University of New Brunswick
PO Box 4400
Fredericton, NB
Canada
E3B 5A3
506-458-7154
506-453-4817
Biden@unb.ca
Biomedical Engineering
Edmund N Biden
Professor and Dean of Graduate Studies

UNB
UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK

16 November 2011

Mr. John Traversy,
Secretary General,
CRTC
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0N2

Re: MAC and the Broadcasting Accessibility Fund.

Dear Mr. Traversy;

I have been involved throughout my career in bio-medical engineering in assistive technology of various sorts in both healthcare and academia. The Broadcasting Accessibility Fund (BAF) appears to be an opportunity for broad participation from the academic research community in the development of technology which will have value for students with disabilities as well as the wider population.

Funding for academic research is increasingly dependent on matching funds. The BAF represents the possibility of matching dollars for project partners who otherwise have difficulty finding such funds. Among the hardest funds to secure are those actual dollars from the private sector to meet matching requirements.

All academic institutions face this challenge and it is critical that the agency administering the BAF and its board and other governance structures remain independent and at arms length of any single academic enterprise. Otherwise, there is a risk of bias in the decision making. Diversity of views and approaches is critical to innovation.

I support Media Access Canada's proposal in response to BNOC 2011-523. MAC is independent, and its mandate is closely aligned with the Commission. Its project funding model requires use of the principles of Universal Design and publication of funded work in open source venues.

Allowing MAC to administer the fund will ensure academic institutions from across the country have the same opportunity to design, develop and research projects to remove barriers for accessible content.

I hope that you can support MAC and the accessibility community from across Canada who are studying and researching in this area.

Best Regards,

Ed Biden

Ed Biden, D.Phil., FCSME
Professor, Biomedical/Mechanical Engineering
Dean, School of Graduate Studies