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## **Item No. 8**

**Halifax Regional Council**  
**February 26, 2008**

**TO:** Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

(Original signed)

**SUBMITTED BY:** Jennifer Church, Advisor, Intergovernmental and Corporate Affairs

**DATE:** February 13, 2008

**SUBJECT:** HRM and Metro University Presidents MOU Update

### **INFORMATION REPORT**

#### **ORIGIN**

October 16, 2007 Annual Meeting between Mayor & Members of Council and Metro University Presidents.

#### **BACKGROUND**

HRM and Metro Universities Presidents' Association (MUPC) representatives signed a Memorandum of Understanding in May 2005. The first initiatives focussed on transit and recreation. These initiatives led to successes such as the UPass program for all major Metro universities, and information sharing on key issues such as the Physical Activity Research Strategy. These achievements were profiled at a luncheon meeting in October 2007, for university presidents, the Mayor and Councillors. Potential new focus areas were discussed at this meeting and given over to staff to pursue and formalize.

Between December 2007 and January 2008, HRM and MUPC staff met to discuss the suggested initiatives and outline specific activities for furthering the MOU. Four key areas of specific activity have been agreed upon.

## **DISCUSSION**

Based on discussions between HRM and MUPC, four key focus areas have been agreed to and work plans are being developed. The following will be the areas of focus for the next 12-18 months, at which time progress will be reviewed by Council and University Presidents and next steps assessed.

### **Research-Sharing**

There is potential benefit to involving experts and resources in university faculties in HRM's business planning process. Once areas are identified where research may be helpful, it would be a straightforward matter of information sharing on an as-needed basis.

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

HRM has a need for more volunteers, and the university student population is an untapped resource. Students could be particularly helpful in areas related to their field of study (i.e., coaching youth sports, childrens' care and programming, etc), and it could benefit them as a learning/work experience opportunity. HRM and MUPC would need to identify areas where student volunteers would be most helpful and develop a recruiting mechanism.

### **Funding Application Support**

Universities are an integral part of Halifax and their campuses are often utilized by the general public. HRM and universities also often face similar issues when it comes to funding needs. As such, it would be beneficial for each body to have the support of the other when requesting funding from other levels of government, or where possible, apply for funding jointly. HRM and MUPC could share areas they each feel need attention and discuss how best to proceed and build a collaborative case for funding.

### **Youth Engagement**

Both HRM and Metro universities have an interest in boosting enrollment, particularly in under-represented segments of the population. Introducing youth to universities and engaging their interest could be a first step to increasing enrollment. This could be initiated by taking HRM-run day camps on trips to universities and spending time in some interesting programming (i.e., a couple hours in a science lab), as a way of introducing them to the possibilities of post-secondary studies.

## **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

No budget implications at this time. Any budget needs would be articulated through the 2008/09 business planning and budget process.

**FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN**

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

**ATTACHMENTS**

N/a

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

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