



April 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Cybera is Alberta's member-driven, not-for-profit National Research and Education Network partner. Our mandate is to drive economic growth in the province through the use of digital technology. We work in partnership with Alberta's 26 post-secondary institutions to increase their efficiencies in several vital ways. These include: providing unmetered access to the Global Research and Education Network; making powerful compute infrastructure and data science tools available for researchers and classrooms; and fostering the development of – and collaboration on – cost-saving shared services, as well as cybersecurity initiatives.

For over 20 years, Cybera has received a base operating grant from the Government of Alberta. Historically, this grant was held by the Ministry of Innovation and Advanced Education, although more recently, it rested with the Ministry of Jobs, Economy and Innovation. We have been informed and currently are transitioning this relationship back to the Ministry of Advanced Education.

What does this shift mean for our members, particularly in higher education?

We believe this move to Advanced Education will be a positive one for Cybera and our member community. Our greatest impact and value has always been to the higher education sector. In the 2019-20 fiscal year alone, Cybera's combined services achieved over \$11 million in net savings for our post-secondary members.

Cybera is well positioned to become Alberta's leading organization in shared services. This is a direct result of the trusted role Cybera plays with our post-secondary institutions, based on years of building a cooperative and collaborative approach to service development, coupled with our clearly defined scope, mandate and vision.

The AB ShareIT program has a strong foundational governance model to support growing this shared services vision. It demonstrates the power of post-secondary collaboration through well defined metrics and measures of success, and we've only just begun. Given our current economic pressures, scaling ShareIT requires leadership and strong partnerships with Alberta's post-secondary sector and the province to drive value and generate greater economies of scale.

In the coming weeks and months, we will be meeting with staff from the Ministry of Advanced Education to outline the positive work Cybera is doing within the post-secondary ecosystem, including:

- **Creating Public Sector Efficiencies** – Cybera acts as a collaborator and facilitator with higher education institutions through our ShareIT procurement program, group training and knowledge sharing initiatives, and collective cybersecurity platforms. Each is creating



efficiencies and generating financial and administrative cost savings. This program is very successful and has potential for future expansion.

- **Growing the Province's Tech Talent** – Cybera's data science team is supporting Alberta's tech talent shortage by providing an invaluable (and over-subscribed) industry-placement program for recent data science graduates. This program could be easily scaled to include hundreds of more graduates, as well as industry and education institution partners.
- **Supporting and Protecting Alberta Research** – Cybera's cloud and networking infrastructure is enabling Alberta researchers to: connect and participate in international big data initiatives (including COVID research); leverage national researching funding; and access free powerful resources to develop new understandings or tools. Cybera is also collaborating with national networking and post-secondary partners to protect Alberta's institutions from local and global cybersecurity attacks.
- **Facilitating Shared Learning and Resources** – Cybera is bringing together leaders from all Alberta post-secondaries to share knowledge and training, find solutions to common problems, and encourage collaboration. Our role as an advanced education facilitator was solidified through our recent absorption of the Alberta Association in Higher Education for Information Technology (AAHEIT), and we are now exploring the many learning and collaborative opportunities this could enable.

Please feel free to contact me directly at barb.carra@cybera.ca if you would like to discuss Cybera's transition to the Ministry of Advanced Education, and what it means for your institution.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barb Carra".

Barb Carra
President and CEO