



Don Avison, KC  
Independent Reviewer – Post-Secondary Sector Sustainability

January 14, 2026

Dear Mr. Avison,

I am writing today on behalf of World Education Services Canada (WES) to provide input as part of the review you are leading, *Modernizing the Public Post-Secondary Education Sector in British Columbia: A Review of Sector Sustainability*. WES' intervention pertains to the nexus between international students and governance, program delivery, and revenues in the BC post-secondary sector.

WES is a non-profit social enterprise that supports the educational, economic, and social inclusion of immigrants, refugees, and international students. For over 50 years, WES has advanced international academic credential evaluation, supporting millions of people as they seek to achieve their academic and professional goals. Through decades of experience as a leader in global education, WES has developed a wide range of tools to pursue social impact at scale. From evaluating academic credentials to shaping policy, we partner with a diverse set of organizations, leaders, and networks to uplift individuals and drive systems change.

As you know, an educated workforce has the analytical, technical, and soft skills that British Columbia (BC) needs to thrive. These skills are more critical than ever, given the pace of economic and technological change that will likely require workers who have the capacity for flexibility and lifelong learning. Today's post-secondary students will be tomorrow's leaders and innovators who will be asked to rise to challenges we cannot yet fathom. BC's future demands a post-secondary sector that delivers the highest standard of education and is attuned to the needs of students, as well as the needs of communities and local economies.

In recent years, the financial health of the post-secondary sector has been tied to the sector's ability to attract international students. Recruitment of international students became critical to address financial pressures related to a decline in revenue from domestic tuition and provincial transfers. Well-publicized pathways to "study and stay" in Canada inflated the value proposition of study in Canada, in spite of dramatic increases in international student fees compared to those of domestic students. This system was unsustainable and did not sufficiently serve the interests of students, post-secondary institutions, or longer-term regional economic needs.

International student recruitment had a distorting effect on post-secondary institutions. It led to outsized growth of study programs that sold well abroad but lacked strong demand among domestic students and a connection to regional labour market needs. Ultimately, international student enrolment is more volatile than reliable—it depends on educational opportunities in other countries, as well as the policy environment set by the federal government.



A proposed way forward is to develop a funding strategy that secures the long-term fiscal health of the post-secondary sector without dependence upon international students. At the same time, BC can realize the educational benefits of international education. To do so, BC should commit to an attractive long-term post-secondary offering through strong academic programming, transparency in international student recruitment, and robust student supports.

To achieve this end, WES makes the following recommendations:

- **Prohibition of exorbitant differences in tuition fees between domestic students and international students.** WES advocates a consultation process involving stakeholders, such as post-secondary institutions, student representatives, and policymakers, to establish fair tuition fee structures for international students.
- **Creation of a dedicated regulatory body to oversee education agents,** including aggregators and their subcontracted agents, furthering the benefits of the recently instituted [International Education Code of Practice](#).
- **Publication of economic outcomes of recent graduates** (earnings, match between field of study and current occupation), disaggregated by international student and domestic student status.
- Collaboration across provincial government, post-secondary institutions, and regional economic development corporations to **provide clear regional labour market data** to prospective students.
- Collaboration across federal and provincial government, post-secondary institutions, and other actors to create **a central platform that provides all information and updates about immigration** and visa rules, as well as rates of transition to permanent residence. This resource would improve access to reliable information and avoid redundancies as multiple post-secondary institutions create and update similar content.

These recommendations come from WES' [International Student Policy Brief](#), as well as a forthcoming research paper analyzing the ecosystem of online information for international students. If you require further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me by email.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shamira Madhany'.

Shamira Madhany  
Managing Director, WES Canada