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Elizabeth May

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The Honourable Marc Miller
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

December 4, 2024

Re: Impacts of international student policy changes on BC community colleges

Dear Minister,

I am writing to urge you to take another look at the impact on British Columbia community colleges of recent changes in policies related to foreign students.

I have been copied on letters to you from the Vancouver Community College Faculty Association (November 28) and from Camosun College Faculty Association (October 24). I support their points entirely and want to add a few of my own.

The first point is blunt. British Columbia has had significant reforms related to international students. Our community colleges are not the academic version of the fake diploma factories of other provinces' strip malls. International students are not the human version of puppies in puppy mills. We need them. The approach of BC community colleges should be encouraged and replicated across Canada. They are deeply embedded in community.

A one size fits all approach is deeply unjust. For international students, access to post-graduate work permits helps Canada's economy and significant skills shortages. Can you please reconsider and allow BC colleges to be treated the same as BC universities for recognition of degrees and diplomas?

A one size fits all approach to dealing with real issues created by a large increase in the influx of international students risks doing irreparable harm to some institutions doing amazing work.



I have been thinking that maybe you could apply a lens that considers the ratio in teaching institutions of the relative proportion of international students/domestic-Canadian students and Indigenous students.

The BC community colleges I have worked with do amazing work for very little money in supporting and educating - lifting up - Indigenous youth. These programmes are amazing, but they depend on revenue flows from International Student enrollment.

I know you have so many work pressures as minister of IRCC and international students are a relatively small slice, but I would be very grateful if you had time to meet with me and dig into the situation of BC's community colleges. I am sure you will want to protect their work.

Thanks so much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth May". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Elizabeth May, O.C.
Member of Parliament
Saanich-Gulf Islands

Cc: Taryn Thomson, President of Vancouver Community College Faculty Association
Lynelle Yutani, President of Camosun College Faculty Association
Dr. Jen Wyre, President of North Island College Faculty Association

