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Advanced Education, Employment and Labour

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION: HIGH PRIORITY IN BUDGET

The 2010-11 Provincial Budget provides \$556 million in operational funds for Saskatchewan's post-secondary institutions, an overall increase of five per cent over last year.

"Our budget ensures that the post-secondary system is innovative, inclusive and responsive to the needs of learners and the Saskatchewan labour market," Advanced Education, Employment and Labour Minister Rob Norris said. "We have taken several steps to enhance student support, so that securing an education is affordable."

The budget provides for \$97.7 million in support for students through student loans, grants, bursaries, the Provincial Training Allowance and the Graduate Retention Program. Several enhancements in student financial assistance will be introduced, including:

- Full-time students can earn as much as they choose during their study period without affecting their eligibility for financial assistance;
- Interest rates will be reduced to prime on repayable loans; and
- Ownership of vehicles by students is allowed without affecting the level of financial assistance.

Also, an additional \$16.3 million in core funding will be provided to Saskatchewan universities, limiting the average tuition increase to about five per cent.

"We have worked hard to help students meet their financial challenges," Norris said. "On average, almost two-thirds of every provincial dollar given to students is non-repayable."

Other initiatives include:

- \$7.9 million invested in additional training seat expansions for doctors and registered nurses, as part of a continuing partnership with the Ministry of Health and post-secondary institutions;
- \$1 million in new operational funds for the Canadian Light Source synchrotron;
- Enhanced efforts to develop further partnerships with First Nations and Métis peoples in training and employment services;
- Increased measures to promote international education in Saskatchewan; and
- Delivery of training and employment programs key to long-term sustainable employment for Saskatchewan workers.

"Through the responsible management of our expenditures and strategic investment in key services, our economy will continue to be strong in 2010," Norris said.

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For more information, contact:

Bill Stovin
Advanced Education, Employment and Labour
Regina
Phone: 306-787-0926