

# Memo



**To:** All First Nations in BC

**From:** The First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC)

**Re:** Suggested Changes to INAC's Post-Secondary Student Funding

**Date:** August 4, 2010 (*redistributed, September 2010*)

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Throughout the past year, FNESC has been closely monitoring suggestions that the federal government was considering significant changes to the administration of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's (INAC's) Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP). Following a statement that the Government of Canada might be considering an alternative approach to funding First Nations post-secondary students, a number of reports have been published in regard to this issue.

In response to all of the proposals that have been made, FNESC has asserted a clear and consistent message: that First Nations must be appropriately and adequately consulted prior to any changes the PSSSP.

To support that assertion, FNESC has prepared a Position Paper: *Post-Secondary Education (PSE): Considering the Options*. This paper has been shared with INAC officials and with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). The AFN also has also developed a response to any proposed PSSSP changes, and their discussion paper, *Taking Action for First Nations Post-Secondary Education: Access, Opportunity and Outcomes, June 2010*, is available on the AFN website.

At the July FNESC Annual General Assembly, FNESC Board members agreed to share the position paper with all First Nations in BC, and to request support for this position through the submission of letters to INAC and the AFN.

To assist First Nations that are interested in responding to this issue, we have also drafted the attached template letter. First Nations are welcome to insert the

relevant information and submit the letter to INAC at the address provided in the template.

Anyone who would prefer to prepare a different letter is of course encouraged to do so.

In either case, we ask that you please send a copy of your letter to FNEESC, to assist us in appropriately reflecting the perspectives of First Nations in BC in any future discussions of this matter.

We look forward to including this issue as a priority agenda item for the upcoming FNEESC Regional Sessions. We also continue to welcome any feedback about the PSSSP and FNEESC's attempts to respond to this issue.