

Honourable Anne Kang
Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training
Via email: AVED.Minister@gov.bc.ca; Anne.Kang.MLA@leg.bc.ca

August 13, 2021

Dear Minister Kang,

We are reaching out to you today to let in the spirit of our meeting with you on May 18, 2021. At that meeting we talked about the importance of a “no surprises” approach and of keeping each other informed. As we get closer to the realities of September’s return-to-campus and as coronavirus case numbers increase, we want to let you know that our members are concerned.

They are concerned for their own safety and for the safety of their colleagues and students. We echo their voices and also want to add that it is paramount that BCIT have institutional autonomy to implement safety protocols that work for the day-to-day functions of our membership. We urge the province to allow BCIT that autonomy: a one-size-fits-all approach does not give BCIT the room it needs to adequately exercise its duties as an employer or as a provider of hands-on, applied, and economy-critical education.

Our members are acutely aware of announcements of (for example) mask mandates, required vaccinations, and vaccinations in student housing coming out from other post-secondary institutions across Canada. It is reasonable and responsible for them to be asking “what makes BCIT different from other universities and colleges across Canada? Why isn’t the safety of our workers and students as important?” We struggle to have good answers for them, especially as we hear of expectations for an increase in the variants of concern as vaccination rates plateau.

We encourage the province and BCIT to urgently connect with front-line employees and get a clear understanding of what these workers need to deliver safe – physically and psychologically – programs in just a few weeks.

Sincerely,



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