

National Post

Colleges Want Cut Of Stimulus; Not On PM's List; Create jobs now, invest in future, group urges

Monday, January 5, 2009

Page: A4

Section: Canada

Byline: Mike De Souza

Dateline: OTTAWA

Source: Canwest News Service

Illustrations: Black & White Photo: Rod Macivor, Canwest News Service / Robert Gillett, president of Algonquin College in Ottawa, says his school is "turning away students who want post-secondary education" because it doesn't have the capacity to accept them all.

OTTAWA - Community colleges across the country say they are being left out of the federal government's infrastructure plan, even though they have enough projects to create about 50,000 construction jobs.

Jim Knight, president of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges, said the institutions urgently need new classroom space to cope with rising enrolment rates that could grow even faster in the coming months as thousands of laid-off workers seek training for new jobs and skills.

The association, which represents about 150 colleges across the country, estimates that new investments would create jobs right away in the construction of long-awaited expansion projects.

"It's a winning combination both ways," said Mr. Knight in an interview. "It creates employment now and then it creates the skills we need for the go-forward economy of the future."

But officials from the colleges said the existing framework of the Harper government's infrastructure plan focuses on roads and bridges and does not include specific targeted funding for classroom facilities.

Mr. Knight said the only option for colleges is to apply for funding for recreational facilities that would be shared with local communities.

"We need classrooms here," Mr. Knight said. "We need to ramp up the advanced skills we need for the future. Not to denigrate recreational, athletic and performing arts facilities, but obviously, the core need is much greater than that in colleges."

He estimates that there are about \$5-billion worth of projects that could start construction if there was a shared investment from the federal and provincial governments as well as the private sector. The association has sent letters to Transport, Infrastructure and Communities Minister John Baird as well as to all federal MPs, but has not received any new commitments from the government.

Mr. Baird could not be reached for comment but has previously said that he would not announce details of any proposed initiatives before the government tables its budget at the end of January.

Robert Gillett, president of Algonquin College in Ottawa, said his institution is still trying to raise

about \$13-million for a new facility.

He said the college, one of the largest in Canada, is forced to put thousands of would-be students on waiting lists every year because it does not have the capacity to accept them all.

"People are wanting to come and get educated and they can't," Mr. Gillett said. "We're turning away students who want post-secondary education."

Mr. Gillett said an investment in infrastructure for post-secondary institutions should be an essential part of a strategy for the economy.

"Even though we have an economic crisis right now, there is going to be a massive skills shortage in Canada and we can do something about that during this economic crisis, if we have the capacity to take more students."

The Daily News (Nanaimo)

Colleges fear being left out of federal infrastructure planning

Monday, January 5, 2009
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The Ottawa Citizen

Colleges want in on building plan; Federal cash will create 50,000 jobs, association says

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"We need classrooms here," Mr. Knight said. "We need to ramp up the advanced skills we need for the future."

He estimates there are about \$5 billion in projects for which construction could commence if there was a shared investment from the federal and provincial governments, as well as the private sector. The association has sent letters to Transport, Infrastructure and Communities Minister John Baird as well as to all federal MPs, but it has not received any new commitments.

Mr. Baird could not be reached for comment but has previously said he would not announce details of any proposed initiatives before the government tables its budget at the end of the month.

Robert Gillett, president and chief executive of Algonquin College, said his institution is still trying to raise about \$13 million for a new facility. He said the college, one of the largest in Canada, is forced to put thousands of would-be students on waiting lists every year because it doesn't have the capacity to accept them all.

"People are wanting to come and get educated and they can't," Mr. Gillett said.

"Even though we have an economic crisis right now, there is going to be a massive skills shortage in Canada -- and we can do something about that during this economic crisis, if we have the capacity to take more students."

Alberni Valley Times

Community colleges in Canada appeal for piece of infrastructure pie

Monday, January 5, 2009
Page: A15
Section: Nation & World
Byline: Mike De Souza
Dateline: OTTAWA
Source: Canwest News Service

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"People are wanting to come and get educated and they can't," said Gillett. "We're turning away students who want post-secondary education."

Gillett said an investment in infrastructure for post-secondary institutions should be an essential part of a strategy for the economy.

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The Leader-Post (Regina)

Colleges appeal for infrastructure funds

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Times Colonist (Victoria)

Community colleges seek funds from federal infrastructure plan

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The Windsor Star

Colleges appeal for piece of the infrastructure pie

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RAMP UP SKILLS

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