

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 23, 2022

EDMONTON, AB – EDMONTON, AB - The Government of Alberta introduced its 2022/23 budget today that made a number of targeted investments in Alberta's post-secondary system:

- \$171 million for targeted enrolment expansion in the areas of technology, agriculture, financial services and aviation,
- \$30 million investment in apprenticeship expansion programs,
- \$6 million over three years for Advanced Education to expand work integrated learning programs
- \$15 million in grants and bursaries for low-income students studying in qualified high-demand programs; and
- \$8 million to expand reskilling and upskilling opportunities through new micro-credential based course offerings.

This new funding will support the ongoing work of Alberta's post-secondary institutions, to prepare the skilled, trained and educated work force Alberta's economy needs.

"These strategic investments support the work of Alberta's post-secondary system to develop a vibrant, diverse and skilled pool of talent that will benefit the province" says Annette Trimbee, Vice Chair for the Council of Post-Secondary Presidents of Alberta "We will continue to partner with our learners and with business to deliver programs that support student success in the work force, as well as innovative new ideas that shape Alberta's prosperity today and into the future."

While members are optimistic about the new investment, the government has cut its operating supports to post secondaries by \$53.6 million compared to what was budgeted in 2021. This is on top of the 6.2% reduction in budget 2021/22 and the 10% reduction in the previous budgets. Alberta's post-secondaries have done their part by reducing administrative spending and per students costs while growing revenue from a wide variety of sources including new investments from the private sector.

All of this has occurred during a global pandemic when our institutions have been on the front line, trying to deliver the quality education our students and business need in a safe healthy environment. This has increased costs and limited revenues generated by on campus events and services. Yet Alberta's post-secondary system has met and exceeded the goals of the McKinnon Panel Report, and we are pleased to see that acknowledge by Minister Toews today. Additional cuts risk our competitiveness with other jurisdictions and undermines our efforts to develop a post-secondary system that is responsive to the needs of our learners and Alberta's economy.

"We understand the tough economic situation the province has been in for the last few years, the downturn in the economy and a global pandemic hit the province hard. Our members made the tough choices and met the needs of our learners." says COPPOA Executive Director Bill Werry "With today's

balanced budget it is time for the the government to develop innovative new strategies and investments that will empower post secondaries to train the work force and innovate the future of Alberta's economy".

As our members begin negotiations with the government on new Investment Management Agreements (IMA's), we will work with the government to make strong strategic investments in post-secondary that benefit students, business and Alberta's economy. We will be looking for investments that support work integrated learning, micro credentials, skills training, research, knowledge transfer, and foundational learning.

Strong investment in post-secondary will position us to be more competitive with other jurisdiction, attract top talent to meet needs of our learners, and employers and develop the technology and innovation that will propel Alberta's economy for decades to come.

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About COPPOA:

The Council of Post-secondary Presidents of Alberta is an organization comprised of the presidents of Alberta's 26 post-secondary institutions. Meeting regularly to discuss common concerns and respond collectively to shared opportunities, COPPOA provides a venue for Alberta's post-secondary leaders to build and strengthen research and teaching partnerships across the province to the benefit of their respective students and communities as well as the province as a whole.

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