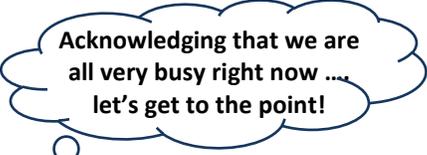


## Advocacy Toolkit – Winter 2021

### AB PSE 2030 and Related Government Initiatives

One of the overarching goals of the current government is to shift the cost of higher education in Alberta away from the public (i.e. government) and towards greater private revenue generation and downloading costs to students through tuition increases. The threats posed by the PSE2030 initiative coupled with the return of performance-based funding considerations threatens to change the landscape of Post-secondary education in Alberta for decades to come. Post-secondary education in Alberta will be less affordable, less accessible, geared toward labour market demands, and controlled by corporate interests which will restrict academic freedom and institutional autonomy.



Acknowledging that we are all very busy right now .... let's get to the point!

#### Possible things you could do (pick ONE or more and just start):



##### Only Have 5 minutes?

- Respond to the Public Interest Alberta Survey <https://bit.ly/2XSEzoP>, and
- Send a Letter to your MLA: <https://www.stoppsecuts.ca/action>

##### Want to show support but have no time?

- Sign up to get a lawn sign (picture left) - <https://bit.ly/2Y732al>

#### Want to really make a difference with an ongoing, small time, commitment?

- Post once a day (or more if interested) on a Twitter/Facebook feed to distribute this information (hashtags #stopPSEcuts #abpse #abpoli #FightTheCuts): [Sample posts provided by the MRFA's Advocacy Committee.](#)
- Speak to individuals outside of the PSE sector to spread the message and help people become informed about what is at stake for Alberta's citizens, students and future.
- Connect with students to get them mobilizing around tuition increases and related threats. [Refer to the PowerPoint provided by the MRFA's Advocacy Committee for sample material that you can provide to inform students.](#)

#### Have more time?

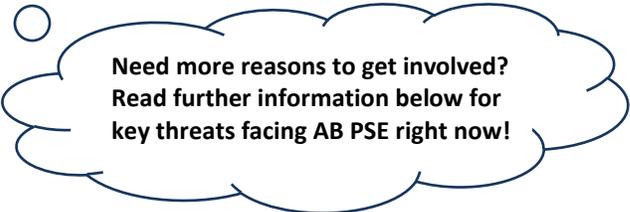
- fill out the MRFA [online faculty profile form](#) to inform the community and support faculty,
- write an op ed (Calgary Herald, Edmonton Journal, both Sun papers, Globe & Mail, National Post, etc),
- write letters to the editors (as above),
- write a column for a community newsletter,
- write a letter that could be distributed to parents in the province,
- call/write your MLA to discuss your concerns ([https://www.assembly.ab.ca/lao/mla/mla\\_help.htm](https://www.assembly.ab.ca/lao/mla/mla_help.htm)), and/or
- visit a group or organization to talk about the value of higher education (i.e. Rotary Club, Kiwanis, Elks Club, the Legion, community associations, etc.)

#### Support Colleagues, Students and other Public Services Workers:

- press to include the voices of traditionally marginalized students and faculty on campus,
- speak out for contract faculty who may not feel able to and who will face the brunt of these changes, and
- connect to other movements resisting the budget cuts/direction of this government – do you know nurses, teachers, doctors, social workers, civil servants, etc?

#### Why should you oppose the ABPSE 2030 Initiative and Performance-Based Funding?

- We all serve the public interest in dedicating our lives to delivering high quality education to Alberta's students,
- We all have important skills that we can draw on to support advocacy efforts, and
- We can all do one or two small (or large) things to contribute (see list above).



Need more reasons to get involved? Read further information below for key threats facing AB PSE right now!

## Key threats of AB PSE2030

Post-secondary education serves a public good: there should be politically independent universities not directed by government or corporate interests. The PSE 2030 sector review, and related performance metrics, will force post-secondary institutions to focus on specific things (i.e. “building skills for jobs”) at the detriment to other aspects of their purpose (i.e. liberal education building engaged life long learners capable of participating fully in the modern democracy and the ever changing economy and workforce). PSE2030 will limit the collegial governance which is required to achieve our academic mission, to protect the quality of our programs and to protect our academic freedom in the pursuit of knowledge that will benefit society now and in the future. The Alberta government plans to destroy what it is we are about as academic institutions of higher education, and what happens here could spread (much like a virus) to other jurisdictions in Canada.

- Sectoral Super Boards governing all institutions within each PSE sector (possibly with additional local Boards at each institution) - Reducing institutional autonomy,
- Changes to the authority of General Faculty Councils – threatening to erode bicameral governance and reducing faculty involvement in academic and program decisions,
- Increased administrative autonomy in the creation of programs resulting in micro-credentials which will result in the unbundling of education resulting in skills based learning rather than a wholistic approach to education that should be the focus of post-secondary education, and
- Corporate control over research and related impacts on academic freedom and the advancement of knowledge.

Additional Sources of Information:

- [AB PSE 2030 MRU Panel Notes](#)
- [AB PSE 2030 Slide Deck – to Share Information with Stakeholders](#)
- [AB PSE 2030 Town Hall Presentations](#)

## Performance Based Funding – an ongoing concern

Performance-Based Funding – Though these metrics were put on hold in 2020 due to the pandemic, AB PSE 2030 Town Halls held in January 2021 indicate that the performance-based funding model will still be coming forward in some form. [Read the letter submitted to the government by CAFA outlining concerns with this model.](#)

### Key Threats of Performance Based Funding

1. *Rebalanced institutional revenues with more income from tuition and self-generated sources, and reduced dependency on government grants.*
2. *Government grant funding that is aligned to skills and labour market outcomes, institutional performance, and research and teaching.*
3. *A more accountable, and transparent relationship between government and institutions with less red tape, that provides results for Albertans.*
  - Metrics (imply decreased public funding)*
    - *Campus Alberta Grant (CAG) dependency ratio*
    - *Own source revenue*

### Overview of problems with Performance-Based Funding Model

1. Increases red tape, despite claims of the opposite: many metrics are not currently measured, it is unknown how some metrics will be measured, and metrics will require personnel to collect data, interpret data, report data.
2. Implies (perhaps even explicitly states) that universities are not accountable to the public. Constant evaluation for faculty (i.e. annual reports, peer review, peer evaluation, tenure and promotion processes, etc.) and the university (numerous publicly available reports – including financial – accounting for our work)
3. Most metrics focused on skills and labour market outcomes – employment rate; employment in related job; time to find employment; graduate median income; access to career/employment services; work integrated learning
  - Universities have no control over the labour market
  - Claims universities are job-training institutions and overlooks the actual purpose of a university – to create and disseminate knowledge and educate students to be adaptable, critical thinkers who can problem solve and communicate with other

- Ignores economic realities – gig economy, cuts to public sector (i.e. nursing, education), high debt loads, etc.
  - Favours students from economically advantaged backgrounds and further marginalized those from traditionally excluded groups
  - Difficult to measure these outcomes – current recommendation is for self-reported data from students only recently graduated (response rate is approximately 40%)
4. While we (MRU) currently fare well in these metrics, this is:
- Not the point (the metrics are inherently opposed to what we do here)
  - Not always going to be the case (especially with cuts to public sector jobs like nursing and teaching)
  - Unclear how metrics which affect our budget will be measured and assessed
5. Effects of performance-based funding will increase over time – institutions will aim for the outcomes (the entire point of outcome-based funding) and will exclude any innovative or challenging developments

### Report and Recommendations Blue Ribbon Panel on Alberta's Finances (August 2019)

4. **Recommendation 8:** *Work with post-secondary stakeholders to achieve a revenue mix comparable to that in British Columbia and Ontario, including less reliance on government grants, more funding from tuition and alternative revenue sources, and more entrepreneurial approaches to how programs are financed and delivered . This includes lifting the current freeze on tuition fees .*
5. **Recommendation 9:** *Assess the financial viability of Alberta's post-secondary institutions. The government should move quickly to address the future of those post-secondary institutions that do not appear to be viable in future funding scenarios .*

### More information:

#### *AB Government Reports*

- [AB 2030 Engagement Workbook](#)
- [AB PSE 2030 January 2021 Town Hall Presentation](#)

#### *Submissions to Sector Review*

- [CAFA Response to NDP Parallel Review](#)
- [MRFA Submission to NDP Parallel Review](#)
- [MRFA Submission to UCP Guiding Coalition](#)

#### *Campaigns Supporting Public Education in Alberta*

- [Alberta Teachers Association Campaign](#)
- [Public Interest Alberta Campaign](#)

#### *Related Sources*

- <https://www.caut.ca/bulletin/2020/03/commentary-plain-truth-about-performance-based-funding>
- <https://cafa-ab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/CAFA's-Consultation-Submission-Outcome-Based-Funding-Model.pdf>