



November 3, 2017

Deborah Matthews,  
Minister of Advanced and Skills Development  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Mowat Block  
900 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N3

Dear Deborah Matthews,

My name is Naqi Hyder, I am currently President and Transition Manager of Durham College Students Inc., Durham College's new Student Association. Today, I am writing for students of Durham College, and the 500,000 students across Ontario that are impacted by this strike.

As a student leader, it has been very hard for me to watch this strike, and listen to the difficulties my fellow students have been facing as a result. Students are unable to attend the already paid classes, which for most students put themselves into debt. During this strike, students feel forgotten because there have been no answers given for students to feel secure. This strike is not only affecting their academic life, it has caused great stress on their economic, and personal well-being.

As the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development, and with students as part of your constituents, how are you advocating for the importance of our needs? College students represent various demographics and come from different avenues of life. We all share the same goals of success, which starts in the classroom.

This strike has added immense additional pressure that shouldn't exist. The mental health of students is being affected, and this strike needs to end with a plan that supports students return to studies. This strike is bringing more uncertainty each day, and there is no assistance provided to the students to help get through this hard time.

Everyone is advocating and fighting for what they feel is correct, however students are forced to face the consequences; even though they should be the ones at the top of the priority list. It is the students that should be given options of having lesser tuitions, and reimbursements. It should be the students that should be paid for all the time they spent watching the news to learn everything about the strike. It should be the students who should be paid for watching their school year turn into a mess. It should be the students who should be paid for everything they have lost with this strike.

Most students use college as a pathway to change their career, or to build a strong one. However, with this strike most of the students are being forced to rethink their entire lives, and thrown into limbo. How is that fair?

I urge you to do something and consider the students first. This is not only causing a great harm onto our academic lives, but holding us back from our own potential. You were voted into this role to assist your constituents with their issues. I call upon you in your capacity and duty to ensure that the students are back in class and all the issues that are caused by this strike be resolved.

I completely understand the nature of contracts and bargaining agreements; however, students should not be the chess piece for such means. If there isn't anything done soon for the students to go back to class, unfortunately the students will see themselves to be pawns in the eyes of the government too. They will lose faith in you, and your party. You have a chance to make a difference, I urge that you do. End the strike and make things right, with a plan for students that alleviates their pressures; not add to them. Please contact me for additional information or consultation.

Sincerely,

*Naqi Hyder*

President and Transition Manager  
Durham College Students Inc.