

2013-2014 ACTION PLAN

Renewing Post-Secondary Education:

Policy and Funding
to Strengthen BC's
Post-Secondary Institutions



Federation of
Post-Secondary Educators
of BC

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Post-secondary education is an important contributor to BC's social and economic prosperity. Through our colleges, institutes and universities, BC could have the capacity to provide opportunities for students to learn while also providing communities with a hub for innovation and civic engagement. Unfortunately, achieving the true potential of BC's post-secondary education system has not been supported by policies and funding choices at either the provincial or federal level. Within BC, the choices made over the last twelve years have only ensured that access is more difficult, affordability is more challenging and quality learning opportunities are more compromised as the pressures of under-funding, de-regulation and reduced stakeholder input continue to undermine what should be a far more open and accessible system of post-secondary learning and development.

As BC's largest union in the public post-secondary education sector, the Federation of Post-Secondary Educators (FPSE) represents the majority of faculty and staff employed at these public institutions. From our inception over thirty years ago, FPSE has maintained an active voice on post-secondary education policy issues. Our goal has always been to support and advance policies that ensure the greatest possible access to high quality post-secondary learning opportunities for every citizen in BC. We recognize that to achieve this goal FPSE needs to press governments—mostly the provincial government, but also the federal government—to implement policy and funding choices that strengthen both the opportunities for access as well as the quality and diversity of program offerings at our public institutions.

Our organization believes that there must be a significant revision to the policies and funding choices made over the last decade. Post-secondary education needs to be strengthened because many of the reforms made in the last ten years have proven to be wrong-headed. The prospect for change in post-secondary education needs to be part of the larger public debate. The May provincial election has

provided a starting point for that discussion. With that election behind us, post-secondary educators need to advance the public debate by ensuring that progressive changes are made to post-secondary education in BC, changes that will give a voice to educators in the oversight of our institution, will improve access and affordability for our students, will ensure that programs reflect the needs of our communities and our students and will provide accountable measures of regulation that strengthen the integrity and reputation of post-secondary education in our province.

Over the next twelve months, FPSE is proposing an Action Plan that will mobilize its members, staff, resources, organizational capacity, and alliances with the broader labour movement and progressive community partners to advance our interests in four major areas. Those areas include:

1. Working with our allies in the labour movement and community organizations to present a plan for comprehensive reform. Those reforms would include:

- Measures that translate into increased funding for public post-secondary institutions through improvements in their annual operating grants and their capital spending account.
- Work with our allies in the Canadian Federation of Students to improve affordability by pressing governments to strengthen student grant programs, increase student financial aid and lower overall cost of tuition.
- A thorough review of the provincial funding formula for post-secondary institutions with recommendations for improving how that funding supports better access and delivery of all programs at our institutions.
- An overhaul of the province's trades training and apprenticeship system to ensure greater input from educators and workers as well as greater utilization of our public institutions for delivering that training.
- A commitment to improve the policies and funding that support the delivery of developmental education within our post-secondary institutions.
- A sustained effort to more effectively utilize the network of existing public post-secondary institutions to deliver a broad range of English Language Training programs

- A plan to re-regulate private post-secondary institutions and include educators in the oversight of those institutions.
- A revitalization of University Transfer programs including Liberal Arts programs to ensure that these programs play an integral role in the learning opportunities available to every student in post-secondary education.

2. Expanding the opportunities for research and scholarly activity by:

- Ensuring all post-secondary institutions have equal access to provincial and federal research funding.
- Making the support of professional development a key priority in the next round of provincial-wide post-secondary education bargaining.
- Advancing the issue of academic freedom within our membership to ensure that protections are in place to guard against unwarranted censorship or limitations placed on faculty research, professional development or scholarly activity.

3. Democratizing post-secondary governance structures by:

- Pressing the provincial government to amend the Advanced Education Statutes Amendment Act which effectively bars our local activists from standing for election as the faculty-elected representative on the board of their local institution.
- Ensuring that faculty representatives have a majority voice within every institution's academic governance structures as well as the province's degree granting process.
- Creating greater awareness among faculty members of the importance of governance by providing workshops and educational material on this issue to every local.

4. Strengthen the rights and benefits of all members by:

- Joining with the broader labour movement's campaign to overhaul BC's labour laws and employment standards, a campaign that will make it easier for workers to form or join a union.
- Supporting the efforts of non-regular faculty who need stronger contract language in their local agreements to address the issue of regularization.

- Continuing to support the efforts of every local to organize the unorganized in their regions.
- Coordinate our bargaining efforts to ensure that recruitment and retention priorities at the institutional level translate into improvements in our salary scale, stronger employment security provisions, especially for non-regular members, measures to address the issues of workload and work-life balance, and improvements to the College Pension Plan.