



Privatizing post-secondary education

It is telling that the first and the last things that the Campbell Liberal government did in post-secondary education were in support of private post-secondary education. Despite the fact that the New Era platform is silent on private post-secondary education, it has been one of the major policy directions of the Campbell government.

In its first move in July 2001, the BC Liberal government terminated two programs – the Training Accord and the College Envelope. Both programs directed some government-sponsored training (such as programs for students on income assistance) into public post-secondary institutions. Most of that training had previously been directed into private training institutions.

On April 18, 2005, in its last post-secondary announcement before the provincial election campaign officially began, government announced its support for the development of a private degree granting institution in the area of disability management.

And in between, the Campbell Liberals have been busy. Here are the facts.

- The *Degree Authorization Act*, passed in 2002, enables private universities and private degree programs to operate with the BC government's approval.
- Private colleges and universities are lining up to have their degree programs approved by the BC government. In January 2005, the BC Liberal government approved the

Ask the candidates

- Does your party support a moratorium on BC government sanctioned new private universities and degree programs and a review of expanding private post-secondary education?
- Does your party support a re-regulation of the private training sector and a balanced approach that better protects the consumer and public interest?

first wave of government-sanctioned private degree programs at Sprott Shaw Community College, University Canada West and Columbia College. By April 2005, one third of the applications for new degrees were from private sector institutions.

- The *Sea to Sky University Act* paves the way for a private university development in Squamish.
- Government announces its intention to privatize the Knowledge Network, the educational broadcasting arm of the Open Learning Agency, in 2003, then later changes its mind.
- The *Private Career Training Institutions Act* deregulates the private training sector. Many institutions can now operate without registering, including English language schools. As a result, the number of registered private training institutions drops from 1100 to 600, leaving hundreds of institutions operating without scrutiny or basic consumer protection.