



MEDIA RELEASE

Association of Canadian Community Colleges

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Colleges and Institutes Welcome the Federal Government's Commitment to Investing in Growth and Prosperity

Ottawa, November 14, 2005 - In today's Economic and Fiscal Update, Finance Minister Ralph Goodale unveiled a plan aimed at improving the quality of life of Canadians – improving how Canadians access education and skills training opportunities is key to ensuring that we meet productivity and competitiveness goals.

Of particular note and importance to the college and institute system are the Federal Government's pledges to support the underpinning elements of a pan-Canadian Workforce Development Agenda.

Canada's colleges and institutes welcome the Federal Government's investment in innovation in postsecondary education and substantial improvement in access for low-income Canadians. Training and skills development are critical to creating a healthy and prosperous environment for all Canadians.

- Creating a \$1 billion Post-Secondary Education Innovation Fund will help address urgent needs. "Such an investment in college and institute infrastructure and equipment upgrades will ensure that these institutions can better respond to rapidly changing technological and skills requirements of industry. The need is substantial – and this is a definite step in the right direction" said Gerald Brown, President, Association of Canadian Community Colleges.
- Extending the existing first-year grants to lower-income students to cover up to four years of postsecondary education will significantly increase their participation. Reform of Canada's system of student financial assistance will help make postsecondary education more affordable to low- and middle-income Canadians. "Canada's colleges and institutes have long advocated for such reforms and grants, as financial resources have been a substantial barrier," said Mr. Brown.
- Increasing the participation of aboriginal peoples, workplace skills development, apprenticeship, literacy and essential skills, and immigrant labour market integration initiatives are all positive investments.
- Encouraging Canadians to study abroad, foreign students to study in Canada, and supporting the participation of Canadian postsecondary institutions in international networks are vital for growth and prosperity.
- ACCC is optimistic that the \$85 million annual increase in funding for Canada's granting councils will lead to the expansion of the NSERC College and Community Innovation Program.

Canada's colleges and institutes continue to call for increased dialogue and collaboration between all government levels and stakeholders in the development of a pan-Canadian Workforce Development Agenda that builds on the strengths of communities, colleges and institutes.

The Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) is the national and international voice of Canada's postsecondary colleges, institutes of technology, cégeps and university-colleges. For additional information, contact:

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