

July 6, 2026

Board of Governors
Langara College
100 West 49th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Y 2Z6

Dear Members of the Board of Governors,

Re: Request to Reconsider the Suspension of the Journalism Program

Thank you again for letting our chair present the challenges the Langara Journalism department has faced over the last decade at the board meeting on June 26 and give you more information about the obstacles and the gains we've experienced. Had we known that we would not be able to speak before the vote, we would have planned to address the board much sooner.

Our request is that, since the vote was made without all the information disclosed, you will reconsider the fate of our Journalism program, this time armed with the new and accurate information we have supplied.

Cancellation is premature

Ultimately, the decision to suspend the Journalism program is not only detrimental to the program itself but also to the college, since it's a strong asset that will be lost. This is one of Langara's flagship programs and, if thoughtfully promoted, can bring as much notice to the college as it once did years ago.

EdCo speaks out

During the same meeting, the Education Council also expressed concerns about the timing of the announcement, stating that mitigations to develop and promote the program were in operation and not being given time for completion. The department was working on online course delivery and hoping to get the two different cohorts – diploma and certificate – combined into one, but both ventures were stalled.

EdCo also mentioned that essential recruiting initiatives had not been tried.

Other worries shared by EdCo were that our graduates are award-winning journalists and that alumni have donated over \$3.5 million in scholarships, intended specifically for journalism students.

Concerns about the process of communication

Anyone hearing only the administration's presentation on the Journalism program could reasonably conclude suspension was the only practical option. But, as we disclosed later in the meeting, we do not believe the Board was given enough accurate context for a fair decision to be made.

We are concerned that the information presented to the Board was incomplete and, in some cases, inaccurate. The description of the journalism industry was overly narrow and did not reflect the full range of employment our students enter, including journalism, communications, research, digital production, social media, web publishing and public-interest storytelling (particularly doing Indigenous stories and training Indigenous reporters). Nor did it reflect the program's transfer pathways, award record, industry reputation or the renewal work already underway.

Several Board members appeared surprised by information that faculty presented at the June 26 meeting, which in turn surprised us since, on May 28, the Journalism faculty wrote to the Board outlining many of these concerns in detail. We received no acknowledgement that the letter had been received or reviewed, although it was included on page 92 of the 256-page agenda package, mixed with other letters of protest.

This raises a serious process issue in terms of the Board's continued independence. If the correspondence to the Board is routed through the president's administrative assistant, particularly when the concern being raised involves a decision made by the president's administration, how can we be sure the correspondence gets to the Board members in a timely manner?

We're not suggesting impropriety, but during the meeting the board members appeared to be hearing our concerns for the first time. It's just an example of how communication between the different parties has been bewildering.

Faculty were previously assured by the former dean that the Journalism Diploma was safe. Then, barely three months after the interim dean's appointment, what we understood to be a discussion about program review became an announcement that the diploma would be suspended. Even more startling, we were told there was no plan to revive the program. At best, we were told we might be able to "salvage pieces" by identifying any courses that could draw at least 30 students outside the diploma.

The intake was suspended and the applicants were dismissed in late May, a month before the Board was to vote. If the Board's decision was to keep the program running, it would have been impossible. The new students had already been encouraged to move on and some of our part-time students were denied the ability to finish their credential.

At this point, the Board's decision seems to be insignificant to the process. The decision seems to be premature and has taken many people by surprise, including the Journalism department and the Education Council – not to mention the students taking Journalism and the news industry.

We are asking the Board to consider whether it was being asked to make an independent decision or to approve a suspension already put into motion.

The concern is that this was treated internally as a settled decision before the Board vote. Although the Board was still required to consider the proposed suspension at the end of June, faculty were told Board

approval was a sure thing. The college then moved ahead with implementation: intake was suspended, accepted offers were revoked, and faculty were instructed to prepare teach-out plans.

Students are not allowed a reasonable amount of transition time

We still don't know why the standard two years was not allowed to transition all the students, as was the case when we upgraded the program in 2019. At that time, we were told two years was the standard allowance for teaching out a two-year program, so no student was left behind. In this case, we were allowed only two semesters and students were displaced.

We were also surprised at the rush to freeze the intake. A healthy number of applicants was increasing and would continue to do so over the summer, but it was suddenly stopped in May. This has led to numerous complaints by new applicants who couldn't apply or register because of the suspension.

If the intake and teach-out were allowed the standard two years, we could have accommodated all the part-time students, the new applicants could have completed their diplomas as well, and the college would have benefitted financially from the tuition. The two-year transition plan would not have left students in the lurch or triggered financial problems and future uncertainty among them, as this one did.

Inconsistent consultation and communication

Unlike our time transforming the Journalism program in 2018 with TCDC's Carmen Larsen, our experience since then has been underwhelming and incredibly frustrating. Our recommendations for potential solutions have not been taken into account even though we could have already addressed the low number of students by **combining the two cohorts from the diploma and certificate streams**. This has been used as a solution in other programs, so it's not untried. We can easily adjust the program so that the diploma and certificate run concurrently and fill the seats to capacity.

This is one of the solutions that was not allowed to run its course, without any explanation.

Reaction from the *Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills*

We have also contacted the *Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills*. In his response, Jamie Edwardson, Executive Director of the Strategic Policy and Initiatives Branch, wrote that "Langara College's journalism diploma program has a strong reputation for quality and community value, including its role in supporting local journalism, workforce development and civic engagement across the region." He also noted that boards are encouraged to follow governance best practices and to ensure decision-making processes are "transparent" and that information is accessible to "students, faculty, staff and the public."

This supports our request that the June 26 vote should be reconsidered. The Board did not have a full and accurate record before approving a decision that had already been put into motion.

Current Strengths of the Journalism Program

Industry Recognition

As we mentioned at the meeting, available journalism jobs have changed and decreased in number, over the last decade. Despite that, we are still placing students in journalism positions and, because we've included communications training, we are having equal success placing students in communications jobs requiring research, writing, video, social media and managing a website.

Employers consistently tell us they value our graduates above those from competing programs because ours are trained and ready to work on day one.

Our students compete with their counterparts across North America and win awards for their news acumen, creativity and technical prowess.

Our alumni are highly placed in the news industry and highly regarded. A steady stream of Langara Journalism graduates is recognized for outstanding work, every year at award ceremonies.

Not only does the media industry actively recruit our grads, but individuals show their trust in our program by generously donating to the development of more journalists like the ones graduating from our programs. The endowment funds stand at over \$3 million presently, and some of that money is directed towards Indigenous and marginalized reporters.

Transfer Pathways

Langara's Journalism diploma includes one year of general arts credits, at almost any university. This has always been the case and is why students who do their research prefer Langara's program to BCIT's. We have worked hard at providing pathways.

Langara's two-year Journalism Diploma graduate has the following options at these BC institutions:

- **BA in Journalism** – Kwantlen Polytechnique University (KPU) in Surrey, offers 2 years transfer credits towards the 4-year degree
- **BA in Communications** - Royal Roads University (RRU) in Victoria, offers 2 years transfer credits towards the 4-year online degree in Communications
- **BA in Journalism/Communications** – Thompson Rivers University (TRU) in Kamloops, offers 1 - 2 years transfer credits towards the 4-year degree, depending on whether the student chooses to complete a degree in Journalism or Communications

The options are designed to give students two full years of transfer credit so they can complete a degree in two more years of study. This allows them to work and support themselves while they scale up their career potential.

Proposed Path Forward

Updating and developing the Journalism program has never ended or even paused. The technology in all mass communication fields is ever-changing, and we have managed to keep pace as our high student placement rate demonstrates. Our placement rate has always hovered at 96-97 percent. The change is only that we now have a higher percentage of graduates opting for communications, according to the market demands.

Our PAC is very engaged and interested in our graduates, and we survey our students at the end of every year to make sure we are meeting the expectations of everyone involved. Based on the research we've collected over last year, we've outlined the areas in which we need to make changes and the content we need to introduce.

We request that the program review we started is allowed to go forward, that the two cohorts are combined for full classrooms, and that we're (finally) allowed to change our program's name and compete as a program we are. One that offers much more than a journalism education.

Recommended Program Renewal Initiatives

1. Change the program name to include *Media Studies*.
2. Strengthen recruitment and promotion by recognizing that the diploma and certificate serve different audiences:
 - Recruit directly from high schools to promote the diploma.
 - Improve the certificate program's SEO and Google presence to reach its distinct demographic.
3. Continue curriculum renewal by maintaining core journalism training while expanding instruction in emerging areas:
 - AI and investigative practices.
 - Storytelling that considers news media audience algorithms (which differ from those used in communications and marketing).
 - Message delivery methods that emphasize both precision and speed.
 - Continued expansion of multi-platform storytelling, website creation and audience engagement

In response to industry and student needs, we have steadily cultivated and improved through the years. We believe it remains critical to the media industries, the students, and the college. The Langara Journalism program is dynamic and progressive and should be supported, especially since journalists are as important as other frontline workers during difficult times and disasters.

We have done a lot of work to upgrade our program but, recently, every plan we've been asked to pursue has been halted halfway, without explanation. That's why it's difficult for us to justify this

decision to suspend and not reinstate Journalism. It would be nice to at least have a straight answer to why these seemingly common-sense solutions were not initiated, since we have never received one.

We respectfully ask for clarification on the following:

1. Why was the recommendation to combine the two cohorts not approved, when it seems like the easiest and most cost-effective solution?
2. Why did we get only one year to complete all our student's certifications instead of the usual two years?

We hope you will reconsider what is best for Langara's Journalism program and allow it to continue developing into what current journalism and communications disciplines require. We are asking for time and support to create a new program built on the legacy of Langara Journalism that will bring students to the college and provide an invaluable contribution to the province and Canada.

Sincerely,

Langara Journalism Faculty

Please send responses to:

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