



Listening to Albertans on **Quality**

ISSUES AND CONCERNS

- There is mounting concern around the growth of the private-for-profit PSE providers, particularly in the lack of regulation and protection for students.
- It is becoming increasingly difficult for technical institutes to compete with business and industry for faculty, so a “skilled labour shortage” is affecting these institutions.
- Too often, instructors are stretched to the maximum because of overloaded and overcrowded facilities, and program development suffers as a result.
- The combination of increased expectations and declining resources has not just led to more efficiencies – it has caused a direct and serious decline in quality.
- The increasing use of online delivery raises concerns about the ability of instructors to meet students’ needs in a very demanding context.
- There is a concern that government may be “dumbing down and diluting” trades.
- to the extent that quality has been maintained, it has happened at the expense of those who work in the system, and we are paying the price in people.
- We have a hard time providing enough support to help integrate new immigrants now, let alone deal with the expected

increases. We are not looking at the educational responsibilities we have to the immigrant community.

- Our PSE institutions are increasingly characterized by serious infrastructure deficits.
- Students are unable to participate in activities that add to the richness of the PSE experience because their time is consumed by working at jobs in order to get by.

SUGGESTED DIRECTIONS

- We need to raise more critical questions about what kinds of technology we are using, and for what purposes.
- There is a need for enhanced government oversight and regulation of private-for-profit PSE providers, in order to provide necessary protections to students, and to oversee the use of public funds by private firms.
- We need to look more closely at the reasons why Alberta’s PSE system has been allowed to slip more into decline, but much of the reason has to do with failures of political leadership.
- Additional resources need to be put into helping faculty improve their teaching skills.
- We need to pay attention to serious issues of recruitment and retention of academic staff, particularly in the light of growing international competition.

The sad reality is that the overall quality of students’ experience in post-secondary institutions has been significantly diminished over the last decade.

Dennis, Educator and parent, Edmonton

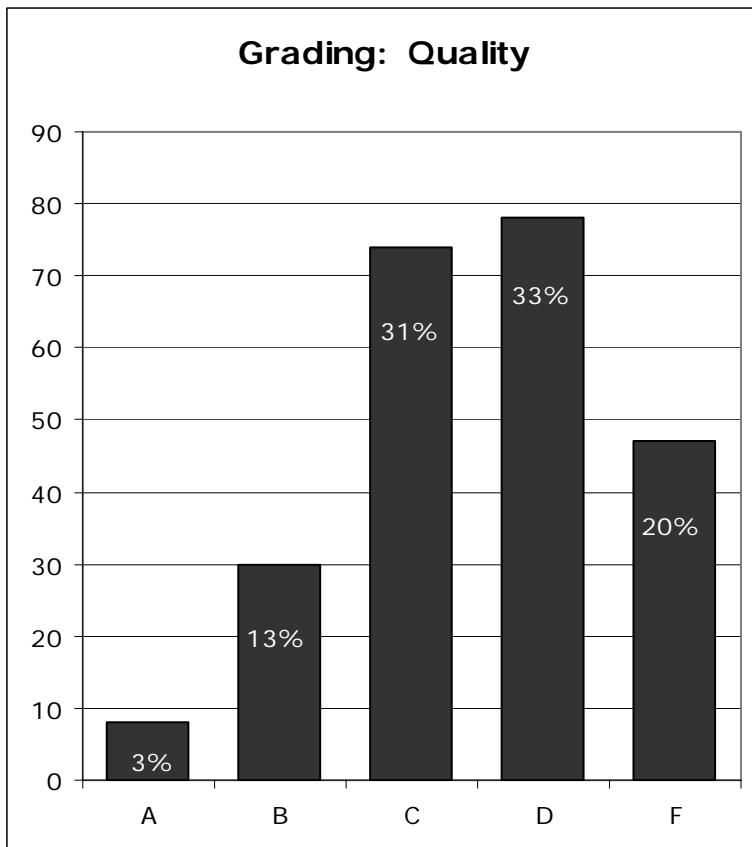


- We must take action to ensure that students are funded so that they are able to participate in the full post-secondary experience, rather than have all of their time completely consumed by classes and jobs.
- It is essential to address infrastructure concerns so that students no longer have to work in overcrowded classrooms, outdated labs, inadequate libraries and deteriorating buildings.
- We have to turn away from the approach of having students make up the shortfall between the instructional needs and the government's funding, because quality and affordability both suffer as a result.
- To improve the quality of post-secondary education the government and institutions must ensure there is adequate and well trained support staff.
- The system needs to expand in order to reduce the number of students in each class. Students need to have more direct access to their instructors, while at the same time making sure access to programs is increased.



Public Response to the Question:

How would you grade the government on its commitment to ensure a high quality post-secondary education system?



Report Card Key

A = exemplary performance

B = more than satisfactory performance

C = some concerns, but satisfactory performance overall

D = does not meet expectations, poor performance

F = complete breakdown of responsibility, dismal performance