

ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

**QUESTION 833/841-18(2): AURORA COLLEGE FOUNDATIONAL REVIEW /
DISMISSAL OF BOARD**

September 20, 2017

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my statement, the terms of reference and the group of people to be consulted for the Aurora College foundational review are very similar to the assessment of the college completed in 2013. Why is another assessment of the college necessary at this point? That is my question for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we are aware of that review. A couple of things, just an update: some of those recommendations have been addressed in terms of working. Another one of those recommendations was to review the college's programs, and also service structure. The foundational review will, I believe, address that. At the same time, in the previous government, that report was also dismissed, but we also still looked at seeing if there was anything we could take out of that report. We also have new NWT-specific data that is going to help guide us into the way moving forward with Aurora College and developing programs and services, as well.

MS. GREEN: Thanks to the Minister for that response. He started to answer my second question, which is: what has changed within the college and the department in the last four years that makes a new ground-up study necessary? It goes way beyond having a new labour market forecast. The original 2013 study looked at governance, strategic planning, relationships between the Minister and the department, and so on, so what else has changed to make a new study necessary?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: The Member also kind of answered this. The NWT-specific data and the labour market information report that we have now will help guide us and Aurora College into the programs and services that meet the needs and educational needs of NWT residents and Northerners. It is going to help us make evidence-based decisions once we see the results. Just moving forward, that information is definitely going to help us. We are also going to be looking at administration, operations, governance, and legislation with this foundational review.

MS. GREEN: Will the Minister table the 2013 assessment of the college by Cleveland Consulting so that the public can assess the value for money of that assessment?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: As I mentioned previously, that document itself was not for distribution or not made public. I will have to take this back to my Cabinet colleagues to get some direction on whether or not we will release that report.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I take that as a commitment that the Minister will

explore each and every way to make this document public. On March 6th of this year, the Minister said in the House, and I quote, "The timeline for completion of this new foundational review is fall 2017, with an implementation target of 2018-2019 academic year." Can the Minister update the House when the foundational review will be completed? Thank you.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: As the Member mentioned yesterday in her statement, we just signed a contract. Right now currently we're working on a work plan with the contractor and our department is working really hard to get that work plan developed. Once I have that work plan I will share it with Members and committee and get their input, as well as Cabinet to get their input into how we move forward. We're just waiting on that work plan, and I can't commit to anything until both the contractor and our department staff have worked on completing it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**QUESTION 841-18(2):
DISMISSAL OF AURORA COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I did some additional research and I have some additional questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment about his decision to dismiss the Aurora College board of governors in May.

According to the board minutes posted on the college web site from the February meeting, "Individual board members brought forward their concerns over the budget cuts, specifically the impact on students, regional centres, and staff." Can the Minister tell us what consultation he did with the board prior to announcing the changes to the teacher education and social work programs? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in previous sessions, our staff worked with Aurora College to look at some of these proposed cuts and made sure that we made informed decisions based on data and the information that they provided. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: The minutes of that February meeting go on to say, "The board also noted their disappointment in how the decisions were brought forward with little consultation or discussion with the board." Does the Minister recall this statement from his February meeting with them?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: If the Member wants, we can get that information on how the process went down in regard to our staff meeting with the Aurora College senior management, how this information was relayed, and how this discussion happened right from staff to staff. We will get that information for the Member.

MS. GREEN: I will take that as a commitment. The minutes of the February board meeting show that the board was fully functional. It was engaged in issues of financing, governance, strategic planning, and so on. I am still not understanding why the Minister decided to fire the board in May.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: When the discussions of the foundational review had taken

place in the May/June sitting, we looked at some direction that has come through, and one of those discussions and directions that were brought forth from some Members was that we look at the governance and we look at the structure of the College. There was a recommendation from the 2013 document moving forward. We took that decision, made that decision, and we are going to be looking at governance as we do this foundational review moving forward, and we look forward to the results.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am going to push back on that statement. I do not recall any of the Regular MLAs saying that they wanted the board dismissed and that this was something that they wanted to see in connection with the foundational review. What I want to say is that those minutes which I have just referenced indicate clearly that the Minister and the board were on different pages. The obvious question is: did the Minister decide to dismiss the board so they would not have any further pushback about the changes he wants to make at the College? Mahsi.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: No, not at all. Thank you