



June 22, 2023
Our Ref. 129479

Catherine Wishart
Board Chair
University of Northern British Columbia
3333 University Way
Prince George, BC V2N 4Z9

Email Address: wishartc@unbc.ca

Dear Catherine Wishart:

On behalf of Premier Eby and the Executive Council, I would like to extend my thanks to you, your board members and your organization's leadership for your dedication, expertise and service to the people of British Columbia.

Public sector organizations—including Crowns, health authorities and post-secondary institution boards—support British Columbians by delivering vital public services and are accountable to the public through their responsible Minister. Your leadership in advancing and protecting the public interest strengthens trust in public institutions.

You are serving British Columbians at a time when people in our province continue to recover from and respond to the upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, an ongoing toxic drug crisis, climate-related natural disasters and while global inflation is driving up costs. Now more than ever, we need to focus on building a prosperous, low-carbon, sustainable economy, and a province where everyone can find a good home—in rural areas, in cities and in Indigenous communities.

This mandate letter, which I am sending in my capacity as Minister responsible for post-secondary institutions, sets out overarching principles relevant to the entire public sector and specific direction on priorities and expectations for your institution for the remainder of government's term.

Government and public sector organizations must continue to advance results that people can see and feel in these key areas: strengthened health care, safer communities, attainable and secure housing and a clean and fair economy that delivers affordability and prosperity.

In doing so, you will continue working towards lasting and meaningful Reconciliation by supporting opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in the province we are building together and delivering on specific commitments as outlined in the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* action plan.

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As required by the *Climate Change Accountability Act*, please ensure your institution implements targets and strategies for minimizing greenhouse gas emissions and managing climate risk, including achieving carbon neutrality each year and aligning with the CleanBC target of a 50 per cent reduction in public sector building emissions and a 40 per cent reduction in public sector fleet emissions by 2030. Your institution is expected to work with government to report out on these plans and activities as required by legislation.

Our province's history, identity and strength are rooted in its diverse population. Yet racialized and marginalized people face historic and present-day barriers that limit their full participation in their communities, workplaces, government and their lives. The public sector has a moral and ethical responsibility to tackle systemic discrimination in all its forms—and every public sector organization has a role in this work. As part of this work, your organization is expected to adopt the Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens to ensure gender equity is reflected in your operations and programs.

British Columbians expect that public sector organizations operate in a responsible manner to deliver quality services equitably in all regions of the province. This requires strategic stewardship of planning, operations and policies in the areas of financial, risk and human resource management including information security and privacy protection.

The protection of government data and networks is a priority, especially where it concerns personal information of British Columbians. Public sector organizations must maintain up to date systems and effective cybersecurity practices, including maintaining current information management and cybersecurity policies, guidelines and standards; evaluating your organization against industry standards and maintaining appropriate security and privacy practices. The Office of the Chief Information Officer within the Ministry of Citizens' Services is available to support and offer guidance to your organization in any of these areas.

Public sector organizations must also implement and maintain an effective fraud risk management strategy. The Office of the Comptroller General and the Risk Management Branch in the Ministry of Finance are available for consultation.

The Crown Agencies Secretariat (CAS) in the Ministry of Finance supports public sector organizations to operate effectively, in the public interest and aligned with government's strategic direction and priorities. Within CAS, the Crown Agencies and Board Resourcing Office (CABRO) will continue to support you and your board on recruitment, appointments and professional development, as well as ensuring board composition and governance reflects the diversity of our province. CAS can support you in public sector governance best practices, policy and planning.

I expect you to ensure the important priorities and areas of focus listed in this letter are incorporated into the practices of your institution and develop plans to address the following new priorities within your approved budget and within the following context.

Post-secondary education and training are fundamental for anyone who wishes to access and succeed in most careers in our province. We know that 80 per cent of the 1 million new job openings in BC over the next decade will require post-secondary education and training. The StrongerBC Future Ready Action Plan aims to make education and training more accessible, affordable and relevant to prepare British Columbians for the jobs of tomorrow. Achieving the objectives of the Action Plan will require collaboration across many sectors, driven by the post-secondary sector.

I ask you to rise to the challenge and work across the post-secondary system, as well as with businesses, unions, tradespeople and community leaders, to build a province of opportunity and equity, where everyone can succeed and prosper by focusing on the following priorities:

- Delivering educational and training programming as described in the [StrongerBC Future Ready Action Plan](#) to equip British Columbians to capitalize on new opportunities and remain resilient in the face of unprecedented change, including the continued expansion of access to affordable, accessible and relevant training, such as through micro-credentials and expanded health seats.
- Working with SkilledTradesBC, Indigenous leadership and partners to ensure Indigenous voices are reflected in trades training decision-making that impacts Indigenous workers, businesses and communities.
- Continuing to provide culturally sensitive and safe learning environments for Indigenous learners to maximize their participation and success in post-secondary education.
- Developing and implementing protections for international students that support their fair treatment.
- Meeting or exceeding the financial targets identified in the Ministry's Service Plan tabled under Budget 2023.
- Complying with the Tuition Limit Policy, which sets a two percent cap on tuition and mandatory fee increases for domestic students to ensure programs are affordable.

The Ministry posts the [annual reporting requirements for public post-secondary institutions](#) on its website. This document outlines the statistical, financial and performance reports for the fiscal year. Your institution is expected to meet these requirements by providing the data and reports necessary for government to carry out its responsibilities.

As Board Chair, you are required, upon resolution of your board, to sign this letter to acknowledge this direction from government to your institution. The signed letter is to be posted publicly on your institution's website by September 21, 2023.

I look forward to continuing to work with you and your board colleagues to meet the high standards set for us by all British Columbians.

Sincerely,



Honourable Selina Robinson
Minister

Date: June 22, 2023

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Catherine Wishart
Board Chair, University of Northern British Columbia
Date: