

## Encouraged by Budget, Colleges Call for Expanded Commitment

**Ottawa, May 2, 2006:** Over 150 colleges and institutes of technology applaud the federal government's decision to invest in the development of a skilled and educated workforce which will positively impact all Canadians.

By increasing employer incentives to hire apprentices, introducing grants for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year apprentices, creating tax deductions for skilled tradespeople, reducing the financial burden on students, deepening immigrant settlement services and creating a \$1 billion infrastructure fund for post-secondary education, the Conservative government's fiscal strategy has realized the depth and breadth of the skills gap in Canada and taken action to begin addressing the urgency of the education and training challenges facing the country.

"Canadian colleges and institutes of technology serve 1,000 communities in Canada, each of which has different needs. We are heartened to see a step in the right direction by allotting budgetary funds to strengthen these institutions and their capacities to produce highly-qualified skilled graduates," said Gerald Brown, President, Association of Canadian Community Colleges.

Colleges and institutes have long advocated for a Pan-Canadian Workforce Development Strategy. Colleges and institutes must be at the forefront, working closely with the government in a sustained commitment to developing a national set of actions which will address skills shortages, meet the changing needs of Canadian businesses and contribute to the economic growth of our country. In that context, particular emphasis must now be placed on the creation of a:

separate Post-Secondary Education Transfer fund and restore its funding to the level of 1992/93, adjusting for inflation and demographic growth.

College and Institute Research Development and Commercialization Support Fund, designed and funded specifically for colleges and institutes.

new Learner Support System which will provide increased access to postsecondary education for students as well as address the concerns of Aboriginal peoples, immigrants and disadvantaged groups.

The Association of Canadian Community Colleges is the national and international voice of 150 Canadian colleges, cégeps, institutes of technology and university-colleges. Visit [www.accc.ca](http://www.accc.ca) for more information.

- 30 -

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