

Funding Sources for Northern Alberta Post-Secondary Public Colleges

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A. Introduction

Over the course of the past several years, funding provided to post-secondary institutions through a variety of different funding mechanisms has changed as has the government departments that deliver such funds. The purpose of this report is to:

- clarify the major sources of funding for public post-secondary institutions in Alberta; and,
- the extent to which the public colleges of Northern Alberta receive such funding.

In March 2000, a committee of MLAs and private citizens was established to review and make recommendations on the funding framework for Alberta's post-secondary system. Recommendations by this committee are to be presented to the Minister of Learning by August 2000. These will be taken into consideration in future budgeting processes.

B. General Operations Grant

These are grants provided in the annual Minister's grant letters for the institutional fiscal year. In 1999-2000, the six public colleges in Northern Alberta received 36.8 percent of General Operations Grants awarded to Alberta post-secondary institutions, or \$82,535,700.

C. Performance Envelope Funding

This funding resulted from a reallocation of between one and three percent of the General Operations Grant with new, additional funding. All institutions receive a systems award based on a given percent of its general operations funding. A progress award is based on a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) that are used to assess and reward an institution's movement toward achieving Alberta Learning goals.

There are five KPIs used to determine the progress award. These are:

- Enrolment
- Graduate employment rate
- Graduate satisfaction
- Administration expenditure
- Enterprise revenue.

In 1999-2000, the Northern Alberta public colleges received \$1,484,000 or 29.1 percent of funds awarded under the Performance Envelope for all Alberta post-secondary institutions.

D. The Access Fund

1. Introduction

The Access Fund is a funding strategy of Alberta Learning that is “designed to increase learners’ access to relevant learning opportunities within Alberta’s post-secondary system.” It is specifically intended to help high school graduates access Alberta’s post-secondary system. Post-secondary institutions submit program proposals that describe how they will expand access to credit programs in priority areas that respond to student and labour market demand as well as government priorities.

According to the draft *Access Fund 2001 Guidelines*, the Access Fund offers funding for incremental costs associated with expansion of enrolment in priority subject areas responding to student and labour market demand. Such funding may give support for program delivery, facility operations, and one-time costs. Post-secondary institutions are required to submit an “Accessibility Plan” with their Business Plan in order to discuss how they plan to expand access to credit programs.

Ongoing funding may be offered on a per Full-time Equivalent (FTE) basis and the amount of funding support will vary by program group. One-time funding may be provided for curriculum development, equipment and capital construction in response to specific proposals submitted as part of the Accessibility Plan.

Those Alberta post-secondary institutions eligible for grants from the Access Fund include:

- Universities
- Public Colleges
- Technical Institutes
- Alberta Vocational Colleges
- Augustana, Canadian, Concordia, and King’s University Colleges
- The Banff Centre
- Community Consortia

2. Access Fund Priorities for 2001/2002

The following Access Fund priorities have been identified for 2000/2001:

a. Health Care Programs

- Nursing (licensed practical nursing, registered nursing, post-basic specialties, nurse practitioner training)
- Home care worker and personal support aide training*
- Geriatrics, alzheimers and dementia programming
- Health technologies (medical laboratory technology, ultrasound, MRI, X-ray, nuclear medicine, radiation therapy and radiology)
- Medicine
- Rehabilitation Medicine (physical therapy, occupational therapy, and audiology and special language pathology)
- Rehabilitation therapy assistant training

* Further funding guidelines will be provided for home care workers and personal support aide training

b. Business Programs

These include degree, diploma, and university transfer programs in business administration, commerce and management.

c. Teacher Education Programs

The emphasis is on the demand in mathematics and science, second language education, and Aboriginal education.

d. Other Programs as Justified in Institutional Accessibility Plans

Post-secondary institutions are advised to link their proposed expansions with provincial strategies expressed in documents such as *Get Ready Alberta*, *Native Education Policy Review*, and *the Three-Year Business Plans* prepared by Alberta Learning, Children's Services, Human Resources and Employment, and other Alberta government departments.

3. Criteria for Review of Accessibility Plans

The criteria categories for Accessibility Plans consist of essential and primary. These are:

- Essential criteria include accessibility, responsiveness, and use of existing resources.
- Primary criteria are made up of innovation, institutional strengths, system coordination, collaboration, effectiveness, and efficiency.

Key questions will accompany each of the criteria described in the *Access Fund 2001 Guide*.

4. Major Access Fund Timelines for 2000/2001

Access Fund Guide is distributed to eligible institutions	mid-April 2000
Post-Secondary institutions submit Accessibility Plans with their three-year business plans	June 1, 2000
Ministry officials meet with institutions	Fall 2000
Decisions made on funding commitments for 2001-2002	Late Fall 2000

5. Funding Allocation for Colleges, Technical Institutes, Private University Colleges, the Banff Centre and Consortia

Post-secondary programs have been organized into five specific groups, from “A” through to “E”. The basis for assigning programs to these groups is based on their average cost as identified by the Key Performance Indicators System and the Financial Information Reporting System.

Program expansion within each group will be eligible for Access funding at levels specified in the following table.

Program Group	Program Delivery Grants Per Full Load Equivalent Student	Facility Operation Grants Per Full Load Equivalent Student
A	\$3,100	\$800
B	\$4,500	\$900
C	\$6,000	\$1,200
D	\$8,600	\$1,600
E	Negotiated	

(A listing of post-secondary programs in each of the specific Program Groups is provided in the *Access Fund 2000 Guidelines*).

6. Specific Budget for Access Funding in 2001-2002

During both 1999 and 2000, the Alberta government did not identify the total funding allocated to the Access Fund until after Access Fund decisions had been made. Typically, these decisions are not announced until January of the funding year.

On January 5, 2000, Learning Minister Dr. Lyle Oberg announced the 2000 Access Fund allocation of \$25.9 million to post-secondary program expansions in nursing, health

technologies, and information and communication technologies, creating 1,213 additional spaces. Of this \$25.9 million to be distributed in September 2000, \$17.5 million is one-time funding for constructing or renovating facilities and for acquiring high tech equipment. The remaining \$8.4 million is for operating grants.

Of the \$25.9 million allocated in Access Funding for 2000:

- Grande Prairie Regional College received \$135,000 for Computer Systems Technology to expand by 15 spaces;
- Keyano College received \$369,000 for Computer Information Systems, ASC in Nursing (with University of Alberta), and Gas Field Operator to expand by 43 spaces; and,
- Portage College received \$250,000 for Academic Upgrading and Computer Information Systems (with Cheyenne College) to expand by 25 spaces.

In total, these three Northern Alberta Colleges received 83 of the 420 student spaces created in Alberta colleges by the 2000 Access Fund. They also obtained \$754,000 of the \$10,624,000 received by Alberta colleges from the 2000 Access Fund.

In 1999, a total of \$51 million was allocated to Alberta post-secondary institutions in Access Funding. This included operation grants of \$9.6 million plus one-time funding of \$41.3 million for constructing or renovating facilities, as well as for acquiring high-tech equipment and other infrastructure support.

Of this \$51 million allocation, Keyano College was provided \$462,000 for computer information systems and Portage College received \$172,100 for academic upgrading. A review of past Access Fund information sources does not identify specific amounts allocated to individual post-secondary institutions prior to 1999.

E. Curriculum Redevelopment Fund (CRF)

Alberta Learning offers one-time grants for redeveloping curriculum for distance and alternative delivery. This includes: adaptation of traditionally delivered curriculum materials, the enhancement of distance learning curriculum or the acquisition of multi-media resources. Redevelopment and media production must be done in collaboration with ACCESS/Learning and Skills Television of Alberta Limited (ACCESS/LTA).

A total budget of \$867,580 was allocated by the Curriculum Redevelopment Fund in 1999/2000. The Alberta College of Art and Design was the only public college to receive funding under this particular envelope grant.

F. Infrastructure Facility Grants

The purpose of infrastructure facility grants is to reduce deferred maintenance and address on-going maintenance requirements at public post-secondary institutions. Grants are allocated to each institution based on infrastructure condition and square footage. This funding is administered by Alberta Infrastructure.

In 1999-2000, a total of \$10 million was allocated to Equipment under the Infrastructure Envelope and \$33,197,500 for Facilities. In total, \$711,900 (24.5 percent) was allocated to the six Northern Alberta public colleges for equipment and \$2,394,806 (33.2 percent) for facilities.

One-time Infrastructure funding in 1999-2000 for all Alberta post-secondary institutions was a total of \$9,335,800. The six Northern Alberta public colleges received \$2,621,000, or 28.1 percent of this funding.

G. Learning Technologies Initiative

Human Resources Development Canada, through the Office of Learning Technologies, undertakes the Learning Technologies Initiative (formerly known as the OLT Contribution Program). This initiative supports projects that contribute to greater understanding and awareness of learning technologies, including:

- What learning technologies have to offer;
- How learning technologies can be adapted and applied in a variety of settings;
- How adult learners with varying needs and capabilities can best take advantage of them.

Funding for the Learning Technologies Initiative is awarded through a Call for Proposals process that takes place annually during the Fall.

1. Eligibility for Funding

Examples of eligible applicants include:

- Canadian research and post-secondary institutions, such as universities, colleges, and vocational and technical training institutions;
- Sector councils or labour, trade and professional associations;
- Major community, charitable and voluntary organizations;
- Aboriginal associations;
- Other public institutions and non-government organizations.

Since 1996, 157 projects have been funded, including two Alberta colleges: Mount Royal College and Grant MacEwan Community College. Both have received two years of funding. The amount of funding for each project is not available.

2. Priorities of the Learning Technologies Initiative

The priorities for the Learning Technologies Initiative are for projects that meet two or more of the following priorities:

- Pan-Canadian focus;
- Creative in expanding existing knowledge, presenting new approaches and forging partnerships;
- Enhance employment opportunities;
- Create new jobs;
- Assess or evaluate the impact of learning technologies in small-to-medium-sized businesses; and,
- Access or evaluate the impact of learning technologies within rural or remote communities.

3. Key Themes of Learning Technologies Initiative

Each year, the Learning Technologies Initiative gives preference to proposals that highlight specific themes. In 1999, the two themes identified were:

- How learning technologies can help reduce inequalities or barriers to learning;
- How learning technologies can assist current and future workers to upgrade or improve their knowledge and skills throughout their lives.

4. Learning Technologies Initiatives Major Objectives

To be considered for funding, proposed projects must meet one or more of the following objectives:

- Access or evaluate the impact of learning technologies in various settings;
- Demonstrate the use and effectiveness of learning technologies for individuals with particular or special learning needs, or for individuals facing barriers to their learning needs;
- Raise awareness about learning technologies by sharing knowledge about it and increasing its availability.

H. Sources

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