



Alberta's colleges ready to act on Alberta 2030 strategy

May 4, 2021 – Alberta's colleges are ready to respond to the Alberta 2030: Building Skills for Jobs strategy by continuing to provide adaptable, relevant, hands-on training that prepares students to support Alberta's employers and economy. The strategy, released by the Ministry of Advanced Education on Thursday, supports the work already being done by the province's 11 Comprehensive Community Colleges.

Located in all regions of the province, Alberta's colleges provide access to education and a variety of educational opportunities to all Albertans. Alberta's colleges work closely with industry partners to ensure their applied degree, diploma, certificate and apprenticeship programs provide both the technical skills and the employability competencies needed to prepare students to enjoy fulfilling lives and careers.

"Alberta 2030 provides a roadmap to ensure the province's post-secondary system plays a strategic role in preparing Albertans to participate and succeed in the 21st century economy, and Northern Lakes College is pleased to be part of the solution," says Glenn Mitchell, Northern Lakes College President and CEO.

"The Alberta 2030 strategy allows us to reflect on the work already being done to support students and industry, and to explore opportunities for increased support and collaboration," says Dr. Paula Burns, Lethbridge College President and CEO. "We are proud of our industry-driven education and applied research, and we know we are well-positioned to deliver on the province's post-secondary needs now and into the future."

Alberta's colleges are committed to making post-secondary education affordable and accessible for all Albertans at all stages of their post-secondary journey. From providing dual credit programming that allows high school students to begin building employable skills, to upgrading opportunities that prepare students to enter the post-secondary system, to creating microcredentials that help experienced workers upskill or re-skill to meet industry demand, Alberta's colleges take education beyond traditional programming by ensuring students have access to high quality post-secondary opportunities.

"Through practicums, co-ops, apprenticeships, and advisory boards, Lakeland enthusiastically partners with businesses and organizations to ensure our students graduate with the skills to meet employers' needs," says Dr. Alice Wainwright-Stewart, Lakeland College President and CEO. "Our priority has always been to go beyond the classroom to offer our students work-integrated learning opportunities that set them up for success in the real world. We are excited to work with the Government of Alberta to strengthen and streamline this process."

Hands-on training and industry involvement have long been a staple of education in Alberta's colleges. Colleges work with industry advisory councils to ensure students are learning the skills they need to enter industry and begin successful and fulfilling careers. Those skills are reinforced by hands-on practicums and placements present in the vast majority of Alberta's college programs. Investment in industry-standard and emerging technologies ensure students are prepared from the first day they enter a workplace environment.

"RDC is supportive of the future vision identified in the government's Alberta 2030 vision, and we look forward to future collaboration with the Ministry," says Dr. Peter Nunoda, Red Deer College President. "We've expanded programming recently, as demonstrated by our newly announced Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences degree. As we look ahead, we're excited to enhance our opportunities and continue growing our partnerships to support students in their future careers."

In addition to training workers, Alberta's colleges also play a key role in solving industry challenges through applied research and innovative partnerships. Three Alberta colleges ranked among Canada's top 50 research colleges in 2020, as institutions attract top researchers from around the world and provide students the opportunity to be involved in meaningful, industry-driven research. Four of Alberta's colleges host Technology Access Centres, which support small- and medium-sized enterprises by providing fee-for-service applied research and innovation services to solve industry challenges and provide specialized training.

"Alberta's colleges play a critical role in the prosperity of our province," says Stuart Cullum, Olds College President. "Through industry-focused education, training and applied research, we are delivering the skilled workforce and innovative advancements that Alberta's economy needs."

Alberta's colleges welcome the opportunity to continue working with the Ministry of Advanced Education to collaboratively support students, industry and communities throughout the province.

-30-

Alberta's 11 Comprehensive Community Colleges ([Bow Valley College](#), [Grande Prairie Regional College](#), [Keyano College](#), [Lakeland College](#), [Lethbridge College](#), [Medicine Hat College](#), [NorQuest College](#), [Northern Lakes College](#), [Olds College](#), [Portage College](#) and [Red Deer College](#)) meet the needs of more than 55,000 learners across the entire province, providing relevant, high-quality programs that benefit both local and provincial economies.

For additional information contact:

Rachel Ouellette
Director, External Relations, Marketing & Communication
Office of the President
Northern Lakes College
news@northernlakescollege.ca

ADDITIONAL QUOTES

“Bow Valley College is confident that we will not only meet but exceed many of the expectations laid out by the Ministry through our commitment to access and seamless education pathways,” says Dr. Misheck Mwaba, Bow Valley College President and CEO. “The recommendations build upon many of the innovative ideas our College has already implemented or is working towards; namely, our plans for micro-credentials, reskilling, and upskilling, Work Integrated Learning (WIL), the development of our virtual reality (VR) tool, which we plan on marketing for sale, and many more initiatives.”

“Through careful examination and evolution of our post-secondary system we are collectively setting the stage for Alberta’s success,” said Dr. Glenn Feltham, acting Grande Prairie Regional College President and CEO. “GPRC is proud to deliver an unparalleled student experience and to equip learners with competitive and marketable skills for life.”

“The Alberta 2030: Building Skills for Jobs strategy establishes a clear vision and blueprint to position Alberta as a global leader in higher education with a highly skilled and well-educated population,” says Dale Mountain, Keyano College interim President and CEO. “Skills development, meeting labour market needs and economic recovery are key aspects of Alberta 2030, but more importantly, is the opportunity to lead and influence a future of transformative change. Keyano College has a successful and proven track record of training and preparing students for success in the workplace through work integrated learning opportunities and inspiring lifelong learning. We continue to grow domestic and international student enrolments, and our proximity to a key resource industry provides opportunities to pursue applied research and innovation for environmental sustainability. We are proud of the students and community we serve, and our contribution to the economy and prosperity of Alberta.”

“Comprehensive Community Colleges have an important role in Alberta 2030,” says Kevin Shufflebotham, Medicine Hat College President and CEO. “This strategic plan provides a roadmap for our system and we look forward to working collaboratively with the Ministry on its implementation.”

“Learners expect Alberta’s colleges to deliver an education that will open doors for them in the workplaces of today and tomorrow,” says Carolyn Campbell, NorQuest College President and CEO. “The Alberta 2030 strategy creates a roadmap for a post-secondary system that brings together industry, learners and post-secondary institutions to ensure our province’s learners leave our colleges ready to make an incredible impact in the workforce and their communities. I am excited to see what the future holds for Alberta as we implement the Alberta 2030 strategy.”

“Alberta 2030: Building Skills for Jobs not only reimagines our post-secondary system but also identifies concrete actions required to improve our system and benefit students, employers and Albertans as a whole,” says Nancy Broadbent, Portage College President and CEO. “Portage College is looking forward to collaborating with government and other post-secondary institutions for the betterment of our communities.”