

Grande Prairie Regional College, October 12 - Selected Highlights

ISSUES, CONCERNS AND SUGGESTED DIRECTIONS RAISED BY PARTICIPANTS

- We have a real problem already with institutions competing with each other rather than working together. The Minister has announced that they may deregulate post-secondary education, but they already allow institutions to compete for students in many program areas. We need real leadership from the ministry so that we do not waste taxpayers' money competing. (*faculty*)
- The government needs to address the many barriers that prevent people from being able to access post-secondary education. It is very expensive for people to move in to Grande Prairie from rural areas to attend college, the cost for childcare is prohibitive, and low income people cannot afford the cost for upgrading courses, let alone the cost of tuition. (*community member*)
- It is very difficult for anyone with a family to go to college. There is no family residence available at the college and the average rent in Grande Prairie is \$1400 month. (*parent*)
- I am concerned that the quality of education is not what it should be. Many people lack the life skills and supports that are necessary to be effective learners. (*citizen*)
- There have been cuts to many programs and it is hard to attract qualified staff to the college because of it. We cannot even get a violin instructor to come here for our fine arts program, because the college is asking applicants to be "self-employed" instead of offering a permanent full-time position. This has an impact on the quality of life for the whole community when fine arts students have to leave the community to get the education they need. (*parent*)
- The hot economy in Grande Prairie means that many young people are enticed into the workforce instead of getting an education. (*student*)
- Studies have shown that students from Grande Prairie do very well when they transfer to university programs. The college offers smaller class sizes and it is cheaper than moving to a city to go to university. The agreement with the



U of A is a good idea, but there needs to be an increase in resources to allow us to provide full university programs. (*faculty*)

- I have to work 40 hours a week while I go to school in order to survive here. I recommend that they exempt students from paying health care premiums and cover extended health care benefits while they are in school. (*student*)
- It is very difficult to maintain good marks, if you have to work while going to school. It is very difficult if you are involved in playing sports at the college, so something has to give. (*student*)
- It is important that students be exposed to a broad general education in the first two years of college, so they can decide where they want to specialize. The world of work has changed so much that it is very hard for young people in high school to figure out what they want to do. (*student*)
- Minister Hancock's public comments about the possibility of two years of free tuition or deregulation of the system, show we are at an important crossroads. Deregulation would pit one institution against the other and only create more barriers and problems for students who want to access post-secondary education. The future for our children will be very dependent upon the direction that comes out of this review. (*student representative*)