



MEDIA RELEASE

Association of Canadian Community Colleges

Serving Canada's colleges, institutes, cégeps, university colleges and polytechnics

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Colleges and industry team up to boost innovation and create jobs

Ottawa, February 11, 2010 – A report released today by the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) found that private sector investment in applied and industry-driven research at Canada's colleges, institutes, polytechnics, cégeps and university colleges increased ten-fold over the last three years.

Partnerships for Productivity and Advanced Skills: The Role of Colleges in Canada's Innovation System compared results with a prior study in 2005-2006. Private sector investment ballooned from \$4 million to \$45 million, provincial/territorial government investment from \$13 to \$25 million and colleges themselves are now investing \$35 million. Federal investment dropped from \$28 to \$27 million. Private sector partnerships with colleges increased seven-fold, with 3,602 companies now participating.

"The private sector has a real hunger for what colleges offer and turns to them for new technologies, prototyping and process improvement. The results translate into productivity gains, enhanced competitiveness and new jobs," said James Knight, President and CEO of ACCC. "Colleges help businesses, particularly small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) start, develop and grow; they are vital contributors to our innovation system. The vast majority of new jobs are created by SMEs."

Colleges identified 142 areas of research specialization, most of which fall within the four priority areas of the federal Science and Technology Strategy.

Colleges embody an enormous concentration of expertise on the application of technology to process improvement and product development. They house centres of excellence and technology access units that support industry partners. They are graduating our next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs. More than any other institutions, they are key to improving Canada's lagging productivity.

One week ago, Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney sounded an alarm about slow economic growth and a lower standard of living should Canadian productivity not improve in the coming years.

ACCC has called on the Government of Canada to expand the College and Community Innovation Program and to support Technology Access Centres in colleges, consistent with the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council's strategic plan.

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The ACCC report is available online at:

<http://www.accc.ca/ftp/pubs/studies/201002researchbackgroundpaper.pdf>

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