

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
March 23, 2015

### Ombudsperson report identifies gaps in private career training oversight

**Victoria** – B.C. Ombudsperson Kim Carter has released the results of her office’s investigation into provincial oversight of private career training institutions (PCTIs). The Ombudsperson makes 36 recommendations to the Ministry of Advanced Education including a student bill of rights and an expanded complaint process.

“Our report is the product of an in-depth investigation that resulted in 31 findings about gaps in oversight of private career training institutions in B.C.,” says Carter. “The investigation found that effective oversight is necessary to ensure students attending these institutions are properly protected. It is equally important for the public which supports and relies on the skill of these students as well as the private career training institutions that want to deliver quality education.”

The Ombudsperson report, *In the Public Interest: Protecting Students through Effective Oversight of Private Career Training Institutions* highlights the principle of “equal protection” for students of both private and public post-secondary institutions. “Students at PCTIs can be unfairly left in the dark about potential problems. They have few options if and when they are affected,” Carter says. “PCTI compliance monitoring has been inconsistent and students are not provided with adequate information – including their rights. When problems do emerge, students are limited in the kinds of complaints they can make to the provincial oversight body.” In addition to an expanded complaints process and the student bill of rights, Carter recommends action to prevent unregulated institutions from operating.

Individual complaints about the oversight body prompted the Ombudsperson investigation, notes Carter. “Provincially regulated career training offers credentials and skills training that serve 48,000 students each year. We are talking about a significant part of our education system.”

Since the Ombudsperson systemic investigation was launched in February 2014, the B.C. government has dissolved the former oversight board and introduced legislative changes to develop a new regulatory model. “There is potential to address a number of our recommendations through regulation,” Carter says. “We will monitor the action taken by government and publish regular updates on the status of implementation.”

*Since 1979, the Office of the Ombudsperson has had a statutory mandate from the provincial legislature to uphold fair and reasonable conduct by provincial public authorities. In addition to investigating individual complaints, the Ombudsperson also publishes systemic investigations and recommendations for changes that address administrative unfairness and improve public administration in B.C.*

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