

Comhairle na Gàidhlig – The Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia focuses on the promotion and growth of Gaelic language in Nova Scotia. In the same way that the Acadians and Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia value their languages as an embodiment of their identities, our organization sees Gaelic language as an extremely important platform that upholds our people's values.

The mission statement of the Gaelic College is “To promote, preserve and perpetuate through studies in all related areas - the culture, music, language, arts, crafts, customs and traditions of immigrants from the highlands of Scotland”.

Cultural arts and identities are forever evolving, and all are valid artistic expressions in their own right. Our focus is on Gaelic arts and culture, and their foundation in Gaelic language, and we have great interest in how the province allocates its resources within the Gaelic College. Our Board of Directors welcomes the concerns expressed by Kelly MacArthur about the possible discontinuing of the Highland Dance competition at the Gaelic College in St. Ann's. Her words express a respect for the work that is done to support and grow Gaelic, and they provide a basis for discussion about the role of the Gaelic College.

Comhairle na Gàidhlig supports the increased emphasis on Gaelic Language programming at the Gaelic College. Using an example, we feel that the Acadian community would not be well served by a provincially-funded educational institution that provided instruction in English, and similarly, neither is the Gaelic community. The Province of Nova Scotia has funded a ‘Gaelic’ institution for 70 years which is only now seriously exploring how it can address and reverse Gaelic language decline in Nova Scotia. These are exciting times. We applaud the strength of conviction that the directors have demonstrated by making this bold move. At the same time, we hope to see programming at the Gaelic College that meets the needs of all its stakeholders.

Although there is no historical evidence of a connection between the culture of the immigrants from the Highlands of Scotland to Nova Scotia and Highland Dancing or the Pipe Band tradition, they have become a part of our contemporary Nova Scotia ‘Scottish’ identity, and they are deeply tied to the Gaelic College in the hearts of many. We know that these arts provide an attraction to the College of those interested in ‘Scottish’ tradition, and are therefore a gateway to introduce people in a positive atmosphere to the unique language and culture of Gaelic Nova Scotia. We also feel that Gaelic cultural values of inclusion, attending to the needs around us, and courage, dictate that we seek options that support the objectives of all parties involved.

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Comhairle na Gàidhlig is a non-profit society, founded in 1987, dedicated to the maintenance and promotion of the Gaelic language and culture. It works with individuals and groups throughout the province, and throughout the world, to preserve and perpetuate our distinct Gaelic culture.