



September 19, 2024

Our Ref. 135667

Dear British Columbia Public Post-Secondary Institution Board Chairs:

With the academic year underway and as you welcome new and returning students, staff and faculty to your institutions, I want to highlight the importance I place as Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills on your work to ensure that post-secondary institutions are safe communities for everyone. I am looking to you, the leaders of the public post-secondary education system, to ensure safety in the areas of racism and antisemitism, sexualized violence and overdose prevention.

As Board Chairs of public post-secondary institutions, you take your responsibility for the management and administration of your institution seriously, and Government respects your accountability for these areas. We recognize the autonomy of academic governance at post-secondary institutions and value academic freedom and the protection of speech. I know that ensuring all post-secondary students, staff and faculty have access to safe, inclusive and high-quality learning environments that support them in achieving their best is a commitment shared across the post-secondary education sector.

Government has been very clear that violence, hate and discrimination, including antisemitism, have no place on post-secondary campuses or anywhere else in BC. While peaceful demonstrations are part of post-secondary institutions' free speech and exchange of ideas, none of us can tolerate expressions of hatred and acts of violence of any kind, and we recognize the need to ensure safety is maintained on campuses.

I expect that each public post-secondary institution has developed, implemented and enforced rules around racism and hate, including incidences of hate language used to bully, harass or harm others. Institutional policies should detail any applicable reporting processes, enforcement measures or potential disciplinary consequences that are in place. Additionally, as leaders of our public post-secondary institutions, it is up to you to ensure these policies are effectively communicated to your community, including students, faculty, staff and contractors. Post-secondary institutions are encouraged to work with their community to ensure their policies and procedures align with best practices to keep students, staff and faculty safe from violence in all forms.

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I am also grateful for the input and advice your institutions, students and community members and partners have provided over the past year which has helped to inform the development of a draft *Post-Secondary Sexualized Violence Action Plan*. As the Ministry continues to develop and augment the *Action Plan*, I urge you to review your institution's policies and procedures to ensure alignment with trauma-informed and survivor-centered approaches. I also encourage you and your teams to make use of the existing synchronous and asynchronous training resources and supports available on the [Safe Campuses BC](#) website. This website also hosts a [Toolkit](#) on reporting of sexualized violence to support you when drafting your institution's annual report.

The safety of post-secondary communities is also at risk from the ongoing toxic drug crisis, which has resulted in significant increases in drug-related overdoses and deaths. In May 2024, I [convened a Post-Secondary Overdose Prevention and Response Steering Committee](#) (the Steering Committee) who, along with my Ministry, has [prepared guidelines](#) to inform your institutions as you develop focused strategies that reflect the individual nature of your post-secondary communities. In addition, a province-wide [toxic drug and naloxone awareness campaign](#) was launched in September to coincide with the return of students to campus. The Steering Committee will continue to keep you and your colleagues informed as you pursue your role in responding to this public health emergency over the short-, medium- and long-term.

My Ministry remains committed to inclusion, justice and equity for all and is dedicated to ensuring staff, students and faculty feel safe and supported. We are committed to working with all public post-secondary institutions to promote policies and procedures that recognize these elements while following best practices in responding to and preventing racism, hate and violence at public post-secondary institutions. My Ministry will continue to work with all post-secondary institutions to provide world-class post-secondary education to all students in a safe and supportive environment.

Sincerely,



Honourable Lisa Beare  
Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills

pc: All Public Post-Secondary Institution Presidents