



Federation of
Post-Secondary Educators
of BC

DISMANTLING AND DEREGULATING

The BC Liberal Record on Post-Secondary Education (April 2005)

On May 16, 2001, British Columbians elected 77 Liberal and two NDP MLAs to form an unprecedented majority government in British Columbia. The legislature now comprises 72 Liberal MLAs, three NDP MLAs as a result of a by-election and two MLAs who left the government caucus. There are two vacancies as of the May 17, 2005 election. The Liberal election platform, called the New Era, promised to protect and strengthen post-secondary education and training.

This document provides an overview of the major policy and budget decisions of the BC Liberal government in the area of post-secondary education.

June 2001

Government announces the first round of tax cuts that, when fully implemented, will remove \$2.1 billion from provincial revenues.

Government announces the beginning of a core review of government services, including the establishment of a Cabinet Core Review and Deregulation Task Force.

July 2001

Government terminates the *Policy Accord on Government Training Expenditures* (Training Accord). At the same time government also announces the elimination in 2002-03 of the college envelope, which allocated \$7 million of a multimillion-dollar training budget to programs provided by public colleges and institutes. Both programs were intended to ensure that public post-secondary institutions were better able to provide government-sponsored training programs, including those for income assistance recipients. The decision to eliminate the programs was made at the Cabinet level and was the first post-secondary decision made by the Campbell Liberals. Subsequent Freedom of Information requests turned up no government documentation or background rationale for the decision.

Government replaces the governing boards of Okanagan University College, Camosun College and Capilano College, and extends all post-secondary board appointments for six months.

August 2001

Government implements a five per cent cut in tuition fees for the 2001-02 academic year –as per its New Era commitment. At the same time, government announces its intention to consult with students and public post-secondary institutions on tuition fees as per its election campaign commitment.

Government legislates education as an essential service and makes a series of regressive changes to the Labour Relations Code including ending automatic certification and forcing secret ballot votes for all certifications, making it harder to organize new workplaces. Government repeals pay equity legislation.

Government imposes contracts on nurses and health care professionals and later in August announces a strategy for training more nurses.

September 2001

A freeze on post-secondary capital projects is made public by the media. Government then admits that at least 12 capital projects, representing years of planning, have been put on hold in order to make way for an election campaign commitment to build three university facilities to train doctors.

October 2001

Finance Minister Gary Collins announces a three-year funding freeze in health and education and dramatic cuts in other areas of government.

Government replaces Kwantlen University College Board.

Government announces that effective November 15, 2001 those entering the workforce with less than 500 hours of job experience will get paid \$2 less per hour than other workers – known as the 'six bucks sucks' wage.

November 2001

Minister of Advanced Education announces initial results of core review of programs and services and receives cabinet approval for a number of "strategic shifts", including: more private post-secondary education, more on-line and part-time learning, results-oriented accountability, and shifting a greater portion of costs onto students.

January 2002

January 17 is called "Black Thursday" as the BC Liberal government announces a three year plan to cut many ministry budgets by an average of 25 per cent. The ministries of advanced education, education and health are spared the cuts, but will see budgets frozen at 2001-02 levels for the next three years. Total government spending will be reduced by \$1.9 billion – an eight per cent decline over three years.

The Ministry of Advanced Education will see the elimination of many programs and services as part of the Black Thursday cuts.

Among the programs to be eliminated are: Student Summer Works, First Job in Science and Technology, Job Start and Youth Community Action, an innovative program that encouraged young people to volunteer in the community in return for tuition credits.

No further funding will be made available for the following programs: Skills for Employment, Institution Based Training Support, Graduate Assistantships, Work Study, the Labour Adjustment Envelope, the New Learning Opportunities Envelope, College and Institute Matching Endowment, and Training Assistance Benefits.

ITAC (the Industry Training & Apprenticeship Commission) will be disbanded with the first closure of regional ITAC offices happening on May 31, 2002.

Kootenay School of the Arts will lose its funding. Also hit are the Contract Training and Marketing Society, the Commonwealth of Learning, the BC Centre for International Education and three theological colleges.

The budget of the Ministry of Advanced Education will remain at its 2001-02 level of \$1.89 billion through to 2004-05. In order to meet this target, FTEs (staff) in the Ministry will be reduced by 40 percent over the period and many programs and agencies will be eliminated or will no longer receive funding.

On January 25 the Provincial government tables Bill 28, the *Public Education Flexibility and Choice Act*. Bill 28 is one of three pieces of legislation that also gut collective agreements in the education and health care sectors. In advanced education, Bill 28 allows college and institute employers to override collective agreement provisions that limit class size and student numbers, and that require faculty agreement on assigning distributed learning courses, student assistants or contractors.

February 2002

Government announces that private post-secondary institutions will no longer be regulated by the Private Post-Secondary Education Commission, but will instead be under a self-regulated/self-funded industry board. This decision is based on the Core Services Review report on restructuring administrative justice agencies.

The Liberal government's first Throne Speech contains important announcements. Government removes the tuition fee freeze and completely deregulates tuition fees in public post-secondary institutions. Following this announcement, tuition fees at post-secondary institutions increase dramatically – with many institutions increasing fees by 30 to 40 per cent and some by almost 100 per cent.

Government signals its intention to expand private post-secondary education and to have SFU take over TechBC.

Government replaces college and university boards of governors.

The CEO and Board of the Open Learning Agency are replaced by Ministry of Advanced Education officials "to review the agency and explore options for a more collaborative model of on-line and distance learning across the advanced education system."

On February 19th the BC Liberal government tables its first budget, and outlines a three-year spending and service plan. While overall funding will remain frozen in advanced education, funding to institutions is projected to decline by about three percent over the three years while institutions are required to increase their student enrolments by about four per cent.

As part of its February 19th budget, government quietly eliminates the grant portion of student assistance for first time students. This will deny some 11,000 students

annually a grant of about \$3,500 and will disproportionately affect students in shorter programs.

March 2002

Post-secondary institutions receive their budget letters, with three-year targets for funding and student enrolment. Every institution's budget will be cut between 2002-03 and 2004-05, with cuts ranging from minus 1.6% to minus 8%. Government institutes block grants, rather than targeted funding for particular programs. Institutions are required to meet overall service delivery targets as well as specific "New Era" targets for student enrolment (health, high technology and on-line student seats).

As part of government priority of doubling the number of medical school graduates by the end of the decade, new satellite medical schools will be established in Victoria and Prince George, and the University of British Columbia's medical school facilities will expand under a \$134-million program announced at the same time as the September 2001 capital freeze.

April 2002

Government passes the *Degree Authorization Act* which paves the way for private universities to grant BC degrees. The Act also expands degree-granting capacity for colleges (applied baccalaureates) and university colleges and institutes (applied Masters).

Government appoints a Transition Advisory Committee to assist in developing the new industry training model. The Committee has only two labour representatives and one education representative.

Government announces the Leading Edge Endowment Fund, accompanied by a society to administer the fund. As of April 2005, no college, university college or institute representatives are appointed as society directors.

Government announces that it will fund 825 new student spaces as part of its commitment to double the number of graduates in computer science and electrical and computer engineering over five years.

As part of a deregulation package, government passes amendments to the College and Institute Act that remove the legislated rights of faculty, staff and students to have input on by-laws related to a number of important areas, including the remuneration of the president and tuition and other fees for students.

May 2002

Government approves the *Sea to Sky University Act*, introduced as a Private Bill but receiving full government support. The legislation, which paves the way for establishment of BC's first privately funded and governed secular university, was spearheaded by ex-UBC President and current Chair of the Canadian Foundation for Innovation David Strangway.

Government passes regressive changes to the BC Labour Code. Government tables, but withdraws controversial changes to the Workers' Compensation Act and the BC Human Rights Code.

August 2002

Government announces a package of initiatives for aboriginal programs, valued at \$1.27 million.

At the end of August, government releases a proposed policy framework to overhaul the regulation of private training institutions. The framework would see substantial reduction in government regulation of the private training sector. This initiative was first announced in February 2002.

September 2002

BC students come back to school at a significantly higher cost this year. 2002-03 is the first year of deregulated tuition fees and fee increases are massive. In the colleges and university colleges, tuition increases on average by almost 50 per cent in 2002-03. A number of institutions also begin introducing tuition fees for Adult Basic Education students who have already received their Dogwood Credential, effectively ending an important policy of providing literacy programs tuition-free in the college system.

The SFU "Surrey Campus", incorporating programs offered at the former TechBC, is formally opened.

Government announces that the twelve capital projects that were frozen the previous September would now go ahead.

October 2002

BC's four public universities receive a \$95 million capital expansion program – designed to support students in high technology programs. The first phase of the project allocates \$46 million to three projects at UBC.

BCcampus – a new body to support on-line learning in BC – is unveiled with an implementation steering committee comprising no faculty and two students selected by the Minister. No specific funding is attached to the BCcampus announcement.

Legislation is tabled to wind-up the Open Learning Agency. Government says that BCcampus will take over some OLA programs, while other Open College and Open University programs will be transferred to other public post-secondary institutions.

November 2002

\$65 million is announced in new research projects at universities and colleges. The funding comes through the BC Knowledge Development Fund, which provides capital funding for research equipment and facilities. \$46 million of the funds go to UBC projects. Later in the month, SFU gets \$23 million for capital expansion and \$7 million for research.

December 2002

UVIC receives \$22 million in capital expansion and \$9 million from the Knowledge Development Fund.

Government issues a discussion paper outlining a proposed new model for industry training in BC. The model proposes, among other things, a separate training authority comprising employer representatives with no labour representation. This

initiative follows up on its decision to eliminate the Industry Training and Apprenticeship Commission as part of Black Thursday announcements.

Government announces ten pilot projects in the industry training area. In addition to the pilot projects, a consultation with the minister on the proposed new training model is announced for the new year with representatives from education, business and learners in several regions across the province.

The Ministry of Advanced Education issues a discussion document proposing a new Accountability Framework for the Post-Secondary Education system. The Ministry document does not acknowledge the work of the Standing Committee on Evaluation and Accountability, a ministry appointed committee which has been working in this area for a number of years.

The BC Progress Board Panel on Education issues its report Learning to Win – Ready, Set, Go. Recommendations of the Board include: extending an existing provincial university's mandate into Kelowna; reallocating BCIT capacity to Kelowna and Prince George; consideration of rationalizing college administration beginning with the Greater Vancouver area; and increasing the number of international students in the post-secondary system by 50 per cent by 2010.

January 2003

Regional consultations on industry training begin. While consultations are initially by-invitation-only, government is forced to open up meetings to broader representation. Every regional consultation is accompanied by a protest by labour, educators and apprentices. Government gets a good deal of criticism, including a negative advertising campaign by construction industry employers.

The Minister of Advanced Education issues a public statement in response to criticism about the dilution of trades and concerns about public safety. The Minister says "a lot of misinformation has been spread by some people who are not fully informed and by others who are opposed to any change in the system."

Ministry of Advanced Education announces that it will no longer provide funding to the Centre for Education Information Standards and Services and the Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology as of April 2004, dismantling two important system agencies.

February 2003

The provincial government's Speech from the Throne introduces the concept of the "BC Heartlands Economic Strategy". The speech identifies that government is excited by the contributions of BC's exceptional colleges and institutes throughout the province. The speech promises that the legislative committee on education will focus its attention on BC's institutes and colleges to determine what can be done to build on their accomplishments. As of April 2005, the committee has not undertaken a consultation on this issue.

Also promised in the Throne Speech is that the BCcampus on-line learning model will be advanced to significantly increase access to post-secondary education and a new *Private Career Training Institutions Act* will be introduced to replace the current

legislation overseen by the Private Post-Secondary Education Commission (First announced February 2002).

Government announces a \$7.5-million BC Regional Innovation Chairs program to create new social and economic development opportunities at BC's colleges, university colleges and institutes, and to be administered by the Leading Edge Endowment Fund.

The BC Liberal 2003 budget is tabled on February 18 and includes a new three-year plan for Advanced Education. While the overall ministry budget remains at its 2002-03 level, the three-year plan (2003-04 to 2005-06) will see funding to institutions decline by two per cent, while enrolment increases by four per cent. Government grants to institutions do not decline in 2003-04 as predicted the previous three year plan, but student growth expectations outpace funding increases.

The Ministry's three-year plan includes a detailed set of performance measures and targets based on the December 2002 Accountability framework discussion document.

UNBC receives a \$10.7 million to increase research and technology space. The funding will also cover a project that includes a new building at the UNBC Research and Development Park, with private sector partners including the AXOR Group Inc. and DataBase Filetech.

March 2003

Colleges and institutes get a one-time only allocation from the 2002-03 budget of \$10 million, comprising \$8 million to increase access and upgrade infrastructure and \$2 million to assist in realigning industry-training programs with the new industry-training model.

Selkirk College gets \$544,000 in research funding from the BC Knowledge Development Fund for a new Geo-Spatial Research Centre.

At the end of March the International Labour Organization's Freedom of Association Committee issues a report based on complaints from Canadian unions about legislation passed by the BC government, including the Public Education Flexibility and Choice Act. The ILO rules that the BC Liberal government repeatedly violated the rights of thousands of public sector employees by refusing to negotiate contracts and by using legislation to arbitrarily enforce its will.

Teaching Assistants at UBC take job action and government orders a 20-day cooling off period.

April 2003

The Minister of Advanced Education requests the Minister of Labour to become involved in job action by CUPE members at SFU.

Government introduces the *Industry Training Authority Act*, Bill 34, which establishes the Industry Training Authority to replace ITAC. (Act passes in May, receiving Royal Assent on May 29.) This follows up on events in January 2003 and an announcement in the 2002 Throne Speech.

May 2003

Government introduces the *Private Career Training Institutions Act*, Bill 52, which overhauls the regulation of the private training sector. Among its major features, the legislation replaces the Private Post-Secondary Education Commission with the Private Career Training Institutions Agency – a board comprising industry representatives – and significantly narrows the scope of institutions to be regulated. (Act passes in October 2003, receiving Royal Assent on November 14.) This follows up on a February 2002 announcement.

On May 13, the Degree Quality Assessment Board is established, with no faculty representation. The board is charged with developing a quality assessment process for public and private institutions seeking to offer BC degrees. Legislation to authorize the board and new private degrees was passed in April 2002.

June 2003

The Ministry of Advanced Education issues a working paper: *Mandates, roles and responsibilities in the public post-secondary education sector*. The paper seeks feedback on a variety of issues related to how the public post-secondary system is working, including governance structures. Responses are to be sent in to the Ministry by October 2003. The outcome of the review may be legislation or further consultation at a later date.

August 2003

Government announces the composition of the Industry Training Authority Board. In contrast to the previous balance between employers, unions, education and government, the new nine-member board has only one labour appointee and no education representatives.

September 2003

BC students come back to school at a significantly higher cost this year. 2003-04 is the second year of deregulated tuition fees and fee increases once again are substantial. In the colleges and university colleges, tuition increases on average by over 25 per cent in 2003-04. In some institutions, tuition fees have doubled within two years.

The BC government announces its intention to seek a request for expressions of interest to create a new model for the Knowledge Network – the province's educational broadcaster.

Government announces \$1.94 million to fund 25 pilot projects to test new models for providing industry training.

October 2003

Government announces the investment of \$30.5 million from the BC Knowledge Development Fund. The funding will assist the University of Victoria to further its research and education initiatives in the areas of earth, ocean and atmospheric studies.

New guidelines for student loans are announced which will make it easier for students to increase larger student loans. Government estimates that 12,000 BC students will be eligible for \$4 million in additional loans.

November/December 2003

Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services issues its report on its public consultation regarding the 2004 provincial budget. The report reflects considerable concern about the state of access to post-secondary education.

UNBC receives \$100,000 to support technology transfer and UBC receives \$9 million to support a variety of research projects.

February 2004

The Speech from the Throne announces the government goal of creating 25,000 new spaces for post-secondary students by 2010.

The BC Liberal 2004 budget is tabled. The new three-year plan for post-secondary education projects significant enrolment growth accompanied by modest funding growth. Overall institutional budgets are targeted to grow by about \$57 million – or four per cent – from 2003-04 to 2006-07. The plan projects enrolment increases of 11,800 student spaces – or seven per cent – from 2003-04 to 2006-07.

New student spaces are essentially funded by eliminating the entire up-front grant portion of student assistance. This will mean an estimated average increase in debt of about \$14,000 for BC students. Approximately 23,000 students receive grants, 16,000 of whom are in public post-secondary institutions.

March 2004

The Centre for Education Information Standards and Services and the Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology formally cease operations.

Government announces a number of changes in university-level education, all of which are made with no consultation with educators or students:

- \$70 million will be invested in the Surrey campus of Simon Fraser University, in the very place where the Liberal government shut down the Technical University of BC early in its tenure. Government identifies a target of 8,000 new spaces for the Fraser Valley region by 2010.
- A new UBC campus will be opened up in the Okanagan, breaking up Okanagan University College and creating a new Okanagan College that will offer university transfer, trades and other applied training programs.
- University College of the Cariboo will become a special purpose free-standing university by May 2005, and will combine with the BC Open University and Open College distance education functions and resources by 2007. The announcement includes funding for a long-awaited Williams Lake campus.

April 2004

Government announces that the Kootenay School of the Arts will amalgamate with Selkirk College, allowing it to continue and to come into the public system.

BC and Alberta Ministers of Advanced Education meet with presidents and board chairs of post-secondary institutions to discuss issues affecting post-secondary education in the north. Ministers announce their intention to develop future agreements and partnerships.

May 2004

Research funding announced –\$2 million in provincial funding from the BC Knowledge Development Fund (UNBC - \$250,000; University College of the Cariboo - \$250,000; UVIC - \$450,000; SFU - \$1.1 million)

May 17 – Private Career Training Institutions Agency Board is appointed. Ten private education providers are appointed. The board's first order of business will be to finalize and approve bylaws regarding registration and accreditation requirements for private trainers. The appointment of the board follows on the May 2003 passage of the new legislation for the private training sector.

Government announces 24 online program projects (\$1.1 million allocated out of a fund of \$3 million for online courses and programs).

Government announces the creation of the Oil and Gas Education and Training Consortium – an industry partnership with Northern Lights Community College.

BC and Alberta governments continue meetings, including a second joint cabinet meeting with a commitment to cooperate on e-learning.

June 2004

Advisory councils are appointed to guide the development of UBC Okanagan (27 member UBC Okanagan President's Advisory Council) and Okanagan College (16 member Okanagan College Advisory Council). Both councils will meet until September 2006.

July 2004

Minister of Advanced Education Shirley Bond appoints an 18 member Minister's Advisory Council. The council has no representation from college or university college educators or any representation from faculty organizations. The council does, however, include a representative of the private training sector organization, the BC Career Colleges Association.

August 2004

In the February 2004 budget, the BC government announced the elimination of the BC grants program – an \$80 million program that offered students in second year and beyond a grant based on need. The grant for first year students was eliminated by the government in the February 2002 budget. In August 2004, government announced that it would restore some funding - \$30 million in provincial funds for a loan reduction program for high-needs students. The program would also see \$37 million in Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation funding. The new program would apply only to students in undergraduate programs lasting at least two academic years.

Government announces a BC Tourism and Hospitality Education and Training Consortium. There are no faculty or union representatives on the 15 member governing board.

September 2004

Year three of tuition increases is underway, with a number of institutions increasing tuition fees beginning in the spring semester. While a number of institutions have

limited increases, some students still face a range of increases into the double digits for 2004-05.

Government announces how it will spend \$1.47 million for 29 new projects funded from the \$1.5 million Aboriginal Special Projects Fund.

Government announces a name for the new university that will amalgamate the University College of the Cariboo and the Open University and Open College. Thompson Rivers University will begin operations under its new name in April 2005.

BC and Alberta governments issue a joint statement updating implementation of the spring 2004 framework agreement committing the two provinces to collaborate in a number of areas including delivery of online programs and implementing new technology.

October 2004

Government passes legislation amending the University Act and enabling UBC Okanagan to operate under an independent senate and expanding membership in UBC's Board of Governors. (The announcement of a UBC Okanagan campus was made in March 2004)

A new high school industry training program - ACE IT (accelerated credit enrolment in industry training) is announced. It is not clear how this program will work with the existing secondary school apprenticeship program.

Government announces \$7.5 million to assist SFU in developing programs and research at its Segal Graduate School of Business.

Government announces the Irving K. Barber B.C. Scholarship Program for students transferring from a community college to a B.C. university to complete their degree. Scholarships of up to \$5,000 each will be awarded to approximately 150 students each year. The announcement accompanies the donation of \$12 million by Irving Barber towards the establishment of the Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences at UBC Okanagan.

The BC Cabinet approves details of the establishment of the Private Career Training Agency (PCTA) and changes to the regulatory regime effective November 2004. New regulations will see many institutions now able to operate without registering with the PCTA, including many institutions offering English language instruction. As evidence of the impact of the new policy, the number of registered private training institutions in BC dropped from its pre-regulatory reform level of approximately 1100 to about 600 as of April 2005.

November 2004

Premier Campbell announces a literacy strategy aimed at making BC "the most literate place in North America". The strategy includes \$23.4 million for library services and innovative literacy programs. He also names the members of the new Premier's Advisory Panel on Literacy who represent literacy organizations, business, local government and non-profit service agencies. There are no faculty or teacher representatives on the advisory panel. Announcements are made at a Premier's

Literacy Summit to which organizations representing faculty, staff and students are not invited.

Government announces \$1.3 million to assist in establishing a digital research centre at Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design.

Government appoints an interim board for Okanagan College.

December 2004

The BC student loan forgiveness program expands to include students who graduate on or after December 1, 2004 as speech language pathologists, audiologists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists, and who serve children in rural and remote areas of the province.

January 2005

Government approves new private degree programs at Sprott Shaw Community College, University Canada West and Columbia Colleges. This is the first announcement of government action related to the passage of the controversial Degree Authorization Act in April 2002 and the establishment of the controversial Degree Quality Assessment Board in May 2003.

February 2005

The Throne Speech includes a government commitment to pass legislation to limit future tuition increases to the rate of inflation, effective September 2005. As of the end of the spring 2005 legislative session, the promised legislation has not been introduced. The Throne speech also promises increased new funding for post-secondary education.

The BC government and the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation, a private, independent organization created by the federal government in 1998, announce a new four-year, \$26 million trial bursary this fall for students from low-income families in BC. Bursaries, funded by the Foundation and delivered together with the BC government, will be delivered to approximately 2,800 students in conjunction with a research project on the effectiveness of different forms of student financial assistance.

The BC Liberal 2005 budget is tabled. The new three-year plan for post-secondary education disappoints many, projecting significant enrolment growth accompanied by very modest funding growth. Overall institutional budgets are targeted to grow by \$107 million - or 7.5 per cent from 2004-05 to 2007-08. The plan projects enrolment increases of 12,888 student spaces - or 7.9% per cent over the three year plan. Funding per student will decline from \$8659 to \$8629 over the period of the plan. Funds for industry training remain frozen for the three years of the plan and student aid funding remains essentially frozen for the 2005-06 year.

Government announces new student aid rules to harmonize with the federal government and reduce the amount that parents are expected to contribute to their children's post-secondary education. Government estimates that this will cost an additional \$4.25 million. In addition, the government will recognize up to \$300 per program year for computer-related expenses, at a cost of about \$2.5 million.

Government announces its intention to seek legislative approval for a \$10 million contribution to develop three new research chairs and a new Institute of Mental Health at UBC.

March 2005

Government announces \$6.1 million in provincial funding for the Centre for Blood Research at UBC. This announcement is part of the BC Knowledge Development Fund which has helped to provide \$283 million in funding for 413 research programs.

April 2005

Government continues to make announcements related to capital and budget allocations throughout April. Some of the major announcements are outlined below.

Two regional innovation chairs are announced for Okanagan University College, with \$4.5 million provided from the Leading Edge Endowment Fund. The Fund has provided an additional \$11.25 million in 2003 and 2004 to create nine regional innovation chairs.

Capital announcements – beginning February 2005

\$15.4 million for College of the Rockies

\$6 million for Northern Lights College

\$29.3 million for Langara College

\$65.4 million for UVIC

\$34.5 million for SFU

\$7 million for Malaspina University College

\$33 million for VCC