“Keep Athabasca in Athabasca University” Sample Letter #3 (medium length)

*(Insert your name, address and contact info)*

*(Personalize the letter)*

*(Date)*

Office of the Premier

307 Legislature Building

10800-97 Ave

Edmonton, AB, T5K 2B6

Dear Premier Kenney,

I have just learned that the Athabasca University (AU) Board of Governors plans to effectively close the campus in Athabasca by the end of this year, by turning it into a “near-virtual” organization.

This is devastating for me for many reasons. First of all, my family and my town as … (insert your concerns and stories)

Regionally, if Athabasca University’s near-virtual plan it carried out, it will destroy the economy of Athabasca county and negatively affect all of rural Alberta..

The Board of Governors’ “near-virtual” scheme will leave less than 40 employees in Athabasca. Athabasca will lose about $37 million in annual wages resulting in well over $100 million in economic loss per year.

This will have a dramatic impact on the local economy: schools will close, businesses will fail, housing prices will shrink, and the local tax base will suffer. And perhaps even worse is the loss of social capital as bright young people and families move away, never to be replaced.

The $118 million in government-funded assets at the Athabasca campus will be abandoned. To whom does the Board of Governors expect to lease $118 million in office space in a ghost town?

The pandemic has proven that home offices are not effective long-term. Major corporations are bringing their people back to offices as fast as possible. The board’s dodgy experiment poses great risk to the long-term viability of AU. This is a big threat to the region and rural province.

The pandemic has also laid to rest the fiction that qualified people cannot be attracted to work in rural communities. Workers around the world migrated by the millions to small towns, rural settings and cottage country—an exact description of the Athabasca region.

The Lougheed government moved AU to Athabasca to enhance rural development, and it worked. Neither the past president nor the current board has the authority to reverse that decision, a political decision firmly supported by the provincial government and the people of Alberta.

AU is one of Alberta’s greatest success stories. Just what is the AU Board of Governors trying to fix? Why is it risking this success with a dodgy experiment in an unproven, unprecedented, unnecessary and wasteful adventure that plays with the lives of existing employees.

The near-virtual plan must be reversed. A presidential search is underway, the new president needs to live and work in Athabasca, and focus on rejuvenation of the Athabasca campus.

I urge your government to take control of this reckless board before they destroy one of Alberta’s greatest institutions.

Yours truly,

(Name)

cc: Glenn Van Dijken, MLA for Athabasca-Barrhead-Westlock

503A Legislature Building,

10800 - 97 Avenue NW  
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Honourable Demetrios Nicolaides, Minister of Advanced Education

403 Legislature Building

10800 - 97 Avenue

Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Honourable Ric McIver, Minister of Municipal Affairs

132 Legislature Building

10800 - 97 Avenue

Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Your MLA

Another affected MLA(s)