



January 27, 2014

Ms. Sydney O'Sullivan
Chair, Board of Governors
Aurora College

On January 24, 2014 a number of MLA's had the occasion to informally meet with approximately 40 of your students at the Yellowknife Aurora College Campus. On this occasion, as I'm sure you can expect, we had heard a number of concerns facing the daily lives of the students attending college.

As we listened to these concerns, one could rightly place many of them generally into a few different categories. Concerns directly related to Aurora College, the Department of ECE and the City of Yellowknife. As to the specifics of those areas of concerns raised under those headings, I will defer them for another occasion.

However I write to you more specifically because I had the occasion to ask the students a few questions of my own and one response in particular caused some concern to me. The question I posed to the students was: Has your Board of Governors ever met with you? Sadly their response was a resounding "No".

Now I can't say I was completely shocked by their response but in my view the Board of Governors are missing a real opportunity by not meeting these students on some regular bases. It would be my assertion that meeting with the students on each campus once a semester would allow the opportunity of the Board to ensure that there is some level of relationship and at the same time, accountability to the students for whom you are intent on serving.

Now perhaps the view of the Board of Governors is, with a single student representative, this is the conduit it relies upon to ensure that the views of all students at all three campuses is being accounted for and maybe in a perfect world that could be enough. But it cannot be ignored that when taking into consideration the inconsistency in tenure of the student appointments, Cabinets delay in appointments and from what appears as the lack of issues raised in the minutes of the Board meetings it makes one only wonder, are the needs of the students being overlooked?

.../2



Having had the opportunity to read many of the Boards minutes going back a few years, I quickly noticed the challenges the student representative must be facing as a single representative considering the number of program areas as well as the number of campuses they must represent. I simply see this as an impossible task for anyone to fully meet considering they are equally a student with academic responsibilities. While at the same time, after reading these minutes I'm not seeing anywhere near the volume of concerns which were brought to us as MLA's which then begs the question, how is the Board of Governors aware of the concerns these students face?

In closing let me say that I wanted to bring this to your attention while using the occasion to suggest that you as the Board of Governors should consider holding public forums for your students to hear their concern. And while a public forum may present challenges, it would demonstrate your interest to the students to whom you serve. And finally, as previously mentioned a number of the concerns raised to us fell well outside the directly responsibility of the College, however as true as this may be, it is my view that this does not exempt the College from some type of responsibility in its role as partners in the success of your students.

I would like to leave you with this thought that I often call upon myself while doing my work as a Member of the Legislative Assembly: *Salus populi suprema lex esto – The welfare of the people is to be the highest law*

With kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Robert". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Robert.

CC: Aurora College Board of Governors

Jackson Lafferty
Minister of Education, Culture and Employment

Alfred Moses
Chair, Standing Committee on Social Programs

Aurora College Student Representatives