

Dr. Daniel Weeks, President
University of Northern British Columbia
Office of the President
3333 University Way
Prince George, BC V2N 4Z9

May 4, 2017

Dear Dr. Weeks,

I am writing to you to express our concern and disappointment at the message you sent to faculty on May 2.

In your message you outlined your support for a BC Liberal party proposal to increase Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) graduates at UNBC. As you know, or should know, these proposals are also supported by both the Green Party of BC and the New Democratic Party of BC. We were also troubled by your reference to "ongoing conversations with our partners in Advanced Education".

These comments could fairly be interpreted as an endorsement for the re-election of the Liberal government. I hope you would agree that University presidents should remain strictly nonpartisan during an election campaign. I would refer you to the following response by UBC, quoted in the *Vancouver Sun* on May 3, to a recent substantial campaign announcement regarding its medical school:

Dr. Dermot Kelleher, Dean of the medical school, could not comment on the Liberals' proposal. Katie White, a spokeswoman, said: "The institution does not comment on party platforms during the election."

Your comments also exacerbate our concern that the politicized composition of Boards of Governors could compromise the independence and integrity of BC's research universities. Your highly inappropriate statement to faculty, who in the end are your employees, does a disservice to the entire UNBC community.

We call upon you to either retract or clarify your remarks.

Yours Sincerely,



James Johnson, President