



COLLEGE OF THE ROCKIES FACULTY ASSOCIATION
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FEDERATION OF POST SECONDARY EDUCATORS - LOCAL 6

To: Sandra Carroll, Deputy Minister, Advanced Education

From: Leslie Molnar, President, College of the Rockies Faculty Association

Date: October 29, 2015

Re: Adult Basic Education Tuition and the Adult Upgrading (AUG) grant

1. ABE should continue to be tuition free. The BC Government should restore the funding.

The College of the Rockies Faculty Association (CORFA) believes Adult Education is a basic building block for our post-secondary offerings. We ask the government to restore the \$6.9 million and reverse the decision to charge tuition for Adult Basic Education courses.

2. Income levels for the AUG grant

When the College announced the ABE tuition fees at its Board meeting on October 8, 2015, one student attending the public session burst into tears, as she realized her access to education had just been cut off. This will be true for many Adult Upgrading students. Most of our adult upgrading students work and often they are supporting families. The \$23,677 is too low of a threshold, even for a single student. We suggest the income level for a single student be raised to \$40,000 and pro-rated upwards for the other categories.

3. Documentation and Process

Students must apply for the AUG grant once per term. AUG eligibility is based on a student's previous year's income documentation. This will not change from term to term. Already, here at COTR, we are worried about being able to provide support for students to apply for the funding. The form is eight pages long. Students should only have to apply once per year, as is the case with Student Loan funding.

4. Parental Income for students under the age of 22

Students under the age of 22 must supply parental income documentation. Often these students are working individuals, looking for ways to reduce living costs so they can attend school. Tying student eligibility to parental income puts them at a disadvantage. Parental income should not be included for calculations for students applying for the AUG.

5. Withdrawal and Re-entry

Students are penalized (they won't be funded for future courses) if they have to withdraw from a current course. Withdrawals are legitimate student decisions that should not be linked to future

funding. The College should be able to reverse or pro-rate funding for withdrawals. Students should be able to withdraw from a course without penalty.

6. Resident for 12 months Criteria

A student who has not been a resident of BC for 12 months is not eligible for AUG funding. This is a serious disadvantage for students who come to our province to get educated and to find work. This requirement should be removed.

7. Childcare costs

Childcare is a cost that is supposedly covered by the AUG grant. However, the reality is students do not apply for it because they must secure a space for their child, pay for it up front, and then submit receipts for funding reimbursement. Childcare is the second highest cost for students, next to housing. This system presents a serious barrier for students who are parents. We suggest the government create a voucher system that allows parents access to funds for childcare prior to starting a class.

We are deeply troubled by this shift of financial burden to students. Limiting access to needed upgrading courses is not the way to enable British Columbians to participate in the education they need to fill the new and existing skilled job openings.