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For immediate release

September 19, 2013

IGNITE Alberta: Phase II kicks off with student focus groups held across Alberta

Edmonton, Alberta – Post-secondary students from across the province will have the opportunity to voice their opinions about their educational experiences and share their vision for the future of higher education in Alberta this month as the second phase of the IGNITE Alberta project kicks off with over two dozen focus groups being held across the province. IGNITE Alberta is a student lead initiative run in collaboration between the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS), the Alberta Students' Executive Council (ASEC), and the Alberta Graduate Council (AGC).

“CAUS is pleased to be involved in an initiative that will truly let students voice their opinions, ideas, and concerns about the direction of Alberta’s post-secondary system,” said Conner Brown, chair of the Council of Alberta University Students and VP External at the University of Calgary Students’ Union. “With the biggest cuts to post-secondary education in 20 years, the opening of the Post-Secondary Learning Act this fall, and ever increasing Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees it is more important than ever that we hear directly from students about what their concerns are, as well as their innovative ideas for creating the best possible future for tomorrow’s learners.”

The IGNITE Alberta project began with the IGNITE: Ideas for Post-Secondary Education conference held at the University of Alberta on February 22 & 23, 2013. The conference brought together stakeholders from all areas of Alberta’ post-secondary education system including government, institutions, faculty, civil servants, industry, K-12 school boards, and of course students, to work together for two days and develop inclusive outcomes and find common goals. The findings of the conference are now being taken to students across the province for feedback and further exploration.

This week, focus groups were held at the University of Alberta, MacEwan University, NorQuest College, and Concordia University College of Alberta. Further consultations with students across the province are planned throughout the rest of September and into October. Students will also have the opportunity to participate in an online survey launching in mid-October. The findings from the IGNITE Alberta survey and focus groups will be published in a report expected at the end of November, 2013.

“IGNITE Alberta has been a catalyst in starting a broader conversation about post-secondary with students and stakeholders across the province,” said Brown. “By being involved in the IGNITE Alberta project, we hope to allow students to have a greater say in what the future of post-secondary education will look like in our province.”

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The Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) represents the interests of undergraduate students at the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary and the University of Lethbridge.

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