



**Council of Alberta University Students**  
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For immediate release

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## **Students urge government reinvestment in post-secondary in Budget 2014**

Edmonton, Alberta – The provincial government is set to announce its 2014 budget at 3:00 p.m. today. Last year's budget delivered a 7 percent cut to post-secondary institutional base operating grants, despite a commitment from Premier Redford to increase this funding by 2 percent. While \$50 million of the \$147 million cut last March was restored in November 2013, students at universities, colleges, and technical institutes across the province are still feeling the impact of the largest cut made to post-secondary education in the past 20 years. Nevertheless, students remain hopeful that the Government of Alberta will see Budget 2014 as an opportunity to invest in building the future of Alberta by ensuring stable, predictable funding for post-secondary.

"As a result of the cuts, this year students saw quality impacted by reductions in faculty, increases in class sizes, cancellation of smaller classes and programs, all while mandatory non-instructional fees were either introduced or increased," said Conner Brown, chair of the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) and VP External at the University of Calgary Students' Union. "We are hopeful that the government will use Budget 2014 to re-invest in post-secondary and initiate a long-term, predictable funding arrangement for the benefit of both post-secondary institutions and students."

Following the cuts made in budget 2013 the Ministry of Innovation and Advanced Education began an extensive review of several key areas within post-secondary. As part of this review, tuition and fees as well as the funding framework used to allocate government grants to institutions are being assessed. Students are concerned that the predictability of costs associated with attending post-secondary in Alberta may be impacted by the results of this review.

In real dollars, tuition and fees have nearly tripled in Alberta since the 1990s. However, the current tuition regulation ties increases to inflation according to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which allows students and their families some measure of predictability when planning to attend post-secondary. Students support the tuition cap that Minister Hancock put in place in 2006 – during his previous time in the position of Minister of Advanced Education – and would like to see the regulation around tuition broadened to also include mandatory non-instructional fees.

"Our post-secondary institutions help shape the future Albertans that will grow and strengthen our province; building Alberta not just today, but for future generations," said Brown. "It is important for post-secondary institutions to have stable, predictable funding so that students and their families feel confident while planning for the growing expense of obtaining a post-secondary credential."

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

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The Council of Alberta University Students included the following recommendations in our pre-budget submission to the Minister of Finance.

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For Budget 2014 CAUS Recommends the Following:

- Tying tuition increases to CPI to ensure that post-secondary education remains affordable and predictable for Alberta students and the families that support them
- Putting the tuition cap back into the Post- Secondary Learning Act
- Establishing the Rural and Aboriginal Bursary promised in the 2012 election to improve participation rates amongst these underrepresented groups
- Creating a new student employment program with an initial investment of \$7.1 million
- Targeting a new student employment program to long-term opportunities for students with direct links to their area of study and/or desired employment goals
- Funding a one-time capital package to be delivered to universities over a period of years on an equitable basis to remedy accumulated deferred maintenance liabilities
- Creating an annual funding envelope to universities to provide adequate ongoing preventive maintenance
- Reinvesting in post-secondary institutions, and more importantly, ensuring that the funding model is stable and predictable
- Establishing a long-term plan for investing in post-secondary, recognizing that it is the key driver of our continued prosperity

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*Read the full CAUS pre-budget submission Alberta's Knowledge Economy: Building the Future of our Province online at [http://www.caus.net/docs/12-09\\_BudgetSummary.pdf](http://www.caus.net/docs/12-09_BudgetSummary.pdf)*