



## **Post Secondary Education**

### **What's in the budget?**

- \$45 million (over 5 years) for a post doctoral fellowship program.
- \$222 million (over 5 years) for TRIUMF, a national laboratory for nuclear and particle and physics research.
- \$32 million per year for Canada's research granting councils, (\$16M to CIHR; \$13M to NSERC with \$5M tied to establishing business/academic partnerships; and \$3M to SSHRC), plus \$8 million (per year) to the Indirect Costs of Research Program.
- \$75 million for Genome Canada, focused on forestry and the environment.
- \$15 million (per year) for the College and Community Program to promote college/business partnerships.
- \$135 million (over 2 years) to the National Research Council Canada's regional innovation clusters program, supporting business/academic/ government partnerships.

Other research and development initiatives include:

- \$48 million (over 2 years) for research, development and application of medical isotopes;
- \$497 million (over 5 years) for RADARSAT Constellation Mission;
- \$49 million (annually) regional development agencies supporting innovation.

### **What does it mean?**

This year budget does nothing to address the funding crisis facing post-secondary education in Canada. Although the budget commitment to the 3% increase in transfer payments is welcome but does not even come close to addressing the current funding crisis and the need for an immediate cash infusion of at least \$1 billion to restore funding levels to 1992–1993 levels. Nor does it account for the rising cost of living, increasing enrollment, increasing operating and repair costs of buildings, equipment and library resources.

Student enrollment in our colleges and universities have risen in the months following the recession placing an extra burden on our institutions and also signaling the critical role post secondary education is playing in our economic recovery plan.

Under current conditions, economic growth is increasingly hinging on our ability to support a "knowledge economy". Fostering research and innovation has become an exit strategy out of the recession and our post secondary campuses are at the forefront of not only short term economic recovery, through training and skills development, but future economic prosperity.

Underfunding has ensured tuition fees and student debt, corporate sponsored and directed research, increased contracting out of services and jobs, and

a reliance on underpaid, contract workers, all of which are completely at odds with a public education system based on the principles of accessibility, affordability and equality. Those hardest hit by these trends are women, immigrants, workers/students of color and workers/students with disabilities.

The emphasis on science and technology, commercialization of research in this budget, and aspirations to corporatize our campuses through increasing numbers of academic/business partnerships, corporate research funding, patents and intellectual property rights revenue is a threatening trend that is compromising the quality of our public education system. Without proper public funding this trend will increase, as will an overreliance on tuition fees as a source of private funding.

Commercialization is occurring at the expense of basic research, inquiry and knowledge generation and maintenance of our science and humanities programs. At the moment, 49% of university professors teach in the Humanities, Education and Social Sciences yet the federal granting council supporting their research will only receive 3% of the federal research funds in this budget. The \$32 million offered to the granting councils in 2010 does not compensate for the \$143 million that was cut (over 3 years) in 2009.

Stimulus funds, under the Knowledge Infrastructure Program, have done little to address crumbling infrastructure on campus. To date very few infrastructure projects started and completed using

these funds. The matching funding requirement is creating a barrier to participation for some campuses and is creating an incentive to seek private funding support.

### **What would be better choices?**

The 2010 budget could have acknowledged our post secondary institutions as an important source of stable jobs, critical to our training and skill development needs, a source of valuable basic social and scientific research, and potentially on the cutting edge of emerging green technologies.

In doing so they could have established a sustainable, reliable post secondary education transfer payment instead of continuing to rely on private funding. CUPE has called for an increase in federal transfers for post-secondary education of \$1 billion to bring core funding back to 1992/93 rates. Post secondary institutions need to stop relying on tuition as a major source of private funding. The current funding transfer escalator should immediately be increased from 3% to at least 4.5% to account for increased cost of living and enrollment increases.

Restore the entire \$143 million that was cut (over 3 years) in the 2009 budget from our three federal research granting councils and allocate these funds equally and unconditionally.

Eliminate all incentives to privatize and pursue P3s on our campuses, and commit to increasing public funding for research, and the operation, building and renewal of our campus infrastructure.

**For more information, visit <http://cupe.ca/budget>**