



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

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Media Release

Albertans Give Government Failing Grades on Post-Secondary Education

Edmonton, The majority of Albertans who participated in Public Interest Alberta's on-line report card and who spoke out at eight public forums across the province have given the government failing grades and have raised serious concerns about Alberta's post-secondary education system.

"The Post-Secondary Education Report Card" that was released today at a media conference in Edmonton, sends a very strong message to the provincial government on the eve of the Advanced Education Minister's Forum.

On the survey, Albertans were asked to grade the government on four primary areas (funding, affordability, accessibility and quality) as well as to identify their key concerns and suggestions on how the government could address the issues. The grading results were as follows:

Funding:	A - 2%,	B - 2%,	C - 18%,	D - 52%,	F - 25%
Affordability:	A - 0.8%,	B - 3%,	C - 15%,	D - 37%,	F - 44%
Accessibility:	A - 2%,	B - 6%,	C - 29%,	D - 38%,	F - 25%
Quality:	A - 3%	B - 13%	C - 31%	D - 33%	F - 20%

The report concludes, "It is clear that across the province, there is an enormous sense of frustration and concern with a wide range of post-secondary issues and with the government's failure to adequately address those concerns. The frustration was compounded by the sharp contrast between the government's rhetoric about the vital importance of post-secondary education to our individual and collective futures versus the realities of large student debt, lack of access, inadequate loans, rapidly growing tuition fees and other expenses, crowded classrooms, deteriorating infrastructure and many other concerns."

"We hope Minister Hancock will take the concerns outlined in this report as a wake up call, and make sure that the review of post-secondary education actually leads to real solutions to the many issues that are raised in this report," says Bill Moore-Kilgannon. "Albertans will judge the government on what they actually do to improve the affordability, accessibility and quality of post-secondary education, not on some vague rhetoric and principles."

Public Interest Alberta is a provincial non-partisan organization that advocates for better public services, institutions and democracy. Members of the PIA post-secondary education task force include the Non-Academic Staff, the Student Unions and the Faculty Associations in 14 colleges and technical institutions and the four universities in Alberta.

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The Post-Secondary Education Report Card can be viewed on-line at www.pialberta.org

Media Contact: Bill Moore-Kilgannon Ph (780) 420-0471, Cell (780) 993-3736.