



Canadian Association of University Teachers
Association canadienne des professeures et professeurs d'université

January 23, 2020

BY EMAIL: premier@gov.ab.ca

The Honourable Jason Kenney, MLA
Premier of Alberta
Office of the Premier
307 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB
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Dear Premier,

On behalf of 72,000 academic staff from across the country, we are writing to express our strong opposition to your government's deep funding cuts to post-secondary education in Alberta, and the 'outcomes-based' approach to funding announced this week, which will only further compromise the quality of education in Alberta.

Alberta has an inspirational and vibrant post-secondary sector with internationally recognized universities, top polytechnics, and an extensive network of regional universities and colleges. Your government's cuts jeopardize the high-quality education and research they provide, and the future of all Albertans. In direct contrast to your promises to keep Alberta's economy strong and get Albertans back to work, your approach to post-secondary education will do the opposite, increasing costs for students and families, and undermining efforts to strengthen the economy, today and for the future.

This week's announcement on outcome-based funding will only strip even more funding from a post-secondary system already under undue strain. Whereas system-wide data are important, performance-based funding, wherever it has been operationalized, leads to a narrowing of scholarship, both in teaching and research, limits education choice, and, frankly, results in "gaming", fundamentally compromising the quality of education.

Your government's short-sighted plan balances a budget on the backs of students and staff. Alberta already has low participation rates for post-secondary education, and these changes will create more barriers, just when many young Albertans, especially those living in rural areas, and older adults who are navigating Alberta's changing industries, need doors open.

In the fall, hundreds of workers were laid off in the advanced education sector, with more Albertans expecting to lose their jobs in the future. These layoffs come on top of recently passed regressive labour legislation and forced wage rollbacks, and dictated contract term limits, which interfere with the free collective bargaining process.

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Post-secondary education and strong protections for workers sustains good jobs and a high quality of life. On behalf of our members, we implore you to reverse these cuts, reconsider your approach to performance-based funding, and reinvest in post-secondary education to ensure a better future for Albertans.

Yours sincerely,



Brenda Austin-Smith
President



David Robinson
Executive Director

c.c. Heather Bruce, President, Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations (hbruce@alberta.ca)
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