

March 5, 2024

The Honourable David Eby, MLA  
Premier of British Columbia  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC  
V8V 1X4

Via Email: [premier@gov.bc.ca](mailto:premier@gov.bc.ca)

**RE: BC Federation of Students Open Letter & 5 Calls to Action for Post-Secondary**

Dear Premier Eby and the Government of B.C.,

The Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia (CUFA BC) has recently become a signatory on the BC Federation of Students' open letter "[\*We Can Do Better for Students: Our Vision for a Post-Secondary Education System that Delivers for Students and Communities in B.C.\*](#)", recognizing our support for the letter's calls to action.

CUFA BC is the provincial voice of more than 5,500 unionized faculty members, professional librarians, lecturers, instructors, and other academic staff at BC's research universities. We support high-quality post-secondary education and research in British Columbia. We stand in solidarity with the dozens of other signatories who collectively represent more than 837,500 British Columbians.

In advocating for these calls to action, we would like to begin by expressing our gratitude to the government for past actions including eliminating interest on provincial student loans and establishing the BC Access Grant. These policy changes and supports for students have had an immediate and lasting impact, helping to make post-secondary education more affordable and accessible to learners across British Columbia.

The current state of post-secondary education in British Columbia demands urgent attention and intentional action. Decades of underfunding have resulted in an overreliance on international student tuition fees and a precarious funding model that risks the stability of our post-secondary institutions and the communities they serve. The recent announcement of a two-year cap on international study permits further exacerbates these challenges. Students, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders are worried about rising tuition fees, and cuts to programs and services that are relied on, to make up for anticipated revenue loss.

We commend the government for recent measures aimed at addressing some of these issues, such as fee transparency for international students. However, more comprehensive action is needed to tackle the systemic underfunding of the post-secondary sector and ensure fair and accessible education for all.

We believe that there is an opportunity to chart a new path forward, one that aligns with a shared vision of post-secondary education in B.C. A world-class public post-secondary education system should prioritize student well-being, foster transformative learning experiences, and contribute to the economic, social, and cultural prosperity of our communities.

We echo the calls for the B.C. government to take immediate action to address these pressing issues. Specifically, we urge the provincial government to:

1. Cap international student tuition fee increases at 2% annually.
2. Release a transparent plan on how international study permits will be distributed to institutions in B.C.



3. Complete the Post-Secondary Funding Formula Review and identify gaps in government funding, particularly for regional colleges and universities.
4. Develop a funding model that provides long-term financial stability for institutions, prioritizes quality education and services for students, and reduces reliance on student tuition fees as the primary source of funding.
5. Increase annual funding to B.C. public post-secondary institutions to ensure affordability, accessibility, and the production of skilled workers needed in the labor force.

We can no longer afford not to fund B.C. institutions; investing in the public post-secondary sector will ensure our province's ability to educate today's learners and train tomorrow's skilled workforce. Thank you for considering the 5 calls to action set out in this open letter – I look forward to seeing positive changes that prioritize the well-being of students and the prosperity of our communities.

Sincerely,

*Kenneth Christie*

Kenneth Christie, PhD  
President

CC:

Honourable Lisa Beare, Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills

Honourable Rachna Singh, Minister of Education and Child Care

Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister of Finance

Honourable Adrian Dix, Minister of Health

Honourable Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Housing

Honourable Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

Honourable Brenda Bailey, Minister of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation

Honourable Harry Bains, Minister of Labour

Honourable Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions

Honourable Sheila Malcolmson, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction