

The Honorable John Horgan, Premier  
The Honorable Carol James, Minister of Finance  
The Honorable Melanie Mark, Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training  
The Honorable Leonard Krog, MLA, Nanaimo  
The Honorable Doug Routley, Nanaimo-North Cowichan

Hello,

One of the key planks in the NDP's election campaign was putting fresh resources into education at all levels to improve the prospects of the province's economy and to create a brighter future for young people. Not only are people in the education sector part of the NDP's natural constituency, but we have seen firsthand the ravages visited on the post-secondary education system – especially teaching universities not blessed by vast endowments – under the watch of Christy Clark and Gordon Campbell over the last 16 years – and, as a result, were voting for change.

Many of our students are from working-class and lower-middle class backgrounds and are the first in their families to get a university education. They are also often working part- or full-time – in addition to going to school – to pay their tuition and living expenses. While we have two new buildings going up on campus, a number of our buildings are shoddy and becoming derelict. Our GIS faculty have had their offices in a portable that doesn't even have a washroom. The building I teach in is falling apart and has classrooms that are routinely either too warm or too cold.

In the last 11 years, the salaries of instructional employees in the post-secondary system for colleges and teaching universities has grown by an average rate of 1% per year, which falls far short of the rate of inflation. [Incidentally, MLAs' salaries increased by 34% between 2007 and 2010 alone.] This is not acceptable. Moreover, Vancouver Island University, where I teach, is facing a 2% across the board cut this year and a 3% cut next year. We need more money, not less. I know these are early days, but I hope it's part of your agenda to reverse the Liberals' suffocation of the post-secondary sector that we have suffered for so long.

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