

Selkirk College Board of Governors Letter to Minister Marc Miller

October 25, 2024

The Honourable Marc Miller, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Sent by email: Marc.Miller@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister Miller:

Re: Recent Federal Announcements on International Student Reforms

On behalf of the Selkirk College Board of Governors, I am writing to express disappointment regarding recent changes instituted by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). As governors of a publicly funded college serving rural British Columbia, we are particularly dismayed by further restrictions to international student study permits and post-graduate work permit (PGWP) eligibility. These reforms will have a profound impact on building the skilled workforce that is so vital to strong rural economies.

For over 60 years, Selkirk College has addressed local workforce requirements through programming that aligns with labour market needs. Both domestic and international students have received the education, training and skills our region needs to thrive. From nurses and electricians to chefs and foresters, our graduates make a daily impact on our communities.

Over the last decade, Selkirk College has worked within the objectives of the federal government immigration system to design programs and produce outcomes ***that are working in rural British Columbia***. The federal government's adjustments to policy and its messaging (i.e. reducing the parity of esteem of colleges in the Canadian post-secondary landscape) have already had a significant negative impact on our college. These changes will result in inevitable cuts to essential programming that will impact not only international students but also domestic students, who may no longer have access to programming because future cohorts will be too small to sustain. While large census areas may be growing, the same cannot be said for rural areas of the country, and we need newcomers to meet the demands for services.

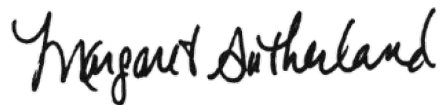
We support a well-managed immigration system that ensures a balance of community needs and aspirations is being met. The current approach taken by the federal government to address some of the larger challenges that come along with a robust immigration system has severely damaged the international reputation of Canada's public college system and unfairly favours universities.

We call on the federal government to work with public colleges to find solutions that work for all of Canada. Labour market needs—particularly in rural areas—need to be considered in consultation with provinces. Please commit to genuine partnerships with the institutions that are building a skilled workforce and sustaining local economies.

We look forward to your response and to actions that will carry us all towards a more prosperous future.

Sincerely,

On behalf of the Selkirk College Board of Governors



Margaret Sutherland
Chair, Board of Governors
Selkirk College

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