



For Immediate Release

Professional Association Questions ESL Cuts at VCC

June 3, 2014

Vancouver, BC - The Board of Directors of the Association of BC Teachers of English as an Additional Language (BC TEAL) is deeply concerned and disappointed about the sudden closure of English as a Second Language (ESL) programming at Vancouver Community College (VCC) as announced on May 29, 2014.

The discontinued funding for quality instruction and programming at VCC and other BC public post-secondary ESL programs will have serious repercussions for BC's economic and social health. Language training is a critical pathway for newcomers and citizens because it allows them to upgrade their English language skills and transition seamlessly into a wide range of academic, career, vocational, and trades programs. Cutting quality language instruction lacks foresight and will hinder newcomers' full social and economic participation in British Columbia.

Without this pathway, thousands of students, employees, employers, the overall economy and the community at large will bear the consequences of these ill-advised cuts. Furthermore, these cuts undermine efforts to enable our students and neighbours to engage, integrate, and contribute to our communities. Hossam Rezk, a Mechanical Engineer originally from Egypt and now studying ESL at Camosun College in Victoria, comments, "Cutting the funds from those courses – it does mean that you cut the support for me as a new immigrant, because without proper English, without the support you give, I cannot survive, I cannot find a proper job, I cannot be of added value to the new society or new community to which I belong."

BC TEAL is calling for full consultation with stakeholder groups to ensure continued investment in high quality, recognized English language training and equal access for immigrants and citizens to skills training and higher education. BC TEAL is committed to advocacy on behalf of ESL students and teachers, in the private, public and not for profit sectors in the province of British Columbia.

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About BC TEAL:

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BC TEAL is the provincial association of Teachers of English as an Additional Language. With a membership just under 1,000, the Association was established in 1967 and is an organization of educators dedicated to the growth and development of the profession of English language teaching. A key role of BC TEAL is to help our members better serve English language learners in realizing their goals. As EAL professionals, we reach thousands of learners each year, and it is through our collective efforts that our work continues to progress, improve, and evolve.