



March 18, 2025

Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
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To: The Right Honourable Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Canada,

As I write, President Trump is engaging in games of cat and mouse with Canada over tariffs, and our country is vibrating with righteous indignation and fear about what this could mean for Canadian workers, their families, and local businesses. However, before Trump even took office, our own Canadian government (under Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Marc Miller) instigated a series of measures in the immigration/student visa sector that also will have major economic consequences for post-secondary institutions, for communities, and for families across the country.

We are living through an unfortunate moment of fear and bigotry. We are living in a time when lies are told, straight out, by the President of the United States, a convicted felon, and raging megalomaniac. We are living in a time when fact-checking is discouraged and where independent journalists are fighting to find airtime.

It is in this climate that our own federal government, led by Minister Marc Miller, has brought in a series of changes that are specifically targeting immigrants and foreign international students. These changes are having a tidal wave of affects in post-secondary institutions.

In November, Immigration Minister Miller brought in measures to make it harder for international students to get post-graduate work permits, and this is translating into plummeting numbers of international students coming to Canada.

This means that publicly funded colleges (the new rules unfairly target colleges over universities) are facing massive cuts. All of this means fewer services for students, financial precarity for institutions, and ensuing job losses for faculty and staff. Publicly funded colleges are microcosms of the communities they are imbedded in. As well as providing education and services to students, colleges are significant employers in communities. Publicly funded colleges are significant drivers of the economy, and the changes imposed by Minister Miller and the Trudeau Liberals have already crushed some of them. Last week, Kwantlen Polytechnic University here in BC announced cuts of seventy faculty members. Our own institution, Vancouver Community College is facing similar cuts as are all the public colleges in the province. I understand the reasoning behind this IRCC change. There have been huge issues with the international student program and with the fact that institutions have come to count on and exploit international students to balance budgets or create profits. However, institutions have come to rely on this funding source, and to cut it off abruptly without consultation or a plan is irresponsible and is causing undue hardship for thousands of students and faculty across the country.

Additionally, and of effect at my institution, Vancouver Community College, late in November, Minister Miller further announced that VCC would not be granted a renewed federal contract to offer the LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) program, a program VCC has offered for over fifty years. Our current contract runs out at the end of March, and the students – 800 of them – as well as about 30 faculty and several staff – will be displaced. The students will be left without the language training they need to ensure they can find employment and will be severely disadvantaged. The faculty and staff who lose work will have few other options as all colleges are facing massive cuts to programming due to the loss of international students. They will be out of work and the impacts will ripple outwards: personal loss, family precarity, housing precarity, institutional precarity, and community precarity. This cut makes no sense. These students are already residents of Canada. They live here. What is the point of making their lives infinitely more difficult and more precarious?

Considering the shifting sands south of the border, and since the threat Trump presents requires reconsideration of current and past funding policies,



we call on the federal government to do the following:

- Postpone the international student measures that came into effect November 1, 2024, until the completion of an independent study.
- Invest in an independent study of International Students and Immigration with participation from institutions from all the provinces as well as representation from their associated unions, to propose a better, more equitable international student program integrated with immigration policies. This study should be extensive and should result in a document that would provide a clear and evidence-based path forward for immigration in Canada.
- Halt the cuts to LINC programs across the country for two years. During the hiatus, a neutral agency should be enlisted to study and make recommendations regarding federal programs such as LINC.

Decisions with such massive implications to communities and their economic well-being should be researched and planned. The federal government's decision about changes to the international student program and the decision to cut LINC programs were neither researched nor planned and are already displacing students and putting thousands and thousands of faculty out of work. This is not the time for our own government to create financial woes for its citizens. We call on you, Prime Minister Carney, to reconsider.

Taryn Thomson,
Vancouver Community College Faculty Association (VCCFA) Vice President