

February 28, 2012

Honourable Naomi Yamamoto
Minister of Advanced Education
Province of British Columbia
P O Box 9080 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Yamamoto:

The presidents of British Columbia's post secondary institutions are writing regarding Budget and Fiscal Plan 2012/13 - 2014/15, tabled in the Legislature on February 21 by Finance Minister Kevin Falcon. As a sector, we take very seriously our commitment to fiscal prudence and financial discipline and appreciate that this is fundamental to Budget 2012. We look forward to the meeting to be convened by Deputy Minister, Cheryl Wenezenki-Yolland, with the institutional presidents to discuss this matter more fully.

We appreciate that the post secondary budget has not been reduced for the next fiscal year and that new funding has been provided for deferred capital maintenance, which is so important to maintaining the infrastructure of our institutions. However, it is critical for Government to understand that the \$70 million reduction to institutional grants over the last two years of the fiscal plan, combined with five years of unfunded inflationary pressures, creates a strain on the operations of post secondary institutions. This is exacerbated by the complexities of the co-operative gains mandate, which requires compensation increases to be funded internally.

We are very concerned that the Provincial Government is not aware of the measures the post secondary sector has undertaken in the last number of years in response to significant cost pressures and no increases in institutional operating grants. It is particularly concerning that in Budget 2012, the post secondary sector is the only social sector to receive an absolute budget reduction, with the inference that other sectors, such as health, have taken action where we have not.

Post secondary institutions can point to numerous expenditure management initiatives implemented over the past few years including administrative efficiencies and new revenue measures. Because of these pressures, we are always seeking and are open to new ways of creating cost-savings. However, we must be clear that it is unrealistic to assume that the reductions contemplated by Budget 2012 can be achieved without implications for service levels.

It is also important to recognize that during the past few years, many institutions have been challenged by the changing requirements resulting from the economic downturn, while other institutions have responded to increased student demand and provided more spaces than they are funded for. As government has acknowledged, this has been done while offering high quality education, resulting in higher employment rates for post secondary graduates.

We draw this to your attention because we have a shared commitment to a strong post secondary education system and we do not want to see a decline in a system that is seen as one of the best in the world. We would like to engage with you on how we can strengthen post secondary education to support British Columbia families, communities and the economy.

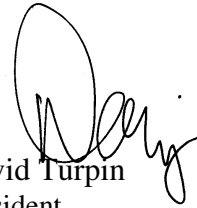
Sincerely,



Stephen Toope
President
The University of
British Columbia



Andrew Petter
President
Simon Fraser University



David Turpin
President
University of Victoria



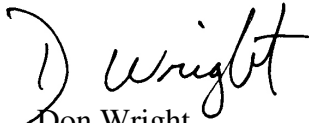
George Iwama
President
University of Northern
British Columbia



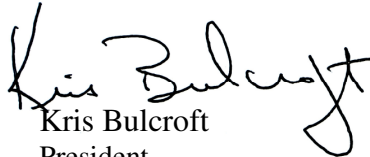
Allan Cahoon
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Royal Roads University



Alan Shaver
President
Thompson Rivers University



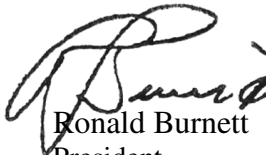
Don Wright
President
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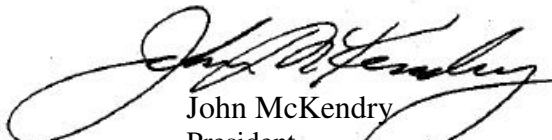
Kris Bulcroft
President
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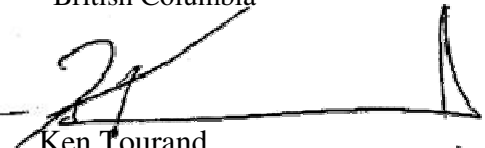
Jack McGee
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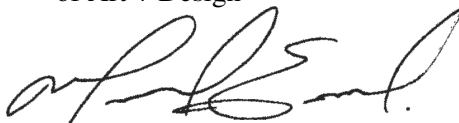
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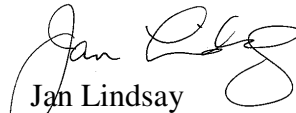
Mark Evered
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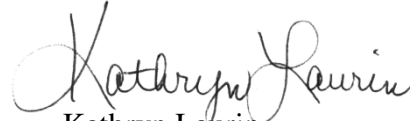
Ralph Nilson
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David Ross
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Jan Lindsay
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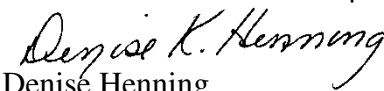
Kathryn Laurin
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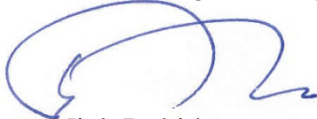
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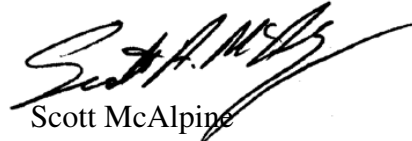
Denise Henning
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Angus Graeme
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cc : Honourable Kevin Falcon, Minister of Finance and Deputy Premier
Cheryl Wenezenki-Yolland, Deputy Minister of Advanced Education
Robin Ciceri, President, The Research Universities' Council of BC
Jim Reed, President, BC Colleges
Ruth Wittenberg, President, BC Association of Institutes and Universities