



**TO:** UMSU Board of Directors  
**FROM:** VP Advocacy, Victoria Romero  
**DATE:** October 20, 2022  
**RE:** **Report to the Board, October 2022**

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## Continuing Updates

### International student healthcare

MAPSS will have the opportunity to present the international student healthcare proposal to the Manitoba provincial government on October 21<sup>st</sup> 2022. We will be meeting with Hon Mr. Jon Reyes, Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration.

MAPSS is continuing to advocate for the re-instatement of international students onto the provincial healthcare plan. We have passed our petitions onto both Manitoba NDP and Manitoba Liberal provincial parties, and they will be read out in the legislature in weeks coming.

In Legislative committee on Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration, Hon. Min Jon Reyes made quite a few comments on the topic of international student healthcare.

In response to being asked about the unfair principal of buy-in international student healthcare:

*Mr Reyes: "And she's aware—and I don't know if the critic's aware, because I've said this many times—that when international students, as part of their tuition enrolments, they have health-care coverage and they will receive the same benefits as domestic students once they enrol in their health-care benefits."*

In response to this question asked by MLA Jamie Moses "Is the minister interested—is the minister considering reinstating public-provided health care for international students?":

*Mr Reyes: "You know, all summer I've been meeting with many folks, and I'm sure the critic has, too, as well. I've met with many international students from many countries—Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, China. And you know, one thing—you know, I'm always eager and excited to meet them because these are highly likely future Manitobans because they like to come here because of—first of all, No. 1 is they actually have connections here. They say the reason why I came here is because, you know, I have friends here that go to these post-secondary institutions like the University of Manitoba, Assiniboine Community College, Brandon University. Number 2, the great programs. Number 3, affordability. The low tuition costs. That's what they tell me as the minister, that tuition costs are lower than other jurisdictions. I can't afford to go to British Columbia or Ontario. I decided to come to Manitoba because they have a pathway. They have a pathway with regards to, you know, coming here as an international student and then, you know, streamlining into our Provincial Nominee Program that a PC government created in 1998, may I remind him. So, these are individuals that are very important to Manitoba because they are studying here. We offer low tuition rates, the reasons why they're coming here. And with regards to him asking me about the question on international student health care, I would ask him to ask that question to the Department of Health."*



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These are only two excerpts of what the Minister had to say in committee. The rest of the report can be read at this link: [70b.pdf \(gov.mb.ca\)](#) (starts on pg 47)

These comments speak to the level of ignorance, privilege and nativity that this government is operating at. Yes, International student do in fact receive healthcare coverage, after paying hundreds of dollars, on top of tuition that is sometimes up to 5x higher than domestic students. The reasons that the minister lists as why international students enjoy our province, are all reasons that can be swayed by the implementation of or removal of international student healthcare coverage. Better, free, healthcare coverage would lead to more students choosing Manitoba as a study destination, leading to more connections. The Minister notes low tuition rates and affordability, which we all know is not the reality, and has not been since this government took office 6 years ago. They have continued to raise the tuition despite countless calls to make life more affordable for students, for all.

Also, the Minister chose to push blame onto another Minister (Hon. Min. Gordon, provincial Minister of Health) for this question. The Premier referred us back to Hon. Min Reyes when we reached out to her for contact. Hon. Min Gordon has not replied to any requests to meet with UMSU or MAPSS in the entirety of her term as an MLA, and directed us to ask these questions to Hon. Min Reyes.

### **Manitoba Alliance of Post-Secondary Students (MAPSS)**

The Manitoba Alliance of Post-Secondary Students (MAPSS) will be compiling our pre-budget policy recommendation document over the next few weeks. This document will serve to inform MLAs and the provincial government of student issues and concerns ahead of the release of the 2023-2024 provincial budget.

Stay tuned for updates about upcoming MAPSS policy incubators – where students can share their ideas for new PSE advocacy! During these incubators we will invite speakers to inform students, and then have lots of time for guided breakout groups where likeminded, passionate students can draft advocacy ideas for MAPSS! Every students' voice matters in PSE advocacy, we hope you will be able to join us!

Indigenous Representatives:

- In order to make our advocacy truly representative of all students, we have amended our constitution to permanently include Indigenous representatives from each member (school). This will ensure that Indigenization is a part of all that we do. This change is long overdue!



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### **Performance Based Funding**

We have received word from various sources (including the UM admin and provincial government sources) that the sitting provincial government is planning to move forward with their Post-Secondary Accountability Framework (PBF in disguise) plans. There are no approved/confirmed metrics for this system, however until we are certain that there are none, we will continue to advocate for the strong aversion to any and all forms of PBF, and make sure that we are clear in our stance that things such as rate of pay after graduation, “success” after graduation, minority contingents etc are not acceptable reasons to cut funding. We will continue to push for a “bonuses, not cuts” mentality when it comes to dealing with performance metrics.

There has been much backlash around Performance Based Funding from students and professors alike. This is not something that has performed well in other locations (Ontario, Texas) and would likely not benefit the greater good and instead harm marginalized communities if implemented in our province. We wish to encourage accessible education for all learners, regardless of how their academic journey may look. Performance metrics are a huge barrier to this accessibility and we must stand united against it. MAPSS will be including this advocacy in our policy recommendation document.

Hon. Min Reyes had some things to say on the topic of Performance Based Funding, in recent legislative committee on October 6<sup>th</sup>. I will include some of his responses below. The last listed quote/excerpt of this section is one I urge everyone to read through. It is a clear example of how this government dodges questions, avoids blame, and does anything but address the topic at hand. We know PSE stakeholders have been alerting the dangers of PBF for a long time, and when this government is confronted with that notion, they choose to ignore it.

In response to this question “*so is the system that the minister's describing one in which performance measures would be set out for universities and colleges, and based on whether those universities and colleges meet those performance measures, funding for that institution would be tied to how those measurements are met? Is that the process that the minister's just described?*” posed by MLA Jamie Moses:

**Mr Reyes:** “*No funding decisions have been made. This is an accountability framework exercise, and we're looking to develop accountability framework metrics that will satisfy everyone involved and, most importantly, for the Manitoba taxpayer.*”

In response to this question “*I recently met with faculty members from the University of Manitoba. They organized an event to–discuss topics like performance-based funding, tuition fees, differential tuition fees. And one of the common–I would say, almost universal–thoughts on this were that they're, quite frankly, not necessary. That they would–if implemented, would make the post-secondary system in Manitoba worse off. So my question is–and the minister said that he has consulted with faculty. Well, what did they tell him about this plan? What was their feedback about these initiatives that the minister is proposing?*” asked by MLA Jamie Moses.



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*Mr Reyes: “I want to thank faculty associations for their recent participation and contributions during our formal consultations on a new tuition and student fees policy on a post-secondary accountability framework. You know, our department appreciates all faculty associations' level of engagement. I'm encouraged its members remain active on matters of importance to Manitoba's post-secondary education system. You know, the–my department, we look forward to working with faculty associations and its members again in the future.”*

*Mr. Moses: So, faculty members told me loud and clear that this type of initiative would include performance metrics for funding, that would include differential tuition fees–would be a resounding negative effect–impact on our universities. And I want to know whether the minister got this message as well, if this was what came out of his consultation meetings, and what the minister says about that response to the framework that he's currently working on.*

*Mr Reyes: “I just want to let the–my critic know that consultations are ongoing. We need to get, you know, very important stakeholders involved, including Indigenous groups. You know, we have to listen to all views. But, again, I want to thank, you know, the participation of faculty associations and students for their contributions during our formal consultations on this new tuition fees and student fees policy, which will bring on a new post 'coundly' frame–framework. The department appreciates their participation, and we'll continue to listen to all views.”*

The rest of the report can be read at this link: [70b.pdf \(gov.mb.ca\)](#) (starts on pg 47).

### **External Events & Meetings Attended**

- October 7<sup>th</sup> 2022: Meeting with Manitoba NDP Leader Wab Kinew & NDP MLA Jamie Moses
- October 11<sup>th</sup> 2022: Meeting with UM Vice-Provost Students, Laurie Schnarr
- October 13<sup>th</sup> 2022: Winnipeg Election and Environment Comms meeting
- October 13<sup>th</sup> 2022: Meeting with Federal Minister for Northern Affairs, Dan Vandal
- October 17<sup>th</sup> 2022: Meeting with Manitoba Liberal Party Leader Dougald Lamont
- October 19<sup>th</sup> 2022: MAPSS BOD meeting
- October 19<sup>th</sup> 2022: AMA Steering Committee
- October 19<sup>th</sup> 2022: Convocation