



March 9, 2007

The Honourable Monte Solberg
Minister of Human Resources and Social Development
140 Promenade du Portage
Gatineau, Quebec
K1A 0J9

Dear Mr. Solberg,

Postsecondary education in Canada has reached a critical juncture. Our economy faces competition from around the world, while provinces and territories face increasing challenges in meeting demands for an educated and highly skilled workforce. Further investments in postsecondary education are thus needed to meet the increasing demands of a knowledge economy.

The federal government has recognized that postsecondary education is important to supporting the competitiveness of the Canadian economy. But much more than an economic imperative, postsecondary education is the measure of our commitment to opportunity – it is the foundation of an engaged citizenry and a strong democracy.

Despite this, federal cash transfers for postsecondary education are lower today than they were in 1994-95.

Provinces and territories have repeatedly stepped up to the plate and reinvested in postsecondary education. Most provinces and territories have undertaken extensive reviews and consultations aimed at ensuring high quality, accessible systems. Our governments have funded postsecondary education to the limit of our resources, in accordance with the priorities, policies, objectives, and programs established with our educational institutions, which are thus responsive to the institutions' specific needs. As champions in education, provinces and territories continue to lead all educational issues.

Over the past two years, provinces and territories have sought to engage the federal government in working collaboratively to help develop the full potential of their citizens and ensure economic prosperity of Canadians. The federal government itself, in its Budget 2006, recognized the importance of restoring its transfer support to provinces and territories for postsecondary education by specifying that “the Government is also committed to taking further action over the coming year ... to put in place long-term fiscal arrangements that will provide equitable and predictable support ... for postsecondary education.”

Canadians will welcome the realization of this commitment in the upcoming federal budget. Provinces and territories need a real financial partnership with the federal government through substantial, predictable, stable, ongoing, and unconditional funding for postsecondary education that respects the constitutional responsibility of provinces and territories in postsecondary education.

For decades up to 1995, the federal government partnered with the provinces and territories by providing significant funding support to help them sustain and develop postsecondary education. In 1995, it dramatically cut its cash transfers to provinces and territories. We urge the federal government to restore its partnership with the jurisdictions. As a first step, provinces and territories are calling on the federal government to immediately restore the intergovernmental transfer that supports postsecondary education to 1994-95 levels.

The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, and Canada's premiers have repeatedly stressed the importance of enhanced financial support for postsecondary education. We now urge your government to demonstrate its commitment to postsecondary education as an essential investment for Canadians in the upcoming federal budget.

Sincerely,

Joan Burke
Chair, CMEC
Minister of Education
Newfoundland and Labrador

Christopher Bentley
Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities
Ontario

Jean-Marc Fournier
Ministre de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport
Quebec

Karen Casey
Minister of Education
Nova Scotia

Edward Doherty
Minister of Post-Secondary Education, Training
and Labour
New Brunswick

Diane McGifford
Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy
Manitoba

Murray Coell
Minister of Advanced Education
British Columbia

Mildred Dover
Minister of Education
Prince Edward Island

Pat Atkinson
Minister of Advanced Education and
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Doug Horner
Minister of Advanced Education and
Technology
Alberta

Patrick Rouble
Minister of Education
Yukon

Charles Dent
Minister of Education, Culture and Employment
Northwest Territories

Ed Picco
Minister of Education
Nunavut

cc The Honourable Jim Flaherty