

February 17, 2016

The Honourable Robert Falcon-Ouellette, M.P.  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H4

594 Ellice Ave  
Winnipeg, MB R3G 0A3

Dear Dr. Falcon-Ouellette

**Re: Indian Studies Support Program/Post-Secondary Student Support Program**

I would like to begin by congratulating you on your recent election as the Member of Parliament for Winnipeg Center. This letter is being written as a request for your support in the reinstatement of the Indian Studies Support Program (ISSP) allocations to First Nation universities and colleges. My request is specifically for the support of Manitoba's only First Nation post-secondary institute, Yellowquill College, located at 480 Madison Street in Winnipeg ([www.yellowquill.org](http://www.yellowquill.org)).

Since the inception of our First Nations post-secondary institutions, specifically Yellowquill College (1984), we have relied on the support of the *Indian Studies Support Program* (ISSP) to assist with funding our core operations. The *Indian Studies Support Program* was a long-standing program which provided basic, if inadequate, core funding allocations to First Nations post-secondary institutions located across what we call Turtle Island and more commonly known as Canada. This program (ISSP) provided the opportunity to maintain our Indigenous knowledges, while offering mainstream programming, in a safe and respectful environment where we control the programs and content being delivered.

In the late 1980's, the federal government blended together the allocations for the ISSP and the *Post-secondary Student Support Program* (PSSSP). The consequence of doing so resulted in an overall loss of 12% funding for First Nations. It also created competition with the ISSP and PSSSP with deferred and eligible PSSSP applicants. First Nations were not consulted on the changes of these programs.

To make matters worse, the ISSP funding criteria was removed and replaced with the Post-Secondary Partnership Program (PSP). ***The changes in the funding criteria allow non-First Nation post-secondary education institutions to apply for this funding, who also receive funding from other government sources. Many of these non-First Nation institutions have***

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***now successfully obtained the PSPP funds, funds that should rightfully be appropriated to First Nation institutes such as Yellowquill College.*** The amount of PSPP funding was not increased so the funds that previously came to our institutions were reallocated to the non-First Nation institutions. This has negatively impacted our ability to deliver our programs and has decreased the number of students that we can serve.

The resulting critical shortage of funding for Yellowquill College, which does not benefit from any kind of core funding for operations, has further hampered our operating sustainability. A further consequence is that the flow of departmental funding to other universities and colleges operating under provincial jurisdictions appears both to be a breach of the trust upon which we relied, and caused duplication of the funding flowing to provinces under the federal 'established programs financing' transfers for post-secondary education. As such, non-First Nation institutions can access both funds and First Nation institutions cannot.

***I am asking for your support in reinstating the ISSP funds as a grant for Indigenous-controlled institution, such as Yellowquill College, and fund our First Nation institutions at par with mainstream institutions so that we may meet the post-secondary education needs of our communities.*** It is essential that all our First Nation institutions be able to operate on par to those universities and colleges that are provincially funded.

Yellowquill College has operated for over 30 years and has an impressive track record. Two of our board members are former graduates of Yellowquill and are now Chiefs of their First Nation communities. In addition, many of our other graduates are gainfully employed in management and administration in their communities.

I look forward to working in partnership with you, and am available at your convenience to discuss this further with you.

Sincerely

Doreen Beauchamp  
Director