

Dear Albertans,

We understand that the Government will be presenting its Alberta Vision 2030 for post-secondary tomorrow. We have heard concerns from many of you and from hundreds of Albertans that the UCP Government's sweeping cuts are devastating to our post-secondary system and urgent action is needed now.

I agree with you fully. This government cannot possibly try to suggest to all of you that on the one hand they are supportive of our post-secondary schools while on the other they cut hundreds of millions of dollars, force massive tuition hikes onto students and threaten the existence of whole programs at some of our most important institutions. We have joined you in speaking out against these harmful and generational cuts to the sector and have proposed some ideas to immediately assist schools, especially as they deal with the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic and economic collapse.

Specifically Alberta's NDP has called for the following:

- Reverse the \$690 million in cuts to the post-secondary budget.
- Freeze student tuition rates for at least the duration of the pandemic.
- Stop increases to student loan interest rates.
- End the move to performance-based funding for schools.

It is clear that these changes are needed to ensure that both the post-secondary system and the students who learn within it are equipped to drive a diversified economic recovery. Let's be clear, post-secondary can be the engine of Alberta's economic recovery, but only with the provincial government as a willing partner, with a commitment to stable funding and with proper investment in new capital and improving student access.

We would like to thank you for providing input to our work on our Alberta's Future proposals for the post-secondary sector. We have developed a number of proposals that we hope to share with Albertans soon. Our approach and response today differs greatly from the one being imposed by the current Minister. We also have a different drive to the future. We will suggest ideas and then take your feedback and adjust them.

Some of the ideas where we are seeking your input for an upcoming policy paper include:

- Creating a trusted provincial framework for rapid skill improvement and credentialing that is based on academic coursework and evaluations
- Support for regional innovation hubs
- Instituting policies that provide high quality instruction by preventing and reducing precarious employment for instructors.
- Increasing Alberta's potential for research and innovation at our universities · Universities by for example creating an Alberta Research Chair Program and a stream of funding for developing research ideas

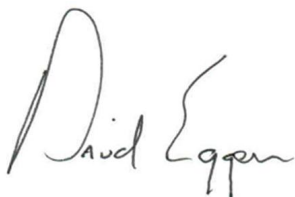
Our formal proposal will be released in the coming weeks and it will include a full response to Vision 2030 as well. As you review what is being proposed by the Government tomorrow, I urge you to consider whether this Premier and his Minister are really, genuinely attempting to improve the post-secondary sector.

Can we actually support student and faculty success and set up our institutions to grow and fuel a diversified economy while they grapple with haphazard and massive cuts to funding?

Can we really push forward some of the ideas I've detailed above while cutting off student access, pulling back on promises to bring new universities to the province and pushing forward major changes like performance-based funding without the proper support of all of you?

I would suggest the answer to the questions I've raised is no. My commitment to you, the commitment I make on behalf of Alberta's NDP, is that we will work with all of you to support post-secondary and to ensure that the schools you work and learn in are positioned front-and-centre in our vision for Alberta's future. I invite all of you to continue sharing your feedback with me at www.AlbertasFuture.ca and I encourage you to keep watch for our formal proposals and further consultation sessions in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,



David Eggen
MLA for Edmonton-North West
NDP Critic for Advanced Education