

BY EMAIL

February 22, 2017

Honorable Alfred Moses, Minister of Education, Culture and Employment
Government of the NWT
Box 1320
YELLOWKNIFE, NT X1A 2L9

Re: Resignation from Aurora College Board of Governors

Please accept this letter of resignation from my position as South Slave Representative from the Aurora College Board of Governors.

I would like to thank the Minister; the Department of Education, Culture, and Employment; the President and Staff of Aurora College; and the Board of Governors for the opportunity to serve as the South Slave Representative. Unfortunately, my position on the future of Aurora College is currently not in line with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment and I am unable to continue to serve in this capacity.

During the past few weeks, I have heard many stories from students and staff (past and present), and from residents of not only Fort Smith but from across the territory on the importance of the college to themselves and to Northern society. These stories touched on how important the education that was received helped to build our communities and how the experience of having the ability to get a post-secondary education in Aurora College shaped the future of the students who attended.

When I applied for the position on the Board of Governors, I spoke to my own education and employment at Aurora College, my past work experience in adult education, and how I felt I could help to shape the future of the college. As I write this, I reflect on how the college has shaped me.

As a long-time resident of Fort Smith, the college is as much a part of my life and my history as is any other part of Fort Smith: the elementary school, the high school, the roar of the rapids, and the pelicans in the summer. As a child, I walked the hallways of AVTC with my dad during his employment in the tool crib; I sat in the chairs of the dental students; and I went to the classes where my mother, Marilyn, was getting her education in Business Administration. As a teen, I typed essays on my home computer for Arctic College students from their written work for extra spending money; I sat in a panel in front of the Social Work students to talk about my experiences and the difficulties of being a single teen mother, and agreed to be used in a case study on teen pregnancy. As a young adult, I took a summer job at the college in the finance office; I drove in to work with my dad who was a trades instructor at the college; and when I returned back to school, I got my own education at Aurora College.

At the time that I applied to attend Aurora College, I was a single parent and, even as an indigenous aboriginal, unable to get further than casual employment in any government or professional position in Fort Smith as I did not have a post-secondary education. I moved to Fort Simpson, worked a casual term position with the Department of Transportation, and applied to attend the college in Fort Smith. As a single parent, I was able to afford the rent and the tuition of the college and the living expenses of my small family. I graduated with a 4.0 GPA and was encouraged by the guidance counsellor, Dave Grundy, to look beyond Fort Smith. This advice guided me to move to Vancouver and, eventually, to Philadelphia where I attained a position working in adult learning and development for a global consulting company. I worked in this position for 13 years, even as I travelled between countries and cities. My education and experiences at Aurora College opened doors to opportunities for me that I had previously struggled to attain.

I moved back to Fort Smith 10 years ago with my family to raise my two young daughters in a safe and welcoming community that values education and culture, and to be close to my parents, Sandy and Colleen, who were both trades instructors at Aurora College. I have worked in a professional capacity with the staff and the students at the college. As a town counsellor and then as Mayor of Fort Smith, I was invited to speak to the importance of trades to the young students attending the Trades Access Programs.

It was with great pleasure that I had put my name in to serve on the Board of Governors when the position became available. Though my tenure on the board was short, I feel that the Board works well to support the future of the college and to align the college programming with the needs of the employment sectors in the North. The degree-granting programs at Aurora College are critical to the future of the North and these employment needs. I cannot support the cuts to the college when the value of the college to Northern Students is so important and, therefore, I feel that my role in supporting the college is through other avenues.

Aurora College is an important part of our community and of the North. My story is only one of thousands of children, students, and staff who have benefitted from their experiences at the college. Thank you, and thank the Board of Governors, for allowing me the privilege to represent my region. I look forward to continue my work with Aurora College in other capacities and hope to see continued growth and support for the future of the college in the North.

Sincerely,

Lynn Napier-Buckley

cc: Jane Arychuk, Aurora College President
Aurora College Board of Governors
Premier Bob McLeod, MLA Yellowknife South
Honorable Louis Sebert, MLA Thebacha
Honorable Robert C. McLeod, MLA Inuvik Twin Lakes
Honorable Glen Abernethy, MLA Great Slave
Honorable Caroline Cochrane, MLA Range Lake
Honorable Wally Schumann, MLA Hay River South

Michael M. Nadli, MLA Deh Cho
Kevin O'Reilly, MLA Frame Lake
Rocky (R.J.) Simpson, MLA Hay River North
Kieron Testart, MLA Kam Lake
Frederick Blake Jr., MLA Mackenzie Delta
Jackson Lafferty, MLA Monfwi
Shane Thompson, MLA Nahendeh
Herbert Nakimayak, MLA Nunakput
Daniel McNeely, MLA Sahtu
Tom Beaulieu, MLA Tu Nedhé-Wiilideh
Julie Green, MLA Yellowknife Centre
Cory Vanthuyne, MLA Yellowknife North
Town Council, Town of Fort Smith