



Jamie West

Member of Provincial Parliament, Sudbury
Député provincial, Sudbury

June 12th, 2020

Minister Ross Romano
Ministry of Colleges and Universities
5th floor, 438 University Ave
Toronto, ON
M7A 2A5

Dear Minister Romano,

I am writing to you about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the colleges and universities in my riding of Sudbury. The pandemic has placed an extra financial strain on our colleges and universities, who were already struggling to adjust to funding cuts made by your government last year. If the public post-secondary institutions in my riding do not receive additional funding and support to get through this pandemic, they may be forced to make difficult cuts that will harm our community.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted enrollment and revenue at the Colleges and Universities in my riding of Sudbury. In April, Laurentian University announced that due to COVID-19 and pre-existing financial pressures, it will need to address a \$15 million shortfall in the 2020-2021 fiscal year. Both Cambrian College and College Boreal have had to revise their budgets for the upcoming year as the pandemic led to a decline in enrollment levels, resulting in lost revenue. If the post-secondary institutions in my riding are not able to make up for this lost revenue, administrations may be forced to examine extreme cost-cutting measures, which will directly affect programs and student supports. Without direct government help, Sudbury's students and families will suffer.

Post-secondary institutions in my riding were already struggling prior to this pandemic. Thorneloe University, a federated university at Laurentian University, recently cancelled its theatre arts and motion picture arts program due to a lack of funding. I have heard from students, staff and members of our community. They are deeply disappointed that the unique opportunities and small classes these programs offered will no longer be available to students. COVID-19 threatens to take away even more opportunities from our students.

The colleges and universities in my riding have done an incredible job of responding to this pandemic. They set up remote learning and virtual classes to ensure students were able to continue their coursework while campuses are closed. Now, they need help from the provincial government to help them weather the financial impact of the pandemic.

In the most recent provincial budget, your government cut \$700 million from Training, Colleges and Universities, and threatened to withhold as much as 60 percent of what is left if schools do not meet your criteria. I urge you to reverse these cuts and increase investment to our colleges and universities.

Community Office

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We simply cannot leave students, universities and colleges — and the communities they support — to fend for themselves. Cuts to the universities and colleges in my riding will have a painful ripple effect on our community and our economic recovery. I am asking you to step in now and invest in our colleges and universities to prevent any further negative impacts to students and our local economy.

Sincerely,

Jamie West
Official Opposition Labour Relations Act Critic
MPP for Sudbury

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