

Minister says he will have a look at issue: Newcomers from Ukraine facing international student fees

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK

Saskatchewan Advanced Education Minister Gord Wyant told the World-Spectator Thursday that he will have his department look for solutions to the issue of Ukrainian newcomers facing international student tuition fees for post-secondary education in the province, which can be several times higher than the fees paid by Saskatchewan residents, as well as not having access to student loans.

The province of Saskatchewan has made several changes to make it easier for Ukrainians who have come to Saskatchewan to escape the Russian invasion of their homeland, to settle in the province.

The province made it simple for Ukrainians to switch to Saskatchewan drivers' licences, is offering reduced rates initially in Housing Authority homes, and made amendments to The Education Regulations, 2019 to ensure that all Ukrainian school aged students arriving through the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) Program receive tuition-free Kindergarten to Grade 12 education.

However, some Ukrainian families who have settled in Saskatchewan have discovered that post-secondary education would be a massive cost as their children are treated as international students, who face much higher tuition fees than Canadians.

Tuition for international students at the U of S ranges from \$25,000 to \$35,000 per year depending on the college, compared to \$7,000 to \$9,700 for Canadian students. Dentistry tuition for international students is \$118,056. (One local student is interested in pursuing dentistry at the University of Saskatchewan, another is interested in becoming a lawyer like her mother).

"I am treated as an international student, but it's a problem for us because the cost is a lot more, like twice or more,"



Viktoriia Buzdyhan, left, and Viktoriia Knyhnytska, right, came with their families from Ukraine and have settled in Wawota. They would like to go to university in Saskatchewan, but because newcomers from Ukraine are not classed as refugee claimants or permanent residents, they are subject to the same fees as international students (multiple times higher than the tuition fees Canadian students pay) and do not qualify for student loans. The World-Spectator spoke with the Minister of Advanced Education Thursday and he said he will have his ministry look at how they can fix the situation.

said Viktoriia Knyhnytska, a grade 12 student who will be graduating this June and wants to study dentistry at the University of Saskatchewan.

As a result of facing international student fees in Saskatchewan, some families who have just been welcomed to Canada under the CUAET program, and have just settled in Southeast Saskatchewan, are looking at splitting up their families and sending the students to Europe for university as it is more affordable, while the rest of the family stays here.

Wyant told the World-Spectator that he is anxious to come up with a solution to the issue.

"The fact of the matter is that this has just been brought to our attention and we're kind of anxious to do something about it," he says. "The students are all here on what they call an Emergency Travel Authorization. They're not refugees and they're not Permanent Residents—all of whom qualify for the local tuition rates and qualify for student loans. Because they're not in those cat-

egories, they qualify as international students and they don't qualify for student loans.

"Since this was brought to our attention, I raised this with a number of my colleagues. Of course we're really committed to supporting Ukrainian immigrants who have come here to escape the war, so we really want to continue to do what we can to support them and their contributions," says Wyant.

"I have asked my ministry to come up with some solutions so that we can take something to cabinet to get this resolved. I had some preliminary conversations with my cabinet colleagues and they're all supportive of it. Of course, I don't have a formal decision from cabinet and I won't have that for a bit, but we're certainly hopeful that we can move something forward to accommodate these kids. That's where we're at since this just came to our attention."

Wyant said his ministry will be talking to post-secondary institutions in the province.

"Of course, we're going to have to work with our post-secondary sector as universities are responsible for setting their own tuition notwithstanding what we might say. Sask Polytechnic we have some control over, but we're hopeful that we can work with our post-secondary institutions and universities to come up with a reasonable solution for these kids."

"We want them to stay here. We want them to learn here. We want them to go to school here."

"Whatever we can do to continue to support them, we're going to do. I hope to have some further direction on this next week. I've asked my ministry to work as quickly as they can to come up with some proposals for us, but we're keenly aware that we need to do something to accommodate the students."

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Minister says he will have a look at issue: Newcomers from Ukraine facing international student fees

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"There's a significant differential between domestic and international students, as you know, and the ability to access those student loans. So we're very anxious to get something forward to cabinet as quickly as we can."

He said he believes the post-secondary institutions will be willing to work with the province to address the issue.

"I've asked my ministry officials to reach out to both universities and I certainly think they're going to look at what kind of guidance we're going to have," he said.

"We're very hopeful that the universities will follow suit."

"We're certainly looking at all of the possibilities in order to try and resolve this."

"We know these students are starting to make decisions and we don't want to lose the momentum. That is why, when this came to our attention earlier in the week, I asked my ministry officials to bring something forward as quickly as possible."

"I've had some preliminary discussions with some of my cabinet colleagues and I think that they were general-

ly supportive of it, but we need to have a cabinet decision on it so we're going to attempt that as soon as possible."

He said the government will look at including Ukrainian students in student loan eligibility as well as qualifying for Canadian tuition fees.

"We would include that as part of our package," he said. "If they're going to qualify as domestic students, they would have access to the student loan program just like refugees or permanent residents would."

Wyant said his message to the students is that they are working on the issue and hope to have a solution soon.

"Our message to the students is that we're working on this very diligently and we hope to have something formalized as soon as next week," he said.

Arts centre planned for Moosomin

Continued from Page 3

"We can be the hub. People can come from other communities to learn and to explore, and share," he said.

Some of the ideas for workshops and classes are painting with acrylics, watercolours, alcohol inks, as well as digital arts for photography and video editing, paper crafts, glass work with stained glass and fused glass, as well as jewelry making, wood carving, candle making, pottery with slab throwing and wheel throwing, along with culinary arts and more.

Beckett said they will also be providing workshops focused on cultural visual arts with crafts linked to traditional arts within the Indigenous, Filipino and Ukrainian cultures.

The group said they are open to include other ideas for workshops if people have an idea for something they do not have on their list.

Looking for sponsors

The group is aiming to host the art classes and workshops free of charge to kids.

"We want to keep it affordable for families and for people," said Grant.

"Let's say I want to go experience alcohol ink, well maybe I won't buy a set of alcohol inks myself, but if I was able to take a class or be exposed to it without huge costs to me, I might really love it and decide to take it on, or I might decide that's not for me and try something different."

Aside from applying for grants to pay for operating costs, and donations to pay for the equipment needed, the group is currently looking for volunteers and local sponsors to assist with the Moosomin Arts and Culture Centre.

"We're hoping to apply for grants. We're looking for any donations or sponsorship," said Crellin. "We're looking for volunteers, instructors who would be teaching classes. That's where we are at right now."

People can contact Krista Crellin at kristacrellin@hotmail.com, (306) 434-9000, or Jacqui Beckett at jacquibeckett@gmail.com, (306) 434-7090, or Terry Grant at terendk@sasktel.net, (306) 434-6240.

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**Kevin
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In our opinion:

Time to keep federal advertising dollars in Canada

The Canadian government has supported journalism in some ways for generations.

Since the founding of Canada's first newspaper, the Halifax Gazette, which dates to 1752, government advertising has been an important source of revenue for newspapers.

Even prior to Confederation, direct supports, like the former Publications Assistance Program, which subsidized the postal delivery of newspapers, ensured that Canadians have access to high-quality Canadian news.

Twenty years ago, the federal government spent \$110 million on advertising, which was managed by 30 advertising agencies.

Print newspapers and magazines accounted for about one-third of federal advertising spending, while internet advertising accounted for less than 1 per cent of the spend.

Last year, the Government of Canada spent a total of \$140 million on advertising, involving one Agency of Record for media planning and placement.

While the one Agency of Record model is efficient, we are concerned with where scarce ad dollars are being spent.

Last year, just \$6 million or five per cent of federal advertising dollars went toward print publications. That is a far cry from the roughly one-third of twenty years ago.

For comparison, government spending on Facebook/Instagram ads alone accounted for almost double what is spent on all print advertising combined. And the spending on Twitter, Snapchat, and TikTok combined was greater than all print expenditures.

Today, digital advertising accounts for more than 50 per cent of all federal ad spending. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, which is suing Google, the company "pockets on average more than 30 per cent of the advertising dollars that flow through its digital advertising technology products."

Social media companies operating in Canada do not employ journalists and they are shielded from liability by Section 230 of Title 47 of the United States Code. They enjoy all the benefits of being a publisher without any of the obligations.

Digital search and social giants have contributed greatly to connecting people, businesses, and communities. Yet, there have been unintended consequences.

While they provide the essential plumbing of our digital age, they have not figured out a way to separate the clean drinking water (e.g., fact-based news and information) from the sewage (e.g., fake news).

Trusted news sources provide an important filter that helps Canadians make informed choices.

Real journalism, which is based on editorial judgment and rigorous fact-checking, costs real money, which comes from advertising and/or subscription revenue.

Canadian news publishers employ real journalists, who adhere to strict editorial standards, and publishers can be held liable for their content.

Yet, federal advertising dollars that once helped fund our newsrooms have shifted largely to Big Tech companies that benefit from our content.

The federal government has recognized that the business of journalism is in trouble. It has taken steps to fill news deserts and areas of news poverty through the Local Journalism Initiative.

It has also introduced Bill C-18, the Online News Act, which will allow publishers to come together to negotiate fair content licensing agreements with web giants and level the digital playing field.

One of the most powerful tools in any government's policy toolkit is procurement.

Procurement can help governments advance socio economic policy objectives, including job creation, and deliver better outcomes.

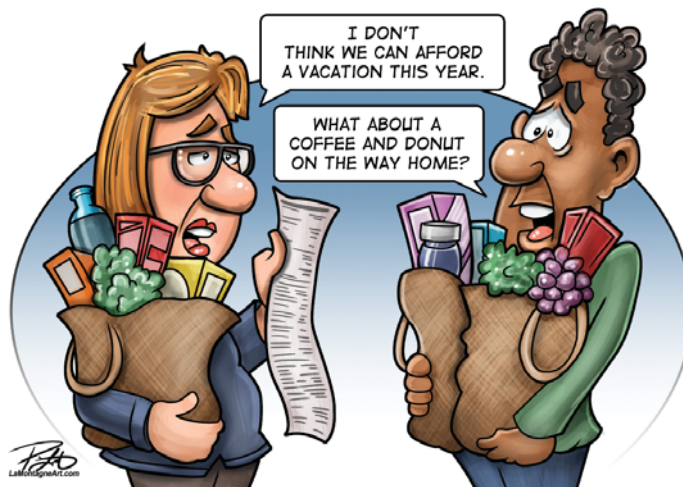
Indeed, the federal government's Policy on Social Procurement facilitates and supports the inclusion of socio-economic measures in procurement to support the goal of achieving best value for the Crown and, in turn, for Canadians.

Isn't it time for the federal government to align its advertising spending with its public policy goal of supporting accountable and trusted sources of information?

Isn't it time to support the home team and keep advertising dollars, which support fact-based, fact-checked civic journalism, in Canada?

The consequences of inaction are more misinformation and disinformation, a less informed and engaged citizenry, less robust public discourse, and a loss of community.

This editorial was written by Paul Deegan, president and chief executive officer of News Media Canada.



Isn't it great when government works like it's supposed to?

It's wonderful to see how responsive this provincial government can be.

When government works like it should, problems are solved by the simple act of raising them—when there is an issue and it is brought to the government's attention, it is dealt with and corrected.

I have to say dealing with Saskatchewan's provincial government lately has been a textbook lesson in how government should work.

A case in point, on Sunday, April 23, it was brought to my attention for the first time that Ukrainian newcomers to Saskatchewan were facing the same fees for post-secondary education as foreign students—multiple times higher than Sask residents would pay.

That's because under the special program that brought them to Canada, they are neither permanent residents nor refugees.

For the same reason, Ukrainian newcomers do not qualify for student loans.

So they are facing massive costs for university and no access to student loans.

I found out about this after speaking to a young woman named Viktoriia at an event in Wawota Sunday marking one year since the first Ukrainian arrived in Wawota.

She is graduating Grade 12 in Wawota this June, and would like to start university at the U of S this fall.

Cannington MLA Daryl Harrison was also there Sunday and we raised it with him.

I asked Moosomin MLA Steven Bonk about the issue at the Chamber meeting Tuesday.

On Wednesday, I requested an interview with Advanced Education Minister Gord Wyant, and explained the problem.

On Thursday Minister Wyant gave me a call and we got an interview. He said he had not been aware of this issue until we started raising it last week, and both Daryl Harrison and Steven Bonk raised it with him.

He said he was already getting his department to try to find a solution, and expects to see a solution this week.

That's how things should work: Problem raised, solution identified, solution implemented.

To have the minister commit to coming up with a solution within days of an issue being raised is nothing new for us.

As a matter of fact, a few weeks ago we may have set a world record for getting a problem



Kevin Weedmark

sorted a few weeks back. Some job applicants didn't appear to be given a fair shake when applying to the Saskatchewan Health Authority. I sent an email to someone in the Premier's Office, to the Health Minister, to our three local MLAs, and a few other people in government, got the first call back within a few minutes, and within four hours had the premier's office offering to solve the issue and reach out to the individuals directly. And the email I got back from someone in the premier's office afterwards read "Isn't it great when government works like it's supposed to?! Thanks for bringing it to our attention."

That is how government is supposed to work. Someone suggested to me afterward that we got the problem sorted within hours because I knew the right people in government.

Of course that's nonsense. The problem got sorted because the people in this government care, and genuinely want to do the right thing. Because of that, when an issue is raised, they start right away trying to find a solution.

I wish every government operated like that. I compare the days or hours it takes to solve an issue with this government with the months and months it took to get my interpreter from Afghanistan and his family safely to Canada after the federal government had provided a visa for him to travel to Canada in recognition of his service to this country.

Wouldn't it be great if every government worked like it's supposed to?

Arts and Culture Centre a brilliant idea

A group of individuals has brought forward an idea that seems to be resonating in Moosomin—setting up an Arts and Culture Centre. When the idea was presented at the Moosomin Chamber of Commerce meeting Tuesday, there was genuine excitement, and a lot of interest, and a lot of great questions.

It will be an amazing addition to the entire area if the arts centre comes to fruition.

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Proud moment

Viktoriia Knyhnytska of Wawota was at the Legislature in Regina Thursday for an announcement by the provincial government that will make post-secondary education more affordable for Ukrainians in Canada under CUAET. The province announced that Ukrainians will now pay the same tuition fees as Canadians and refugees. Viktoriia had raised the issue April 23, Minister Gord Wyant told the World-Spectator April 27 he asked his department for ways to fix the issue, and two weeks later, on May 11, the government announced a new program to fix the disparity in tuition fees.

Province makes post-secondary education affordable for Ukrainian newcomers

BY KEVIN WEEDMARK
Viktoriia Knyhnytska, a Grade 12 student at Wawota, will be going to the University of Saskatchewan this fall thanks to changes announced by the province Thursday.

After the World-Spectator broke the story two weeks ago that Ukrainian newcomers to Canada under the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) program must pay international student fees, which are multiple times higher than Canadian fees, and do not qualify for student loans, the province an-

nounced Thursday that Ukrainians in Canada under CUAET will pay domestic tuition rates rather than international rates.

After hearing the provincial announcement of the changes, speaking to the provincial media about the impact of the changes, and being introduced in the Legislative Assembly, Viktoriia, who wants to go to university to become a dentist like her parents, said seeing the political system in action, and seeing an issue that affects her addressed, was "awesome."

Both refugees and Canadian residents pay domestic

tuition rates, much lower than international student tuition fees. The CUAET program does not categorize Ukrainian arrivals as refugees. As a result, those who want to pursue post-secondary education would be required to pay the higher international student tuition rates, up to \$35,000 a year.

"Our government remains committed to supporting Ukrainians who have come to Saskatchewan seeking refuge from war," Advanced Education Minister Gordon Wyant said Thursday.

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Province makes post-secondary education affordable for Ukrainian newcomers

Continued from front

"These students are in a unique situation. We want them to be able to continue living here to study at one of our excellent post-secondary institutions without causing severe financial hardship for their families."

Among those who may be eligible to pay domestic tuition are approximately two dozen Ukrainian students who will graduate from high school in Saskatchewan this spring. If they choose to pursue post-secondary education in the province, they will now pay the same tuition rates as domestic students.

"Ukrainian arrivals are contributing in many ways to our communities, our labour force, and the rich cultural fabric of Saskatchewan," Wyant said. "They deserve an opportunity to study in Saskatchewan, and hopefully become permanent residents and contribute to the growth and future of our province."

"Saskatchewan has welcomed around 4,000 Ukrainian citizens to the province over a number of months. It has been very gratifying to see our residents, your friends and your neighbours, open their arms and their hearts to help these newcomers get settled and adjust to life in this province."

"We're announcing today that our government will be helping Ukrainian families contribute to our communities, our workforce and our culture."

"We're introducing a process that will help Ukrainian students access secondary education right here in Saskatchewan. Our government will provide funding to allow Ukrainian students to pay domestic tuition rates at Saskatchewan institutions rather than international ones."

"We all know that post-secondary education is a significant investment for students and for their families. There are many financial supports made available to help most students manage the cost but those supports aren't available to Ukrainians who have come here to escape from the war."

"These students deserve a chance to get

an education at one of our excellent post secondary institutions without experiencing significant financial hardship. Our government must give these students a chance to stay here near their families and further their education here in Saskatchewan."

"We know that about two dozen Ukrainian students who came to Canada under the Emergency Travel Program are graduating from Grade 12 this spring and about the same number will graduate next year."

"There may be others who come to Canada through that program who want to get a post secondary education but can't afford it. There are many opportunities available in Saskatchewan for high quality training and rewarding careers. This initiative will give them that chance by allowing them to pay the same tuition as our Saskatchewan residents."

"I also want to note that our government plans to provide some additional financial aid to these students."

"They will receive the same amount of grant funding that a low income Saskatchewan student would receive through the student loan program."

"To the students and to all Ukrainian arrivals, I want to convey our hope that you will be permanent residents in Canada. We want you to stay and we want you to be part of the growth and the future of Saskatchewan."

Program will make a difference for Viktoriia

Viktoriia said now that she will pay the same tuition fees as a Canadian, an education in Saskatchewan is attainable.

She has registered for the University of Saskatchewan to start this fall.

"I want to be a dentist like my Mom and Dad. For international students the cost is \$35,000 for a year, for a domestic student it's \$7,000, so it makes a big difference," she said.

"For us it's really good news to hear that, because we came from Ukraine where there is war, and we're just happy

to hear this."

Kay says program may attract more families

Wawota Mayor Kevin Kay said he believes the program will result in more Ukrainian families choosing to locate in Saskatchewan.

"We have some that were looking at Saskatchewan, but tuition was an issue," he said. "Now that we have this program, I'm confident that they will be coming to Saskatchewan."

He said the announcement is important for Wawota, which has attracted a number of Ukrainian families. "We have welcomed 11 families to our community, and this is a very important announcement for us, because there are a number that have graduated high school, a number who are getting ready for higher education, which Ukrainians take very, very seriously, just like Canadians. We are welcoming more Ukrainians to Wawota and this will make a difference."

Kay said the Ukrainian newcomers have quickly become a vital part of the community.

"Several want to become volunteer firefighters now, which is huge for our community. They've started a chess club, they're involved in soccer, and several other community groups."

U of R, U of S presidents refuse to speak on issue

The World-Spectator reached out to both the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan, both when the issue of post-secondary education for Ukrainian students was first raised, and after the government made the announcement Thursday.

The World-Spectator requested interviews with both university presidents and both refused to speak on the issue.

Other universities have been more ac-

commodating for Ukrainians under CUAET. Many universities decided on their own to charge Canadian tuition rates to CUAET students. The University of Alberta and Brandon University went farther, charging no tuition at all to Ukrainian students. And the University of Manitoba paid up to \$36,000 to Ukrainian students to cover tuition, books, food, and accommodations, while the U of R and U of S chose to charge international student fees in the tens of thousands of dollars to those same students.

Heather Persson, Chief Communications Officer and Associate Vice-President, Strategic Communications at the U of S provided the following statement:

"We welcome the news announced May 11 from the Government of Saskatchewan and the Ministry of Advanced Education that the province will provide funding to ensure Ukrainian students who arrived in Saskatchewan over the past year under the CUAET program who wish to pursue post-secondary education will pay domestic tuition rates rather than international rates."

"As USask President Peter Stoicheff noted in his message to the campus community in February 2022, Saskatchewan is home to one of Canada's highest populations of people of Ukrainian descent. Our university conducts programming and research related to Ukrainian culture, language, politics, and history. We have partnerships and student exchanges with institutions in Ukraine. We have deep and strong relationships with Ukraine, and we are committed to continued discussions with all levels of government about how we can best support students coming to our province and country through CUAET."

The university refused to answer questions about why it took action by the provincial government to bring fees for CUAET students in line with other refugees and Canadian students, when other institutions reduced tuition fees for Ukrainian students on their own. The University of Regina would not arrange an interview with its president on the issue.



Held their annual meeting at the Regency Court on March 23, 2023 with 22 members present.

The club would like to encourage members and new members to enjoy the activities that are available at the Nutrien Sportsplex.

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**Kevin
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In our opinion:

Improved transportation corridors could help boost energy exports

Canada's prairie provinces have signed an agreement that could benefit energy trade with other countries.

Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba entered a memorandum of understanding in April to improve western Canada's interconnected road, rail, air, energy and port corridors.

The long-term goals include expanding the West's export-based economy, strengthening the region's global markets participation, and building relationships with international trading partners—several of which are calling on Canada to speed up liquefied natural gas (LNG) development.

"The perception of Canada's trade infrastructure by customers abroad has plummeted," said Carlo Dade, director of the Trade and Investment Centre at the Canada West Foundation, which worked closely with the provinces to support their efforts.

Internationally, Canada dropped from a top 10 supplier a decade ago to rank number 32 in the World Economic Forum's 2019 Global Competitiveness Report, he noted.

"The decline in our global trade infrastructure stems from our inability to manage (the) development of trade infrastructure. Our unwillingness to move LNG is added on top of this to give Canada two black eyes," said Dade.

According to the Government of Canada, the goods and services trade accounted for around 65 per cent of Canada's GDP in 2020.

And that, said Dade, is a good reason to improve transportation corridors for even greater efficiency. "Trade pays for health care, education and keeping the lights on," he said.

The agreement between the prairie provinces provides a new platform to advocate mutual interests at the federal level.

The vision of building nationwide connected corridors to transport any number of commodities, including oil, gas, hydrogen, forestry products, fish, and manufactured goods, has been championed by many, including Indigenous business leader Chris Sankey.

"This is good news for prairie provinces, and I'm hoping British Columbia will come on board," said Sankey, CEO of Blackfish Enterprises and former elected councillor of the Lax Kw'alaams First Nation near Prince Rupert.

"For us to start working together, I think it's important that Indigenous people are at the table."

Indigenous communities are the solution to building economic activity in their territory, said Sankey, adding that Indigenous participation in improving transportation corridors creates an alignment that can de-risk projects.

"I would say to our leaders, we need to start thinking globally and acting locally," he said.

Canada's challenges delivering energy to international customers are raising questions about its ability to supply other commodities, said Dade.

Canada has yet to deliver a single LNG export shipment while the global LNG sector thrives. The U.S. has become one of the world's largest LNG exporters. In 2022, Germany signed a 15-year LNG supply deal with Qatar after German Chancellor Olaf Scholz ended a visit to Canada without a commitment to supply LNG.

"We currently cannot have rational conversations about moving energy in this country, partially because we have those conversations in isolation," said Dade. "Each transport project, each sector, each bottleneck gets its own conversation. In a country with integrated supply and production chains, everything impacts everything else."

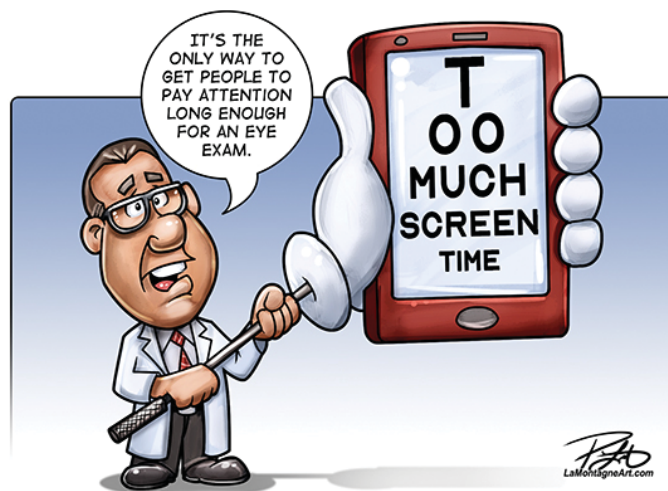
According to the latest industry outlook, global LNG demand is expected to exceed 700 million tonnes by 2040 from its 2022 level of 397 million tonnes. The growth is driven by emerging Asian economies seeking to curb emissions by reducing reliance on coal-fired power.

Canadian LNG is expected to have among the world's lowest emissions per tonne due to a colder climate, lower methane emissions from natural gas production, and the use of hydroelectricity to power operations.

In February, representatives from Japan and South Korea stressed that Canada should accelerate LNG development, saying, "the world is waiting."

"Canada can and should play a very important role to support the energy situation not only in Japan and South Korea, but the world," said Yamanouchi Kanji, Japan's ambassador to Canada.

This editorial was written by James Snell, a multimedia journalist, and Deborah Jarenko is director of content for the Canadian Energy Centre.



Great work by a lot of people led to quick solution for Ukrainian students

Last week the province announced that Ukrainian newcomers to Canada will pay the same tuition rates as Canadians and refugees. A lot of people working together made the difference. Here are a few of them and a report card on their efforts.

Viktoriia Knyhnytska

Viktoriia started the whole process by raising her concerns. Kara and I spoke with her at an event in Wawota April 23. She did an excellent job of explaining her situation. On Thursday, Viktoriia was there at the Legislature for the announcement of the government's solution to the issue and she did an amazing job explaining to the provincial media how she will be affected.

A-plus-plus-plus for Viktoriia who represented Ukrainian students so well Thursday.

Kevin Kay

Kevin Kay is the mayor of Wawota and has led the effort to welcome Ukrainians to Wawota. He advocated for a solution to the post secondary tuition issue. He is a tireless advocate for the Ukrainians in his community, and was there for the announcement last week.

Daryl Harrison

Daryl Harrison is the MLA for Cannington. He was there at the same event in Wawota on April 23, we spoke with him there, he said he would take it to the minister, and he did, and he effectively communicated the issue.

Steven Bonk

Steven Bonk is the MLA for Moosomin. I spoke to him at the Moosomin Chamber of Commerce meeting two days after the Wawota meeting, he said he would raise it with the minister, and he did, and he effectively communicated the issue.

Minister Gord Wyant

The Thursday after that meeting in Wawota where I first became aware of the issue, I interviewed Minister Gord Wyant about it. Steven and Daryl had already talked to him, and he already had his officials working on a solution.

This measure affects a very small number of people, and they and their families cannot vote. But it's clearly a matter of fairness. Minister Wyant did the fair and decent thing and tried to come up with a solution to treat the Ukrainian students fairly.

He told me in that interview that his department would try to come up with a solution quickly, and 14 days after that interview a solution was announced.

A-plus-plus-plus for the Minister.

University of Regina University of Saskatchewan

The University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan get failing grades for their failure to treat Ukrainian students fairly in the first place, and their failure to address the situation in any way when it was brought to their attention.

We wouldn't have had to get involved, the mayor of



Kevin Weedmark

Wawota wouldn't have had to get involved, our local MLAs wouldn't have had to get involved, Minister Wyant wouldn't have had to get involved . . . if the universities had simply done the decent thing and treated Ukrainian newcomers fairly.

Other universities across the country did the right thing.

Many chose to treat Ukrainians under CUAET as Canadians or refugees for the purpose of tuition.

Others have gone farther. Brandon University and the University of Alberta have chosen to charge no tuition at all to CUAET students.

The University of Manitoba is paying up to \$36,000 a year for CUAET students, to cover tuition, books, and living costs.

The federal government prioritized study permit applications from CUAET students and waived the fee, to put them on the same level as Canadians or refugees.

In light of all that, and what the country and province have done to welcome Ukrainians under this program, it's unfathomable how the U of R and U of S were so out of step with everyone else. By waiving the study permit fee, the federal government is saying to people like Viktoriia, "in recognition that you are fleeing a conflict zone and as part of our efforts to welcome you, we will save you \$150 on your study permit," and the U of R and U of S were saying to her, "that's nice, but we will charge you \$20,000 to \$25,000 more tuition than everyone else graduating from Wawota High School this year."

What horrendous, ridiculous unfair behavior from our institutions of higher learning.

Even after the province brought them into line with its announcement Thursday, the University of Saskatchewan was defending its original position, sending me a statement indicating that they believe students here under CUAET are here temporarily and should not qualify for domestic tuition rates.

"Ukrainian people who arrive in Canada through CUAET may return home when it is safe to do so and, as such, are not considered refugees who pay domestic tuition rates. Those who want to pursue post-secondary education would be required to pay higher international student tuition rates." This statement Friday, from the U of S after the province fixed the problem, is an insult on top of an insult. On Thursday at the Legislature both Minister Wyant and MLA Steven Bonk expressed the hope of many Ukrainians that they will become permanent residents. To insult the Ukrainians by charging ridiculously high tuition rates to them, and then to insult them by suggesting those building new lives here should or will be sent packing is deplorable.

Failing grades for both universities.

THE WORLD-Spectator



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In our opinion:

Saskatchewan needs to end small business tax

On Canada Day, small business owners in Saskatchewan will be paying higher taxes.

That's because the government of Saskatchewan is hiking the small business tax rate after cutting it to zero in 2020.

The government will argue that this tax cut was always supposed to be temporary.

But it's not everyday that a politician stumbles into a good idea and cutting taxes for small businesses is a great idea.

The government needs to recognize it's doing the right thing and permanently end the small business tax.

Raising the tax now is the wrong move because small businesses are still struggling, the government doesn't need anymore tax dollars and lower taxes help grow the economy.

Last year, inflation in Canada came in at 6.8 per cent. That means the average small business in the province is paying even more to operate their business.

Many businesses already operate on thin margins and adding more taxes on top of crushing inflation is like getting a punch to the stomach after being kicked in the head.

The government knows the benefits that lower taxes have for small businesses.

"Lowering taxes for every small business in our province over the next three years will help them to recover from the pandemic and enable them to retain and hire more workers," said Finance Minister Donna Harpauer after reducing the tax in 2020.

That logic hasn't changed. Low taxes still help businesses deal with economic troubles, and, despite moving on from the pandemic, experts predict a downturn in the near future.

With so much uncertainty, it's foolish for the government to impose even more costs on small businesses.

A couple of extra dollars in a business owners pocket every month could make or break their small business, but it's barely a drop in the bucket for the provincial government.

The Saskatchewan government collected a record amount of taxes last year, without taxing small businesses.

It raked in a windfall of over \$1.1 billion more in business taxes than it originally projected.

Taxing small businesses again would only increase that windfall by a mere eight per cent.

The government doesn't need any more tax dollars.

Not charging the tax over the last three years saved small businesses about \$189 million.

That's an average savings of \$6,100 per small business. And with a billion-dollar surplus projected for 2023, the government can afford to let small business owners save a little money.

Keeping the small business tax at zero per cent means Saskatchewan is more competitive with its neighbours.

Manitoba's small business tax is also zero per cent. And in Alberta, the NDP is pushing for an elimination of the small business tax.

If that happens, there will be provinces on either side of Saskatchewan where it will be cheaper to operate a business.

That makes it harder for Saskatchewan to attract new job creators.

Small businesses make up the backbone of the Saskatchewan economy.

Over 31,000 businesses in the province will see their taxes go up in July due to this tax hike.

Small businesses employ almost 150,000 Saskatchewanians.

Giving small businesses a hand is something that helps people in every single community in the province.

And if all that doesn't convince the government to end the small business tax, maybe its own budget will.

A low small business tax rate will "provide tax relief to key sectors of the provincial economy and help ensure tax competitiveness with similar businesses in other jurisdictions," according to budget documents.

Unlike many other province, Saskatchewan failed to provide any tax relief this year.

Making the small business tax cut permanent would be a small, but much needed, helping hand for Saskatchewan taxpayers.

Small business owners create jobs and help grow the economy.

The government needs to get rid of the small business tax for good.

This editorial was written by Gage Haubrich, the Prairie Director for the Canadian Taxpayers Federation.



Viktoriia Knyhnytska on the steps of the legislature, and being mentioned by the PM



From problem to solution:

Tracking an issue
from a conversation at the Wawota Village Inn in April
to a solution announced at the Saskatchewan Legislature in May
to a speech by the Prime Minister to the Ukrainian parliament in June

People bring issues and problems to us every day, and it's wonderful to see when things go smoothly from problem to solution. Here's a quick timeline of an issue that was raised with us, that was addressed by the provincial government and now is being used as an example to be proud of.



Kevin Weedmark

Sunday, April 23 Wawota Mayor Kevin Kay had invited us to an event to mark one year since the first Ukrainian newcomer arrived in that community. At the event Viktoriia Knyhnytska and a friend, also named Viktoriia, mentioned that Ukrainian newcomers in Canada under the Canada Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel had to pay international student fees, not the more affordable tuition that everyone else who lives and works in Canada pays.

In Viktoriia's case, she was graduating from Wawota School this June and wanted to go to the University of Saskatchewan to become a dentist like her parents, but couldn't afford the international student fees, multiple times higher than any of her fellow Wawota graduates would pay. We promised to do what we could to understand why that was and how it could be changed, and we raised the issue with Cannington MLA Daryl Harrison, who was there at the same event. He promised to talk to the minister at the start of the week.

Tuesday, April 25 At the Moosomin Chamber of Commerce meeting the issue was raised with Moosomin MLA Steven Bonk, and he promised to raise it with Minister of Advanced Education Gord Wyant as soon as possible.

Thursday, April 27 I interviewed Minister of Advanced Education Gord Wyant about the issue. By the time I talked to him Thursday the two local MLAs had spoken to him. He said he was not aware of the issue until that week, but pledged to have his officials find a solution to the issue.

Thursday, May 11 Kevin Kay, Viktoriia and myself all travelled to Regina for the announcement. We were there in the Saskatchewan Gallery as Minister Wyant made the announcement of the program, and were there in the Legislative Assembly as Moosomin MLA Steven Bonk addressed the issue. It was announced that the province would provide the difference between Canadian and international tuition fees to universities and colleges for Ukrainians here under CUAET.

Saturday, June 10 Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made a visit to Ukraine, and addressed the Ukrainian Parliament. He mentioned some of the things Canada is doing to help Ukrainians feel welcome, and both Saskatchewan's initiative and Viktoriia's name came up.

"In Saskatchewan, people who came through the Canada Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel will pay the same university tuition as the local kids. This means that students like Viktoriia, whose parents are dentists, will be able to follow her dream and afford to study dentistry at the University of Saskatchewan," the PM said. "We're building your future even as you fight for your own." He also spoke of the Ukrainian connection to the Prairies. "Over the years, Ukrainian Canadians worked the land. They built churches distinguished by their beautiful domes. In many ways, the Canadian Prairies are very similar to the landscape of Ukraine, with fields of golden wheat under the bluest skies, just like your flag."

So how did this issue get solved so decisively and so quickly? Because a few people did things exactly right.

Viktoriia Knyhnytska brought the issue forward, so she deserves the most credit for it being solved, and she and **Kevin Kay** explained the problem clearly and concisely.

Daryl Harrison and **Steven Bonk** took the issue to the minister quickly so it could be addressed.

And Advanced Education Minister **Gord Wyant** took the issue seriously and came up with a solution. None of what anyone did would have meant anything if Minister Wyant and the provincial government weren't willing to take an honest look at the problem, look at the options with an open mind, and come up with the best solution.

It's great to see when a solution is found for an issue like this.

Viktoriia has learned how problems get solved in Canada, and in this case her willingness to speak up and point out the problem has led to a solution that will help many students like her.

Let us know what YOU think!
send your letters to the editor to world_spectator@sasktel.net

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