

July 21, 2010

Hon. Diane Finley,  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Finley,

On behalf of the more than one-half million members of the Canadian Federation of Students, I am writing to express concern with the decision to cancel funding for the Youth In Transition Survey (YITS), National Longitudinal Survey on Children and Youth, and the National Apprenticeship Survey, carried out jointly between Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and Statistics Canada.

The YITS is the main source of information regarding post-secondary students in Canada. The survey measures the demographic make-up of the student population, student interaction with the education system, and the relationship between education and employment. The survey also measures the system's successes and shortcomings, and is essential to maintaining a system that will meet the needs of the labour-market.

The YITS is a major source of information required to fulfill our international data collection commitments. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries all survey students using similar methods of data collection. This information is used to compare the success of education in OECD countries and inform education, immigration, and labour market policies—all of which are vital to economic competitiveness.

This troubling situation is made worse by the proposed withdrawal of long-term funding in other areas of data collection. The National Graduates Survey (NGS), a key statistics-gathering mechanism that follows post-secondary graduates as they enter the job market, has only been renewed for a single year. The NGS is essential to measure the connection between post-secondary education and employment outcomes. Without this information, there is no way to measure the relationship between post-secondary education and the job market.

Without surveys like the National Longitudinal Survey on Children and Youth, the National Apprenticeship Survey, the YITS, and the NGS, fact-based analysis of education policy and broader economic planning are impossible. The long-term consequence of these cuts will impede our ability to develop our economy or engage in reality-driven analysis of policy and programmes.

The decision to cancel these vital surveys must be reversed and long-term funding must be committed if reality-based policymaking is to be maintained.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Molenhuis', written over a light grey rectangular background.

David Molenhuis  
Chairperson