



**FPSE Statement on Funding Crisis
at BC Colleges and Special Purpose Teaching Universities**

For immediate release – November 14, 2024

The Federation of Post-Secondary Educators (FPSE) is calling on the provincial government to address the burgeoning funding crisis at our colleges and universities. The arbitrary and sudden policy shift by the federal government to cut the number of international students in Canada, along with other changes that make Canada a less attractive place to study, has created a fiscal crisis across our sector. This rapid shift has exposed a systemic weakness in the post-secondary funding model in BC and raised important questions about the future of our colleges and special purpose teaching universities.

In January, the federal government announced a 35% cut in new international student permits for 2024. Additional announcements followed in rapid succession, including a further 10% cut beginning in 2025, new limits on off-campus work hours for international students, and stricter eligibility requirements for post-graduation work permits (PGWPs). These latter restrictions are particularly onerous for graduates of public colleges, who are no longer eligible for PGWPs except under extremely limited labour market conditions. Most of these changes took effect promptly, long after enrolment and revenue projections had been made for the fiscal year at BC colleges and special purpose teaching universities.

The reality is that the provincial government encouraged the rapid growth of international student recruitment as an alternative to properly funding post-secondary institutions. Our Federation has continually warned of the risk of this approach in recent years, and our worst fears have now been realized. This crisis is a direct result of the province's lack of planning and general neglect with respect to our sector. Faculty associations across the province are being summoned to meetings and briefed on job losses and program cuts. These cuts will gut the quality of post-secondary education in BC and undermine access to education across the province unless the government takes decisive action.

Five-Point Action Plan

We are calling on the provincial government to adopt a five-point action plan:

1. Complete the abandoned funding formula review that was started in 2022 to provide for a stable, predictable model of funding.
2. Create a hardship fund, in line with the \$900 million set aside in Ontario, that institutions can access in order to ensure the ongoing quality and sustainability of programs designed to allow students to study in their own community.
3. Allow institutions to draw down on reserves to maintain programming and course offerings.
4. Aggressively lobby the federal government to moderate or eliminate some of these changes along with implementing a period of transition to allow institutions to adapt.
5. Ensure that regional institutions are not adversely affected by these changes and that students in smaller communities are not forced to move or withdraw from a program all together.

We have already started this lobby campaign and intend to ramp up once the new cabinet is sworn in next week.

For further information or comment, please contact FPSE Executive Director Michael Conlon at (604) 873-8988 or info@fpse.ca.

FPSE is the provincial voice of 10,000 faculty and staff at BC's teaching universities, colleges, institutes, and private-sector institutions. We provide resources and access to legal services, and we engage in advocacy on behalf of our 18 member locals and the public post-secondary system.