

Bulletin #1 – originally sent out Dec 17, 2013

Hello KFA members,

Please see below a news release from FPSE President, Cindy Oliver regarding a campaign being launched to oppose the cuts to funding for ESL programming. The proposed cut to Kwantlen's funding is \$1.35M.

FPSE, together with the Canadian Federation of Students, are launching action to keep English Language Studies alive and well in BC public post-secondary.



17 December 2013

Faculty and student organizations launch campaign to save ESL programs in BC

For Saeideh Ghassarifar, English Language Training (ELT) programs are a very real part of her education plan. Ms. Ghassarifar is from Iran. She has three degrees including a doctorate in health care education. She's currently enrolled in English 099 at Vancouver Community College as part of her longer term plan not just to improve her English language proficiency, but also to ensure that her foreign medical credential is fully recognized in Canada and she can finally become a practicing physician.

Saeideh's situation is by no means unique. Thousands of students are enrolled in a wide range of ELT programs at many of BC's public post-secondary institutions. All of them share a story similar to her, a story in which these students hope to improve their language skills as they work to fully participate in their new country.

STANDING UP FOR ACCESS AT KPU



Unfortunately, the Harper government is more focused on spreading its austerity rhetoric than on continuing to provide support and funding to ensure that students like Saeideh succeed. If Mr. Harper shared their concern, he wouldn't be proposing to cut \$20 million in funding for English language programs. That funding has been part of a long-standing federal-provincial agreement, but it's an agreement that Mr. Harper and his government want to re-write. If he has his way, our institutions, and the thousands of ESL students that we teach, will be on the losing end.

That's why FPSE has joined forces with the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) here in BC to pressure the federal government to re-think its plans to cut ESL funding. It's a campaign in which we are supporting the BC government in their efforts to keep the federal funding in place. We know that Mr. Harper is renowned for playing hardball when it comes to funding services. What's critical at this point is ensuring that the BC government doesn't back down from its stated position of keeping the federal ESL funding in place. Making that case to Premier Clark and her key Ministers will be a major priority for our campaign as well. FPSE and CFS are prepared to work with the provincial government to maintain the support of ESL training and, if necessary, work with to find ways to ensure that ESL programs currently delivered in our public institutions remain accessible and affordable to the thousands of students who need those programs to succeed. In the coming weeks, as our campaign takes shape, we will be working with allies in the broader labour movement to ensure that ESL programs remain a vital part of all our public post-secondary institutions.

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