



MEDIA RELEASE

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Alberta colleges make significant impact on provincial economy

Alberta's colleges, referred to as Comprehensive Community Institutions (CCIs) by the Government of Alberta, make a significant financial impact province-wide, adding **\$4.8 billion** to Alberta's economy in 2015-16 alone. This is equivalent to **43,520 jobs supported** in the province. A new, province-wide study by Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI) indicates that investing in colleges creates a significant return on investment for students, taxpayers, and society.

The study makes a compelling case that Alberta CCIs are an essential economic contributor to our province.

- They enrich the lives of students by raising their lifetime incomes and helping them realize their potential.
- They benefit Alberta's taxpayers through increased tax contributions and decreased use of government-supported social services.
- They add value to local businesses by increasing consumer spending in the province and providing a steady flow of qualified, trained workers into the workforce.
- They benefit society as a whole in Alberta by creating a more prosperous economy.

Alberta students are much better off with a post-secondary education, raising students' earning potential, and increasing their employability. Students with a college education earn more than individuals with a high school diploma. In fact, individuals with a college diploma in Alberta will earn **\$49,500** at the midpoint of their careers, **\$17,300** more than someone with a high school diploma; and will earn approximately **\$640,100 more** over their working lifetime.

Alberta CCIs are important employers in the province. The total income they created during the analysis year as a result of their day-to-day operations was \$599.4 million, which is equivalent to supporting 5,968 jobs in the province. In the same year, new construction on college campuses equaled \$24.3 million in added income for Alberta.

Taxpayers enjoy a wide range of benefits because of their investment in colleges. As students earn more, they pay higher taxes. The net present value of the added tax revenue stemming from higher lifetime student earnings and increased output of businesses amounts to \$1.6 billion. The average annual return on taxpayer investment is 16.3 per cent.

Statistics show that students with advanced education are more likely to develop good health habits, commit fewer crimes, and depend less on income assistance. Society will benefit from **\$87.2 million** in present value social savings related to reduced crime, fewer demands for income assistance, and increased health and well-

being across Alberta. For every \$1 invested in colleges, society receives a cumulative value of \$7.30 in benefits.

Colleges benefit Alberta's businesses by increasing consumer spending. In turn, businesses that hire college graduates help build Alberta's communities. Approximately 90 per cent of students remain in Alberta once they achieve their educational goals, building careers, families, and communities that support the province's economy.

The enhanced skills of well-trained college students make the businesses that hire them more productive. The top industries impacted by Alberta colleges are Health Care & Social Assistance (~\$1.2 billion); Public Administration (~\$771 million); Utilities (~\$437 million); Real Estate and Rental and Leasing (~\$239 million); and Professional Scientific and Technical Services (~\$226 million).

Today thousands of college alumni are employed in Alberta. The accumulated contribution of former students employed in the provincial workforce amounted to **\$4.1 billion in added income or 35,600 jobs supported** during the analysis year.

Expanding our reach through applied research

In addition to the EMSI study, Alberta colleges engage in applied research with industry and public sector partners expanding our economic impact to regions.

Editor's Note: This study was conducted by Economic Modeling Specialists International and is based on a conservative methodology. The report was comprised of data collected from the 11 Alberta colleges. This report is an economic impact study, so it focuses on the impact our students make in the community; whereas, a contribution study would focus on the transfer of government resources to our institutions.

The following colleges participated in the study:

Bow Valley College, Grande Prairie Regional College, Lethbridge College, Medicine Hat College, NorQuest College, Northern Lakes College, Olds College, Red Deer College, Keyano College, Portage College, Lakeland College

Northern Lakes College is a multi-campus college located in northern Alberta and is focused on providing relevant, quality programs through a distributed learning model, serving over 6,000 students annually. To meet regional needs, NLC offers a wide range of certificate and diploma programs in Business, Health Sciences and Allied Health, Human Services, Technology, Trades, University Studies, and Academic Upgrading. The College collaborates with Campus Alberta partners to offer degree completion opportunities throughout its service region, including a Bachelor of Education and a Bachelor of Social Work. Northern Lakes College also provides a wide variety of professional accreditation and certificate programs through its Continuing Education and Corporate Training Department. Northern Lakes College houses the Woodland Operations Learning Foundation (WOLF) to provide Forestry and related post-secondary and professional development programs.

For additional information contact:

Valerie Tradewell
Senior Director, External Relations
Northern Lakes College
780-849-8621