



For Immediate Release

Graduate Students Respond to Alberta Budget: Don't Cut Research and Innovation

Calgary, AB - April 7, 2009 - Today, Alberta's Minister of Finance and Enterprise, Iris Evans, unveiled the provincial budget which announced a 6 per cent increase in base operating grants to assist institutions in managing costs such as staff salaries and facility operations, and new capital funding for expansion and deferred maintenance. However, the budget also included a 28 per cent reduction (from forecast 2008-2009 to estimates 2009-2010) in the Ministry of Advanced Education and Technology's operating support for research and innovation capacity.

"Graduate students applaud the government's commitment to the advanced education system. The 6 per cent increase in base operating funds to our institutions will help maintain graduate programs across the province as institutions struggle with declining endowments," said David Coletto, Chair of the Alberta Graduate Council and a PhD candidate at the University of Calgary.

The good news, however, is overshadowed by the reduction in funding for research and innovation capacity contained in the budget.

"At a time when Alberta's economic difficulties are being exaggerated by our reliance on natural resource extraction, cutting support for research and innovation capacity is sending the wrong signal," argued Coletto.

"New investments in research and innovation would attract world-class researchers and graduate students to our public institutions. Instead, this budget cut is a step in the opposite direction", said Coletto.

"This decision may negatively affect hundreds of graduate students in Alberta."



The Alberta Graduate Council supports a strong, publicly funded research and innovation system that supports basic research in all disciplines and areas. It looks forward to working with the government to make Alberta a research and innovation powerhouse with the best graduate students at its core.

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For additional information and comments on the 2009 Alberta Budget, please contact:

David Coletto, Chair
Alberta Graduate Council
(403) 615 – 4730
chair@albertagrads.ca

The Alberta Graduate Council represents over 12,000 graduate students at the University of Alberta, University of Calgary, and University of Lethbridge. It represents and promotes the interests of graduate students in Alberta to the provincial government and other interested stakeholders.

The AGC's online home can be found at www.albertagrads.ca