



Facts & Issues



BC cabinet shuffle affects colleges and universities – October, 2010

Post-Secondary Changes

For the first time in about 20 years, colleges and universities were separated into two distinct ministries after the most recent BC Liberal Cabinet shuffle.

The Hon. Ida Chong will head up the new Ministry of Science and Universities, overseeing all universities, including the five former colleges, institutes and university-colleges repurposed in 2008 by Gordon Campbell.

The newer universities will fall mainly under Chong’s ministry except where they deliver skills and/or industry training programs.

These include Vancouver Island University and Emily Carr University of Art+Design whose support Staff are members of CUPE.

However, those employers will apparently still belong to the Post-Secondary Employers’ Association (PSEA) for bargaining purposes.

The Hon. Moira Stilwell will run the new Ministry of Regional Economic and Skills Development. She will oversee colleges and institutes as well as post-secondary policy and finance (excluding universities).

Stilwell’s current portfolio is extensive. Added to her post-secondary duties is a long list of other important responsibilities, such as regional economic and rural development, immigration policy and the Public Sector Employers’ Council (PSEC) Secretariat, plus much more.

The Ministers

1. Minister of Science and Universities – Hon. Ida Chong



Minister Chong was first elected MLA for Oak Bay-Gordon Head in 1996. She is a Certified General Accountant and former senior partner in a Saanich accounting practice.

Chong has held several portfolios over the past few years, including Minister of Small Business, Technology & Economic Development and Minister of Advanced Education.

MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND UNIVERSITIES	
<p>General Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Universities, university financing ▪ University policy and accountability ▪ Research, innovation and technology ▪ Year of Science ▪ Student financial assistance 	<p>Major Agencies, Boards and Commissions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ University Boards of Governors ▪ Leading Edge Endowment Fund Board ▪ BC Innovation Council ▪ Premier’s Technology Council

2. Minister of Regional Economic and Skills Development – Hon. Moira Stilwell



Dr. Stilwell was first elected MLA for Vancouver-Langara in 2009. Before the election, Stilwell was employed as a radiologist and nuclear medicine physician at BC Women’s Hospital. She

was also a clinical assistant professor in the Department of Radiology in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of British Columbia.

This is Stilwell’s second cabinet appointment since June 2009. She served as Minister of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development from June 2009 to October 2010.

Under Stilwell’s watch, post-secondary funding and funded student seats were effectively frozen and the student aid budget dropped from \$116 million to \$84 million—a 28 per cent cut.

Like Chong, Stilwell sits on the influential Treasury Board cabinet committee. She is also Vice-Chair of the Economics Committee, chaired by Colin Hansen.

Her appointments to these two high-ranking committees, plus the range and diversity of her ministerial responsibilities, suggest Stilwell is a cabinet heavy hitter.

MINISTRY OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

General Responsibilities

- Colleges
- Post-secondary financing (excluding universities)
- Post-secondary policy and accountability (excluding universities)
- Multiculturalism
- Immigration policy
- Labour market policy
- Provincial Nominee Program
- WorkBC
- BladeRunners
- Industry training
- Community adjustment
- Community Development Trust
- Community Business Loans Program
- Land use planning
- Regional economic and rural development
- Economic development policy
- Mountain pine beetle
- Columbia Basin Trust

- Rural BC Secretariat
- Crown Agencies Resourcing Office
- Public Sector Employers’ Council Secretariat

Major Agencies, Boards and Commissions

- Industry Training Authority
- Colleges and institutes
- Private Career Training Institutions Agency
- BC College and Institute Boards
- British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfers
- Degree Quality Assessment Board
- BC Pension Corporation
- Multicultural Advisory Council
- Northern Development Initiative Trust
- North Island Coast Development Initiative Trust
- Southern Interior Development Initiative Trust
- Nechako-Kitimaat Development Fund Society
- BC-Alcan Northern Development Fund

The Deputy Ministers

1. Don Fast, Deputy Minister of Science and Universities



Don Fast has held several senior posts in the BC, Saskatchewan and federal governments.

He was the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Small Business, Technology and Economic Development

between 2006 and 2010. He briefly served under Minister Chong when she headed up that Ministry.

Fast has promoted the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA) and key international trade agreements.

Fast led trade missions and negotiated several working agreements with the government of China.

He sat as an ex-officio member of the BC Innovation Council (BCIC), a crown agency of the provincial government. The BCIC is dedicated to “develop entrepreneurial talent and commercialize technology through start-up companies and partnerships between industry and academia.”

Fast holds a Master of Science degree from York University and is a licensed professional engineer.

His salary will be \$211,931.00 per year.

2. Philip Steenkamp, Deputy Minister of Regional Economic and Skills Development



Dr. Steenkamp has been a high-ranking career bureaucrat for many years. Steenkamp is the most recent Deputy Minister of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development—from April

to October 2010.

Steenkamp’s salary will be \$260,000.00 per year.

According to various biographies, his list of appointments and educational background include:

- President and CEO of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic games.
- Deputy Minister of Strategic Policy and Social Development in the Premier’s Office.
- BC Deputy Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts.

- Ontario Deputy Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities and Deputy Minister of Education from 2006 to 2008.
- Chief Negotiator for treaties on Vancouver Island and in northern British Columbia under the NDP, Deputy Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, and then Deputy Minister of the Treaty Negotiations Office.
- History professor at Queen's University for two years. Steenkamp then went to the University of Victoria, where he taught African and South African history. While at the University of Victoria, Steenkamp co-edited a book with Rodney Dobell called *Public Management in a Borderless Economy*.
- Steenkamp attended the University of Natal in Durban, South Africa, graduating with a BA in History and English. At Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, he earned his MA and PhD in African history with a focus on migrant labour and economic development.

Did you know: The former Deputy Minister of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development Robin Ciceri left government last year to become president of the Research Universities' Council of BC. RUCBC acts as the principle lobbying organization for BC's four research universities - UBC, SFU, UVic and UNBC.

Observations

The cabinet shuffle has caused quite a stir in post-secondary circles, including among CUPE members in some colleges and universities. Both provincial faculty groups have noted the significance of dividing advanced education into two ministries.

Post Secondary Reactions

Robert Clift, executive director of the Confederation of University Faculty Associations of British Columbia, called the move a “major shakeup” for post-secondary education.

Federation of Post-Secondary Educators President Cindy Oliver said, “Post-secondary education is a collaborative field but, to get the most out of that collaboration, you need to have a single Minister responsible for the entire system. Our concern is that dividing those responsibilities between two Ministers may well detract from the kind of collaboration that we think is necessary and possible.”

By separating universities and colleges, the premier appears to be telling universities to concentrate on research and academic programs and colleges to focus on vocational and industry training.

During his cabinet announcement, the Premier said the change would add "new momentum to our excellent college system to assist with regional job creation."

This may also explain the government's six-month moratorium on new degree programs. Did the province want to ensure that any new college programs cater to the needs of businesses and government in regional and local economies?

Charting this new course may wreak havoc with BC's smooth-running credit transfer system. Canadian Federation of Students BC Chairperson Nimmi Takkar said, “Historically, students have moved seamlessly between colleges and universities in BC using a renowned credit transfer system. This new framework must demonstrate that it will strengthen student mobility.”

Conclusion

If the government intends to turn back the clock, many students from low-and middle-income families will have a more difficult time financing their post-secondary education. The ability to transfer credits from colleges to universities allows BC students to live close to home for the first two years – a much a more affordable option for those residing in many parts of rural BC.

Above all, if this change signals a radical restructuring of the post-secondary system, the question we should all be asking is: Why weren't all the stakeholders, including CUPE members in this sector, consulted?