



Kwantlen Faculty Association

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October 20, 2005

Select Standing Committee on Finance
And Government Services
Parliament Buildings, Room 224
Victoria, BC
V8V 1X4

To the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services,

On behalf of the 700 members of the Kwantlen Faculty Association, I am submitting our views on the choices and priorities that we think should form the next BC Provincial Budget.

Kwantlen Faculty Association represents faculty members at Kwantlen University College, Canada's largest, with campuses in Richmond, Surrey, Newton, and Langley and at the new Cloverdale campus due to open in September 2006. Our membership is diverse, with expertise and backgrounds in a wide range of fields: trades, arts and sciences, business, design, horticulture, adult education, health sciences. We have a long history of teaching excellence and commitment to our communities.

We are members of the Federation of Post Secondary Educators, and through them, affiliated to the BC Federation of Labour, Canadian Association of University Teachers, National Union of Canadian Association of University Teachers and Canadian Labour Congress. Together with our affiliates we are concerned about the drop in funding for post secondary education over the last decade, the consequential rise in tuition fees, the looming skills shortage, and the future recruitment and retention problems we all face. Our members are also feeling the effects of suppressed wages and rising costs of living. The government's zero-zero mandate has meant our wages have fallen behind those in other provinces.

We have helped to build a successful public post secondary system and share the government's belief in the importance of education in a growing, prosperous economy. However, we are aware that government under funding has created problems of access for students and urge that all levels of government commit to a significant reinvestment in post secondary education funding.

The 2006 BC Budget Consultations ask us to provide input on what we think should be government priorities for the next year. Therefore, the Kwantlen Faculty Association submits these for your consideration:

- Increase funding for postsecondary education so that the operating budgets of institutions such as Kwantlen University College are significantly increased to provide more access to education without institutions raising tuition.
- Ensure adequate wage increases are available for public sector workers. We must be able to address the retention and recruitment challenges facing the post secondary sector. Currently, Ontario college instructors at top step earn \$7500 more per year than Kwantlen instructors. A significant proportion of our members are at top of scale and also due to retire in the next five years. We must become more competitive in our salaries in order to attract qualified faculty members for the future.
- Increase the funding for the Industry Training Authority so that the trades programs to be offered at Kwantlen's new Cloverdale campus in Fall 2006 can train workers in sufficient numbers to address the growing skills shortages. The current Service Plan for the ITA projects the same level of funding from the Ministry for 2004/05, 2005/06, 2006/07. The current levels of funding provided by ITA to the institutions are insufficient to meet the urgent demand for trades training.
- Continue to invest in infrastructure projects such as the new Cloverdale campus and Surrey campus expansion and fully fund the capital costs so that institutions do not have to dip into their operating budgets, as they do now, to help pay for the capital expansion.

We note that the government is forecasting a considerable surplus for the coming year and we urge the government to restore funding to 2001 levels and ensure increased public programs and services for all British Columbians. We also will point out that any increase in wages and benefits for public sector workers is an increased investment in health and education.

We urge the committee to give serious consideration to these issues.

Sincerely,

Terri Van Steinburg
President
Kwantlen Faculty Association

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