



Good Day,

Hon. Minister Holder,

I am writing to you today to ask for your help in improving the lives of post-secondary students here in New Brunswick. In November, the New Brunswick Student Alliance (NBSA) had its annual advocacy week. They had three main advocacy priorities, namely: financial aid, international students and Indigenous students. As a member of the organization, I fully support the following advocacy priorities and ask for your help as the Minister of Post-secondary Education Training and Labor in ensuring that they come to fruition in the 2020 budget.

Beginning with Financial Aid:

First, we would like to see the government of New Brunswick *repurpose the tax credit and invest more money into upfront, needs-based grants to ensure our most vulnerable citizens can access post-secondary education*. Tax credits do very little to help with access to university, and they disproportionately reward those who are already able to afford the upfront cost of tuition.

In 2014, Statistics Canada reported New Brunswick's post-secondary graduates as having the highest average student debt in the country at \$35,200, compared to the national average of \$22,300. For this reason, we are also asking for *the creation of a New Brunswick Debt Relief Program (NB DRP)* to help deter our graduates from migrating to other provinces after graduation and propel economic growth within our province.

Moving now to International Students:

International students contribute to our province both economically and socially.

According to a report by the New Brunswick Multicultural Council, in 2018, a mere 900 international students directly contributed a combined \$75.8 million to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of New Brunswick.

Additionally, they bring new ideas and perspectives to our classrooms and share the diversity of their various cultures, which enrich our communities. When they stay, they become invaluable assets to our labor force and push our province towards robust economic growth. However, international students face many barriers to accessing education in this province. The major deterrent is the high cost of international tuition. To this end, we are asking for the regulation of



international tuition through Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) with publicly funded institutions. We would like to see *a cap placed in international tuition of up to 2% per year and make it mandatory for universities to inform international students of the possible cost of their education throughout their scheduled time of study.*

Addressing barriers to Indigenous Students:

Indigenous students face tremendous barriers to accessing post-secondary education. Indigenous students are often marginalized on their campuses due to a lack of cultural sensitivity and support systems to help them navigate university life. This problem results in many students dropping out before completing their studies.

With these barriers in mind, we are asking the provincial government to *invest in the creation of a \$1.5 million Reconciliation through Postsecondary Education” fund to support reconciliation initiatives and programming at post-secondary institutions across the province.*

Additionally, we would like to see an improvement in the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the employees of the Government of New Brunswick employees. To facilitate this, *we are asking that the Government of New Brunswick mandate the KAIROS’ Blanket Exercise for all administrative staff and Ministers responsible for Postsecondary Education, Training, Employment, and Population Growth, Aboriginal Affairs, and all employees of the Executive Council.* This sensitivity training will enable a better understanding of the needs of Indigenous peoples and understand how to better serve this demographic, especially within its post-secondary sector. When all our students have the support they need, they will be much more equipped to excel in their studies and become graduates determined to give back to their communities.

All these issues are important to me. As Minister directly responsible for these portfolios, I hope you are receptive to my concerns and recommendations.

Sincerely,

[Insert name and your institution]

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