the future.

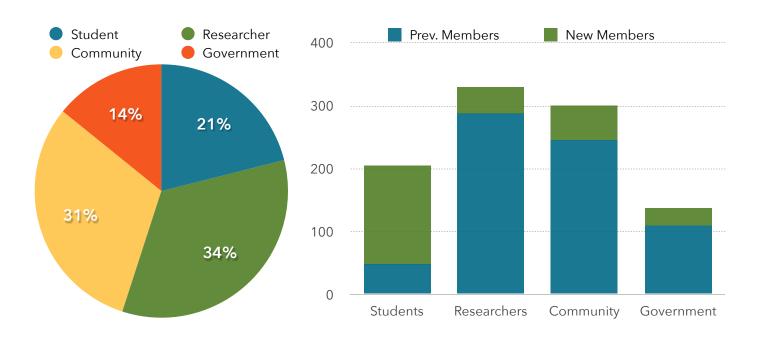
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Member Recruitment & Engagement

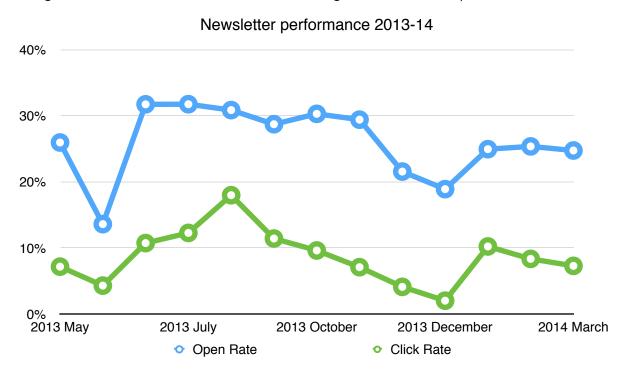
973 Members Total 28.4% increase in membership





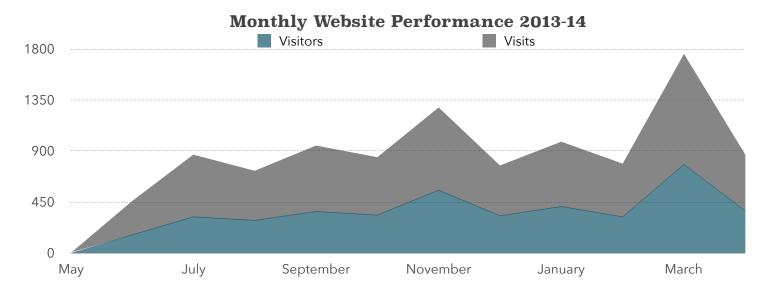
Newsletter, Web & Social

Based on the 2013 membership survey, the general consensus is that social media venues are a key resource for the NBSPRN, including newsletters, bulletins, and the spotlight articles that are done of members within the Network. In this section you will find some statistics relating to our social media channels, website usage, and newsletter performance.



The newsletter continues to be a valued source of information for our members. The table below shows the performance averages for each sector compared to NBSPRN's performance.

Average	Politics	Non Profit	Government	NBSPRN
Open Rate	22.6%	25%	25.7%	26%
Click Rate	2.7%	3.3%	3.6%	8.6%



Website usage continues to climb as more and more content is being generated and more traffic is being driven from the newsletter and social media channels.

21,297 page views / 6,031 visits / 3,707 visitors

New users are subscribing to NBSPRN's social media channels as the organization continues to build its online profile and connect with other organizations and content producers around the globe.







April 2014 Date May 2013

Survey Results

The survey of the membership of the New Brunswick Social Policy Research Network was conducted in order to determine how well the Network is responding to its membership base, the effectiveness of the services that are being offered, and how the Network can improve to help its stakeholders in the future.

Demographics

The survey was administered to 910 out of 941 members; 191 individuals responded to the survey, a response rate of 20.2%. In the 2012 Membership Survey, the NBSPRN had 674 members, which corresponds to a 28.4 per cent increase in the overall membership base. Accordingly, the 2013 Annual Survey had a 21.1 percent increase in the number of individuals that chose to respond to the survey, an increase indicative of a growing membership base.

The majority of members responding to the survey identify themselves as being part of the Government of New Brunswick (21.1%), while slightly less is part of community organization or business (18.9%). Of those members that have a academic affiliation, the majority are associated with the University of New Brunswick (18.9%) and the Université de Moncton (15.8%).

Members have been involved in the Network for an average of 23.4 months.

Facilitating Relationships

73.9% of the respondents to the question: "since becoming a member, I have been able to make connections with other individuals in Academia, the Community, and in Government that seek to enhance social policy research and development" indicated that the network has enabled them to make important connections with individuals across all groups.

Respondents were also asked an open-ended question in follow-up to question fourteen, which asked: "In what ways has the Network improved you access to key contacts?"

Respondents that answered this question indicate that the networking events held by the Network is the key mechanism that increases the connections between stakeholders, and therefore lead to the key contacts that are needed to develop evidence-based policies and/or

The value of the Network is its ability to be a "potential network hub of social policy research." - Survey Respondent, 2013

programs. The bulletin sent out by the Network that includes the spotlight profile on specific members is also helpful, along with the ability to have open communication with other members.

Many respondents (**85.1%**) indicate that the Network has **strengthened relationships** between policy makers and researchers.² A substantial number of members (89.6%) in Academia and in the Community (90.5%) agree that the Network has strengthened their relationships with relevant stakeholders in social policy. Roughly two-thirds of members in Government agree.

In the 2012 NBSPRN Membership Baseline Survey, respondents were asked a similar question: "The Network and its activities has strengthened the relationship between policy makers and researchers."

A large majority of respondents in both the 2012 and the 2013 survey agree that the Network has strengthened the relationship between policy makers and researchers. According to the 2013 survey, member responses indicate that the Network is continuing to build such relationships. Approximately **85 per cent** of respondents in **2013** agree with the statement compared to **75.8 percent in 2012**.

There are three key ways in which members indicate that the Network could strengthen the relationships between policy makers and researchers in order to initiate, develop, and implement social policy research:

- 1. Hosting networking meetings, workshops, and/or conferences that allow more face-to-face interaction between stakeholders. Moreover, such events should build on the collective interests of all involved by identifying social policy concerns at all levels: Academia, Government, and the Community. The Network should also coordinate events that include other organizations (strategic partnerships) that have similar mandates as those identified by members of the Network.
- 2. Have **smaller meetings** that are **targeted** at the specific **needs** of each organization/ department in order to connect members that have similar areas of interest/research.
- 3. Have **more of a social media presence** by driving more media attention to the events, results, and objectives of the NBSPRN. By doing this, it would help drive public awareness of social policy issues. Building an **online membership profile** is another

² A large number of respondents (42.9%) indicated that they do not know.

way to promote the Network and better help connect individuals that are interested in social policy research and development.

The overall consensus among members is that The Network:

- provides the opportunity to establish connections and build relationships with researchers and invested partners in social policy research.
- brings people together to continue an ongoing dialogue regarding the importance of evidence-based research practices and policies.
- achieves a key success in establishing a membership of New Brunswick researchers that believe evidence-based policies are important.

"[The Network's] existence is a signal to policymakers and funding agencies that there is a research capacity in New Brunswick, even if that capacity is currently under supported in terms of data access and funding."

- Survey Respondent, 2013
- is a valuable resource for information sharing and providing awareness of social policy issues and research in New Brunswick.

Collaboration

There are three key areas that respondents think the Network can improve on in order to cultivate collaboration between stakeholders:

1. The majority of respondents indicated that there needs to be a **mechanism that allows** all stakeholders to discuss current social policy issues in their current role (i.e., academia, community, and government) in order to enhance the understanding between members about what is needed for research. One respondent indicated that "...by allowing the respective groups to share some of their key initiatives and where they would be open for input... this would allow for a dialogue that could potentially break through some of the silos [in the respective groups]."

[The Network has increased collaboration] "by serving as a central point for information, communication, and coordination of research efforts and services, and by effectively linking government research community".

- Survey Respondent, 2013

- 2. Respondents indicated there should be more events that are targeted at building relationships through face-to-face interactions. Along with this, members suggested that more events take place such as seminars, lecture series, online forums such as webinars, and conferences. Moreover, it is important to be able to include groups from outside of the Fredericton area, francophone groups, and different regions throughout the province. Providing members with advance notice of said events is key.
- 3. Along with previous comments, respondents reiterated the importance of having an online profile of members so that they can search and find individuals with the research expertise and skills for policy research and development. Moreover, respondents indicate that the Network should share current research projects that are underway, so that all relevant parties are able to be involved and offer to collaborate.

Access to Research

The majority of respondents that answered the question, "In what ways do you think that the Network has improved you ability to access the research tools that are key to developing evidence-based policies and/or programs?" stated that:

- the networking practices implemented by the Network have improved their access to the necessary tools needed for doing evidence-based policy development.
- the key contribution of the Network is the ability of members to learn from each other about the varying ways to conduct research and develop evidence-based policy.
- the information sessions and presentations that have been initiated by the Network have helped in increasing their knowledge about available research tools.

Many members believe that the Network can help improve access to research tools that are needed for developing evidence-based policies and/or programs, by hosting **more events** that deal with the necessary tools for social policy development (i.e., **data and data management software**). This can be done through information sessions, training lead by

[The Network] needs to "find a way to disseminate knowledge in a fast and effective way." - Survey Respondent, 2013

researchers that have the necessary skills to do research, and workshops. **Social media** based tools are also mentioned, such as have access to an **online database of researchers** and an online forum for communication. Many members indicate that they need to have **access to high-quality data** that is needed for the development of evidence-based policies, both

federal and provincial data. Access to key research venues is mentioned several times (i.e., access to the University of New Brunswick Research Data Centre and the Harriett Irving Library database of online resources).

Convenience

In 2012, 87.1% of survey respondents described the network as convenient to use compared to 73.2% in 2013, a noticeable decline.

There are three main areas that respondents thought the Network could improve on:

- 1. Respondents indicated that the Network should be more active in **promoting and advertising** its purpose and activities to the community, current students (both undergraduate and graduate), and recent post-secondary graduates that are interested in the area of social policy and research.
- 2. A large majority of respondents felt it is important to create a better online user profile of NBSPRN members. Specifically, the Network should invest in creating individual pages of current members that are grouped together by their particular research interest, affiliation, and/or expertise. This would allow for relevant stakeholders to contact and initiate policy-based research. Along with this, an online forum would be useful as a means for such parties to connect and discuss key topics of interest.
- 3. Many respondents thought that **more events** in the form of workshops/seminars, is a good investment as mean of increasing face-to-face interactions among members. Numerous respondents suggest that not all of such meetings be in the Fredericton area and that members have more advanced notice of scheduled events.

Conclusion

The majority of respondents to the survey indicate that they are satisfied with the opportunities and services the Network provides as means to initiate and promote evidence-based social policy research in the province of New Brunswick. Overall, stakeholders from all three membership groups (Academia, Community, Government,) are pleased with the progress of the Network, its usefulness, and its effectiveness at bridging the gap between social policy researchers and individuals that are making social policy decision. Overall, the groups that seem to be benefiting from the Network the most are individuals in Academia and Government. Although Community members are mostly satisfied with the practices of the Network, conducting social policy research is not the key reason for their involvement in

the Network. Therefore, most individuals in this group responded 'I don't know' to questions related to research capacity and the access to relevant tools.

In the open-ended questions, most respondents indicated that there are three main areas in which the Network could improve:

- 1. **Networking and events**: many respondents indicate that having face-to-face events such as seminars, workshops, and conferences are important to developing the relationships that are needed to initiate and implement evidence-based social policy research. Moreover, there is a need for events outside of the Fredericton area in order to include members of the Network that live in outlying areas. Providing members with enough advance notice is a key concern, and a few members indicate that there is a lack follow-up after networking events.
- 2. Online services: many respondents suggested ways in which the Network could increase their online presence and services. A large number of members indicate a need for an online profile database of all members so that it is easy to search for researchers with particular interests and skills. An online forum was a key service identified by members that would help with communication between researchers and the dissemination of ideas.
- 3. Access to quality data: many respondents indicate that the access to quality data, as well as individuals that have the skills to use data to develop social policy, is a problem. Moreover, respondents indicated that having a mechanism that provides members with information about what dataset are available as well as programs that provide avenues for accessing data (i.e., the University of New Brunswick Research Data Centre and the Harriett Irving Library online resources) would be beneficial.

Overall, respondents indicated that the NBSPRN continues to be a source of support for individuals that are conducting research in areas that impact social policy as well as connecting social policy makers with researchers that have the skills to provide New Brunswick with evidence-based policies.

Projects

By the numbers

2013-14 saw a significant decline in activity for a variety of reasons that, by now, are obvious to our members and Board. Regardless, the organization continued to actively facilitate relationships and mobilize knowledge while increasing its membership base.

There were 26 requests for support recorded and processed in 2013-14, in addition to 46 projects opened, 4 closed and 11 completed.

Presently, there are 49 open/ongoing projects and 34 pending projects recorded in the database and 5 funded projects³ totalling \$469,000: Pour un accès à des services de santé sécuritaires et de qualité (\$35,000), CNFS/UdeM, Atlantic Regional Panel (\$75,000) - SSHRC/STU, DOC Talks Symposium (\$25,000) - SSHRC/STU, Mentra (\$300,000) - NBRIC, Expanding the Economic Development Policy Discussion (\$34,000) - ACOA/UNB.



Project Connections

³Created and completed in 2013-2014, any project created before this fiscal year is counted in the fiscal year it was started, even when completed in this fiscal year.

Project Highlights

Université de Moncton

Alphabétisation en matière de santé - Nathalie Boivin Université de Moncton, campus de Shippagan

Nathalie Boivin and her team developed a project titled « Programme de soutien à la recherche sur la santé des francophones en situation minoritaire au Canada - appel spécial de propositions 2013 – 2014 ». With NBSPRN's help they submitted a funding application to the Consortium national de formation en santé (CNFS) for the experimental phase of their project. The crucial aim of the project is to improve the accessibility, quality and safety of health services for Francophones in New Brunswick. Ms. Boivin was the recipient of \$25 000 from the CNFS. With support from NBSPRN, Ms. Boivin was also the recipient of a sum of \$10,000 from the CNFS for the project titled « Pour un accès à des services de santé sécuritaires et de qualité : promotion et implantation du protocole d'intervention ALPHA-SANTÉ aux intervenants de la santé, aux étudiants dans ce domaine et à leurs formateurs, au Nouveau-Brunswick francophone ».

St. Thomas University

Imagining Canada's Future

NBSPRN was a partner in a funding application to SSHRC under the Imagining Canada's Future category led by St. Thomas University. In consultation with the region's 15 Vice Presidents Research and the New Brunswick Social Policy Research Network (SPRN), eight initial themes were identified with particular salience in Atlantic Canada. The eight initial themes identified by the Atlantic Regional Panel in phase 1 were: (1) rurality; (2) higher education; (3) transportation; (4) immigration; (5) language; (6) citizens' engagement and governance; (7) First Nations Inuit, and Métis populations; and (8) demographics. A summary document associated with each of the eight themes is available on the ARP website, in both French and English, at: www.atlanticregionalpanel.wordpress.com. The grant associated with this project was for \$75,000.

University of New Brunswick

Balance Awareness - Falls Prevention - Ms. Donna Leggatt (PhD Candidate) and Dr. Chris McGibbon of UNB and Dr. Bill McIver NBCC.

The researchers are developing a project to research balance awareness techniques and the importance of balance awareness to falls prevention. Part of the project includes adapting technology developed at the Institute of Biomedical Engineering for wearable balance sensors. This technology could potentially be linked to a phone ap to be developed by

NBCC. NBSPRN is a collaborator in the development of the proposal and facilitated meetings with potential knowledge users at the departments of Health, Social Development and Healthy and Inclusive Communities. The departments saw potential linkages to the work being done for Homefirst. NBSPRN also arranged for the participation of Imelda Perley, Elder in Residence at UNB.

Community Care for Seniors with Dementia - Alzheimer's Society of New Brunswick, Atlantic Aging Institute, NB Health Research Foundation

The New Brunswick Health Research Foundation is co-ordinating New Brunswick participation in a Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) application for research in care for seniors with dementia. A New Brunswick initiative was initially proposed by the Alzheimer's Society. NBSPRN played a role in bringing all the players together and participated in the working group that developed the New Brunswick grant application. As part of this exercise a "Best Brains" exchange, Transforming Community Care for Effective Interventions for Seniors with Dementia was facilitated by CIHR November 16th, 2013 in Saint John. The exchange brought together experts on the subject with local researchers, NGOs and government representatives. The information shared will inform the development of government's dementia strategy and Homefirst.

Mount Allison University

Lyme disease prevalence in New Brunswick- Dr. Vett Lloyd

Dr. Lloyd is working on a project to determine the prevalence of Lyme disease in NB. She has determined the number of ticks infected with the Lyme bacteria and the number of dogs with Lyme disease. However she would like to have an estimate of the number of people with Lyme disease in the province. A proxy for this information is the number of ELISA tests ordered annually in NB by physicians and done in the Chalmer's hospital microbiology lab. The Network connected Dr. Lloyd to Ms. Michelina Mancuso of the New Brunswick Health Research Council who has informed us that the information is collected therefore should be available. Dr. Lloyd has had discussions with Barry Strack, who is director of research for the Horizon Health Network. She is pursuing this angle for now.

General

Overcoming Poverty Together

NBSPRN staff worked with the Economic and Social Inclusion Corporation (ESIC) to develop the action plan for Overcoming Poverty Together II (OPT-II) as part of the province's poverty reduction strategy, as well as contributing to the measures and indicators working group. NBSPRN is also a member of the Social Enterprise and Community Investment Funds (SECIF) sub-committee on Research and Awareness. As such, we have helped identify key researchers to collaborate with the SECIF committee.

Learn: For Life

In 2010, the NB2026 Initiative on Learning was born. The aim of this initiative was two-fold: Firstly, to engage New Brunswickers in a discussion about learning in all its form and secondly, to affect a culture change - towards a culture of learning.

The document "Learn: For Life" is the result of many months of passionate discussions. The proposed actions within its pages reflect the ideas and suggestions of New Brunswickers who were asked to consider what would help our province become a national leader in learning.

Ms. Christine Paulin and Mr. Nick Scott, members of the Leadership Team and the Advisory Committee of the NB2026 Initiative on Learning conducted research on the theory of collective impact and its applicability to the report "Learning: for Life" which is derived from the public consultation which took place in 2012. They delivered the results of this research at the Provincial Forum on Learning - which took place November 16, 2013 at the Fredericton Convention Centre.

Roundtable on Crime and Public Safety

NBSPRN is part of the Roundtable on Crime and Public Safety that has been tasked with overseeing the implementation of Moving from Theory to Outcomes; New Brunswick's Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy. There are a number of working groups established to implement elements of the strategy. NBSPRN is a member of the Learning and Innovation Working Group that organized the workshop The Cultural DNA of Innovation: Supporting innovative environments and processes within the New Brunswick Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy held December 4th, 2013.

Innovation Data Partnership

In an effort to improve the quality of information used to develop policy, NBSPRN is in the early stages of embarking on a partnership with the MaRS Data Catalyst and working with the NB Research and Innovation Council to establish a Shared Data Partnership to track the

innovation economy. Once developed it is our intention to apply the model and expand the platform to include the social sector.

InspireNB Implementation Committee

NBSPRN was recently invited to be part of the InspireNB Implementation committee, lead by TechSouthEast and PETL. InspireNB is a platform designed to support students in their career choices and connect them with employers in the province. With wide adoption of this platform the by-product is rich data that can be accessed by researchers in the area of education, labour, and economics with subsequent knowledge used in policy development.

Events

« Partenariat de recherche en milieu rural : succès et défis »

The Université de Moncton, Campus de Shippagan, in collaboration with the New Brunswick Social Policy Research Network proposed a half-day discussion and reflection on the role and potential of partnerships between researchers, communities and officials in the context of rural development. This activity, held on March 12, 2014 took the form of a round table, showcased the opportunities and challenges associated with partnerships from the perspectives of researchers, community stakeholders and officials.

International Summer Course on the Rights of the Child

The NBSPRN took part in the organization of the second annual International Summer Course on the Rights of the Child in collaboration with the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate of New Brunswick. The focus of this year's course was on Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Right Against all Forms of Violence, Injury or Abuse, Neglect or Negligent Treatment, Maltreatment or Exploitation. This summer course was a bilingual program comprised of a three-day pre-conference workshop from July 12-14, 2013 focusing on best practices for data collection and research on the rights and well-being of children and youth, as well as a five-day university-based program from July 15 to 19, 2013 on the rights of the child, and the well-being and healthy development of youth people around the world. More than 150 participants from around the world attended this years' course, including institutional stakeholders, professionals, researchers, graduates, students registered in graduate programs and advocates for the rights of children.

Men's Health Workshop: Knowledge, Experience and Action

The Centre de formation médicale du Nouveau-Brunswick, Francophone Family Medicine Training for New Brunswick, and the New Brunswick Social Policy Research Network held the first edition of a workshop on men's health in New Brunswick, on May 22-23, 2013 in Moncton. The theme of this 1st edition was: «Men's Health: Knowledge, Experience and Action ». This workshop aimed to raise awareness among clinicians and decision makers on major specific health needs among men with chronic diseases. Specifically, the sessions focused on health risk perception, health communication needs, health services utilization and clinical follow-up among men.

Digital Humanities Workshop

October 26th NBSPRN participated in the "Digital Humanities" workshop at St. Thomas University, which was a "show and tell" of researchers who work with digital media in order to enhance the research agenda in the humanities. Guest speakers included Dr.Tony Tremblay, Dr. Robin Vose, Dr. Kathy Mac, Dr. Trevor Sawler, Lloyd Salomone, Dr. Greg Kealey, and managing director of NBSPRN Nick Scott presenting on the need for a Digital Knowledge and Data Mobilization Infrastructure.

Policy Panel 2013: Expanding the Economic Development Policy Discussion/ Research to Impact: A Policy Weekend 2014

With a successful funding application to ACOA, NBSPRN planned two events with a focus on the discourse surrounding economic development in New Brunswick.

This project was split in two, first we held a Panel Discussion, on June 12, 2013 at the Wu Centre UNB. The discussion addressed the topic, "What is good Economic Development policy?" On the panel were representatives from the business sector, academia, government and community non-profit sector, each bringing their own informed perspective on the issue. Moderator for the event was Nancy Mathis, who has been working within the business and community sector. She was able to draw out of each contributor his or her ideas on how New Brunswick can develop public policy that produces a positive Economic Development climate. The panel featured Dr. Yves Bourgeois, René Boudreau and Susan Holt and was moderated by Nancy Mathis.

The second part of this project is titled "Research2Impact: A Policy Weekend 2014" took place from February 21-23, 2014 at UNB. Through this policy research weekend NBSPRN contributed to the economic development discourse by creating an opportunity for policy makers, academics and students to come together to consider various policy research elements required to ensure optimal economic development decision-making.

DOCTalks Film Festival & Symposium

The DOCTalks Symposium seeks to foster a creative and knowledge based economy in Atlantic Canada, through collaborative partnerships and networks that create, fund, mobilize and distribute "socially relevant" ideas, content and programming. It was at STU held from Feb. 7th to Feb. 16, featured 14 Canadian and International documentary film screenings, each followed by a talk and discussion with the filmmaker, guest panelists and audience members, about the subjects and themes contained in the film. For more information about the 2014 Doc Talks Festival & Symposium program, schedule and tickets visit: www.doctalks.ca

Future Events Calendar

May 6, 2014

★ Showcase & Sharing: Highlighting Community-Academic Collaboration (Saint John)

June 10, 2014

★ Toward better collaboration between researchers & First Nations (Moncton)

June 25, 2014

★ Homelessness Forum w/ Stephen Gaetz

July 23, 2014

★ Open Government Tour (Moncton)

September 2014

★ Policy Luncheon (TBD)

October 2014

- ★ De la recherche à l'impact (Moncton)
- ★ Research2Impact (Sackville)

November 2014

★ Policy Luncheon (TBD)

November 23-24, 2014

★ GovMaker Days (Fredericton)

January 2015

- ★ Policy Luncheon (TBD)
- ★ Research2Impact (Saint John)

March 2015

★ Policy Luncheon (TBD)

April 20-21, 2015

★ Atlantic Policy Research Congress (Fredericton)