Keep Athabasca in Athabasca University” Sample Letter #4 (medium)

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

*(Personalize the letter)*

*(Date)*

Premier Jason Kenney

307 Legislature Building

10800 - 97 Avenue

Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Dear Premier Kenney,

I am very concerned about the recent Athabasca University plan to become a near-virtual organization structure.

(Your story…

E.g., I worked for X years in \_\_\_\_ role(s) at Athabasca University.

Athabasca University, in my view, has three key advantages. First, it is open, any adult, anywhere in the world can sign up to take AU courses or enroll in AU programs. Second, AU’s flexible course start and end dates are unique in universities and are a key advantage compared to conventional universities with pre-determined terms. Third, the unconventional location of the University outside of a city provides strategic and creative focus and is an invaluable differentiator. Continuance of Athabasca University’s key differentiators is critical to its future.

The near-virtual plan will require virtually all University staff to work from home, and for most, that will mean they can live and work anywhere in Canada. This will erode the cohesive University culture and destroy the collaborative and creative vigour that has driven the immense success of the University. It will mean that the University almost certainly will not survive as a unique institution beyond ten to twenty more years.

The decision some 40 years ago to base Athabasca University in Athabasca led to its incredible growth and success. This was propelled by great communication among University management, academics, professionals and support staff in the Athabasca community. Following the near-virtual plan, personal investment in the University is already eroding significantly. Management by walking about is now non-existent, as most professionals, academics and executives are no longer based in Athabasca. Further, informal and formal decision-making is limited to a small, and increasingly out-of-touch, management group.

I urge your government to intervene in this disastrous plan for the sake of staff, students and stakeholders. Do you really want the University to survive independently? If so, in my view the only way that can happen is if the executive, professionals and academic teams come back together and are solidly based, working and connecting at the Athabasca campus. Many benefits will continue to accrue to the University, and to our students, community, and province if the near-virtual plan is reversed.

The time horizon for saving Athabasca University is very short. Athabasca University is a gem that will continue to shine throughout Canada, but only if it is carefully nurtured and the coming meltdown averted. I urge your government to ensure the future of Athabasca University in Athabasca.

Very sincerely

(Your 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)