

## Speech for 2006 BC Innovation Council Awards

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**Minister of Advanced Education Murray Coell**  
**Vancouver**  
**Monday, November 6, 2006**

This is an evening for celebration.

I am honoured to be here as we acknowledge the innovative spirit of British Columbia's technology entrepreneurs and business people.

I extend congratulations from the Ministry of Advanced Education and my colleagues in government to tonight's award winners and nominees. Your accomplishments show us what can happen when vision, ability and hard work come together. And your successes are moving British Columbia forward as a leader on many different fronts.

I'm also glad to see so many science fair winners here from school districts around the province. I fully expect you will be winning more awards – like those being given out tonight – as you build on your abilities and interest in the fascinating worlds of science and technology.

As Minister of Advanced Education with responsibility for research and technology, I know how important your talents will be to our province in the future.

Premier Campbell wants to build on B.C.'s strengths in these areas to make our province one of the world's top technology centres.

My Ministry is working closely with the key agency responsible for advancing innovation and commercialization in British Columbia, the BC Innovation Council. We continue to partner with and support BCIC as it works to advance the transfer of leading-edge research to industry and to spur the commercialization of world-class, technology-based products.

One way to measure the importance we place on research and innovation is the investments we've made which equal more than \$1.5 billion since 2001 and \$248.5 million in Budget 2006 alone. This has leveraged more than \$800 million in funding from other sources.

These investments have supported a wide array of research projects through the B.C. Knowledge Development Fund, the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research, the Leading Edge Endowment Fund, the Natural Resources and Applied Sciences Research Endowment, and Genome BC, to name a few.

Many of these projects have drawn attention from researchers around the world, and have contributed to solutions to problems that stretch far beyond our borders. By the same token, it's important for B.C. to find out about approaches to innovation elsewhere.

Several weeks ago, I visited Central Canada to check out what is happening in Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal. In Montreal we looked at helping Greater Montréal in dealing with heads of foreign companies and international organizations that want to invest or settle in the area.

In Toronto, we looked at the Medical and Related Sciences that is a new building that houses start-up companies and established support services for research and innovation. It's a great facility for focusing the community on research and innovation and may help us decide what might be possible for the BC Hub concept.

It's clear there's potential for a pan-Canadian strategy to make Canada top in the world.

Everybody has a role in making this happen -- business and industry, academia, the federal government, cities and regional districts, and of course your provincial government. We're creating the right climate ... investing in research infrastructure and commercialization and most important, educating highly qualified personnel – the people part of this equation.

That's why we're expanding our post-secondary education system, and focusing on building on the results we've already achieved to prepare for the changes we know are coming in the future.

If you have ideas about innovation at the post-secondary level, I invite you to engage in Campus 2020: Thinking Ahead. Campus 2020 is a far-reaching and collaborative planning process that will shape the goals and objectives of the post-secondary system in B.C. for the next 10 to 20 years. This includes our research and technology objectives.

So look for Campus 2020 on the web – and let your thoughts and ideas be heard.

And another place where your thoughts and ideas are being welcomed is in B.C.'s Conversation on Health. The Conversation on Health is a discussion among British Columbians on how to make British Columbia healthier and how to improve and renew our health system while strengthening the Canada Health Act.

This follows up on a commitment made in the Throne Speech to engage in a genuine conversation with British Columbians about health. I urge you take part in these important discussion on the future of our health care system which can be accessed at [www.bcconversationonhealth.ca](http://www.bcconversationonhealth.ca)

We are on course to create a truly innovative economy in British Columbia, one that will keep us competitive and build on our reputation for leadership.

Research is helping create the tools British Columbians need to adapt and learn and prosper. And the people honoured here tonight have made contributions that will have an impact on our province – and beyond – for many, many years.

We will continue to work together to make British Columbia the best place on earth for business, for students, for families, and for communities. And I know that the B.C. Innovation Council will have many more successes to celebrate in the future.

Thank you.