

CONSUP

COUNCIL OF NOVA SCOTIA UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS

CONSUP Statement on One-Year Funding Agreements with the Province's 10 Universities

Friday, February 2, 2024

For Immediate Release

Halifax, N.S. –Today the province's university sector received extraordinarily distressing news from the Hon. Brian Wong, Minister, NS Department of Advanced Education about his one-year funding plan for universities.

Historically, Nova Scotia's university leaders have worked in close collaboration with previous governments to develop funding frameworks designed to benefit students, universities, and the province.

That is not the case with today's government announcement.

David C. Dingwall, Chair, Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents (CONSUP) and President, Cape Breton University, said, "On behalf of all university Presidents, I express our disappointment that we had no opportunity to contribute to the development of the funding plan after being led to believe there would be a consultation or negotiation process."

Mr. Dingwall added further, "the Minister decided on an approach that undermines any sense of partnership, collaboration or vision for the future of one of the province's most strategically important sectors."

The one-year plan as presented creates unnecessary financial hardship for many universities.

Mr. Dingwall also noted that, "It disregards the substantial contribution our universities make to the economic, social, and cultural development of communities across the province."

Adding, "there is much in today's announcement that requires greater clarity and we remain hopeful that Minister Wong will engage in a collaborative process that enables universities to better understand government's intentions and expectations and, at the same time, allow department officials to better understand the unintended consequences of its plan."

Over the past two weeks, Nova Scotia's universities have been dealt two serious blows.

First, the federal government's announcement of a cap on new international student-visa permits for Nova Scotia is a policy change that will potentially cost Nova Scotia's universities many millions of dollars in lost revenue and harms the province's reputation as a desirable education destination.

Coupled with today's provincial government announcement, both levels of government have created an elevated level of uncertainty across Nova Scotia's university sector.

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CONSUP will not be making any further comments at this time.