



Public Interest Alberta

#35, 9912 – 106 Street, Edmonton, AB T5K 1C5 P 780.420.0471 F 780.420.0435
E pialta@telus.net W www.pialberta.org

Media Release

August 30, 2005

Government needs to go back to school on post-secondary education review

Edmonton, The provincial government's review of post-secondary education has failed to involve any meaningful input or debate from Albertans and public interest advocates around the province are concerned that nothing will change unless citizens get involved.

In response, Public Interest Alberta and its partner organizations, will distribute 20,000 copies of an information booklet, has set up an interactive website and will organize seven public forums around Alberta. Albertans are also being asked to grade the government on its commitment to key post-secondary education.

"Post-secondary education is a fundamental public interest issue that impacts on every aspect of our society, yet most people are not even aware that the government is doing a major review of the system," says Bill Moore-Kilgannon, Executive Director of Public Interest Alberta. "This campaign will allow Albertans to send a clear message to the government on how they want to see the problems of funding, affordability, access and quality resolved."

"Students are concerned that tuition will remain too high, student debt will continue to skyrocket and funding will remain too low if the public's views on affordability and quality continue to be left out", says Jen Smith, chair of the Council of Alberta University Students, and V.P. External, University of Calgary Students' Union.

David Milner, President of the Alberta College and Institutes Faculty Association says "Faculty are committed to providing world-class post-secondary education, accessible and affordable to all Albertans, but the fact is that the vision of 'A Learning Alberta' cannot be achieved without a major re-investment of public funds in the system and a continuing commitment on the part of government to provide adequate resources to meet future challenges."

"The review of post-secondary education has ignored the fact that providing a quality education and ground-breaking research requires staff – this means support and academic staff", says Joy Correia, President of the Non-Academic Staff Association at the University of Alberta. "The government review must address the impact the deep cuts to staff and maintenance has had on our institutions if it hopes to seriously improve the system".

Alberta Teachers' Association President, Frank Bruseker, says "Teachers are very concerned about the ability of their students to be able to access and afford post-secondary education once they graduate from high school. Recently released figures show that a majority believe that 'post-secondary education is not within the means of the average Albertan', which confirms there are serious barriers for our students to get into higher education".

Lynn Odynski, a parent advocate and Chairperson of Public Interest Alberta says "post-secondary education is also of great concern for parents, seniors, employers, and workers, but their voices are not been heard in this review. In a healthy democracy, things change if citizens stand up and demand that the government improve the system."

-30-

Media Contact: Bill Moore-Kilgannon (780) 420-0471
To view the campaign and advocacy materials please go to www.pialberta.org