

FACULTY CIRCUIT

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Alberta Colleges & Institutes
Faculties Association

acifa

Serving college and technical institute faculty

Premier's Annual Televised Address Raises Post-Secondary Expectations

Premier Klein, in his annual broadcast to the province on Tuesday, highlighted his government's new-found commitment to Alberta's post-secondary education system. More details will be forthcoming in the spring session of the legislature, in which the first item on the agenda will be the 'Access to the Future Act' (Bill 1), focusing on post-secondary education.

1) Fully-Funded One-Year Tuition Freeze

Mr. Klein announced that the government will pick up the \$43 million cost of tuition increases at public post-secondary institutions for 2005/06. This is a one-time 'centennial gift' to students from the province – it is not a rollback – but the premier went on to promise that the government 'will define a new tuition policy for the 21st century' before September 2006. In Klein's words: 'It will be the most innovative, entrepreneurial, and affordable tuition policy in the country – one that reflects the shared responsibility of students, parents, educators and administrators. We will do whatever it takes to make sure money isn't a barrier to attending Alberta's post-secondary institutions.'

The Minister of Advanced Education, Dave Hancock, later said that the government will be undertaking 'a comprehensive review of the affordability of post-secondary education in Alberta', with any changes to be implemented by September 2006. However, while the government recognizes the need to ensure that cost is not a barrier for post-secondary students, tuition 'is only part of the picture,' according to Mr. Hancock. The government's proposed review, which will involve students, business and 'ordinary' Albertans, 'will look at all aspects of

affordability – student assistance, scholarships, bursaries, access for Albertans in rural and remote areas, as well as tuition.'

Again, the Minister insisted that whatever changes are implemented for 2006/07 and beyond 'will continue to recognize the shared responsibility that students, parents, institutions, and government have in paying the cost of post-secondary education.' (This reference to the government's role did not appear in the Premier's address.) The bottom line here seems to be that, while the tuition freeze will provide welcome relief to Alberta post-secondary students this year, terms of a multi-year deal remain to be worked out.

2) Access

Premier Klein, responding to public pressure, also announced that 'immediate action will be taken to create more spaces at Alberta's universities, colleges and institutes'. According to Mr. Klein, the government will undertake to create 15,000 new spaces in the post-secondary system over the next three years; 30,000 after six years; and 60,000 by the year 2020. 'With that added space,' the Premier stated, 'we'll have the highest rates of post-secondary education in the country.'

Details of this initiative remain sketchy at this stage, but Minister Hancock insisted that the government 'will put the necessary funding in place to support the additional student spaces,' and promised more specifics in the Budget, expected in April. New spaces will be not only in universities, colleges and technical institutes, but also in apprenticeship, literacy and life-long learning programs. "We want to inspire Albertans to learn, and to find the post-secondary opportunities they want here in their home province – whether it's a degree, a diploma, or a trade certificate," said Mr. Hancock. He admitted that 'There's no secret the demand for post-secondary has been growing and we haven't kept up with the growth. There's a process we have to catch up

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Post-Secondary Expectations

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on, then more needs to be done to head into the new century.'

The bottom line here was not immediately clear – that will have wait for the Budget – but the Minister did reveal that, while the universities and colleges will get new buildings and budget increases, this will account 'only for some of the 30,000 [new spaces by 2011] and some of the 60,000 new spots envisioned by 2020.'

Mr. Hancock told the media that these figures represent 'not just physical spots to sit,' but 'the ability of students to access programs right across the province,' and will include, for example, spaces in 'virtual' classrooms and in apprenticeship programs. More details are to be announced in due course, but the Minister was quoted as saying, 'It's a different equation on each campus. When we talk about 60,000 spaces, we ought not to think of actually building another university with 60,000 spaces.'

Mr. Hancock indicated that, while consideration is being given to Mount Royal College's request for mandate change, a decision on whether to create Mount Royal University is not among his immediate priorities.

3) Vision for Post-Secondary

The Minister, echoing the Premier, issued a strong statement affirming the government's commitment to post-secondary as 'a major component of Alberta's 20-year strategic plan.'

"Building a knowledge-based culture will secure Alberta's place as a world-class centre in academics, trades, and technologies," Mr. Hancock said. "The measures announced by the Premier in his televised address are bold first steps in a year that will reaffirm the government's focus on the post-secondary front, and will further demonstrate our commitment to advance education, our vision for the future, and our intent to transform Alberta into a world-leading learning society in the 21st century."



The President of ACIFA Responds to the Premier's Address

For the past decade and more, post-secondary education has endured a funding drought that has left our system impoverished and struggling, while the demands on it continue to increase. The message from stakeholders and voters during the recent provincial election was clear – re-investment in post-secondary is overdue. Finally, the provincial government seems to be responding.

In his annual televised address on February 8th, Premier Klein offered increasingly hard-pressed post-secondary students some immediate relief, in the form of a fully-funded tuition hike holiday for this year, with an undertaking to review the whole issue of affordability and come up with a new tuition fee policy by the fall of September 2006. At the same time, Mr. Klein also promised wider access for Albertans by increasing the number of post-secondary spaces by 15,000 over the next three years, and 60,000 over the next 15 years. No dollar figures were attached, but Minister Hancock made clear that the government is committed to provide the necessary funding for these new places.

As members of ACIFA, you can take pride in our role in the effective advocacy campaign which was required to shift government thinking. Of course, no single group or institution could have moved the government. Our lobbying needed to be inclusive, positive, and very powerful to be heard over the many other areas of need (health care and BSE to name a couple) competing for attention in our province. ACIFA took an active part in the 'Wise Up' coalition of groups representing some 200,000 post-secondary faculty and students, and in the even more broadly-based 'Fair Deal' campaign of Public Interest Alberta, which brings together a wide range of groups and individuals seeking to defend and enhance public services, including PSE.

Expectations of 'Bill 1' and the spring Budget are running high. There are hopeful signs in the recent public statements of the Premier, and the new Minister of Advanced Education, acknowledging the government's responsibility to do something about post-secondary education, and setting out a vision for the future. Certainly, the public profile of PSE has never been so high, and the politicians do seem to have woken up to the benefits of a strong post-secondary system.

We still face many significant problems, exacerbated by years of neglect: deferred maintenance of infrastructure, the urgent need to attract and retain new faculty, and the struggle to keep up with advances in technology, to name just a few. What we need now is the rational, predictable, and sustainable funding from government which will allow us to overcome these challenges and provide the PSE system Albertans want.

Teaching and Learning Action Research Awards

Awards

The Alberta Colleges and Institutes Faculties Association (ACIFA) through The Alberta Public Post Secondary Trust Fund will award up to three grants of \$500.00 each annually for action research projects related to improving teaching and learning conducted by members of ACIFA. The award is intended to assist with materials and/or study costs associated with the research project.

Eligibility

These awards are open to all members of the Alberta Colleges and Institutes Faculties Association (ACIFA). All applications must include appropriate institutional consent to conduct the research.

Action Research Project Guidelines

Action research is research undertaken by professionals on their own actions. Research conducted by faculty in their own teaching environment can lead to significant improvements in teaching and learning. Through action research faculty gather and analyze data that helps them and their colleagues make decisions about their teaching.

The research project must be conducted and completed within the 2005 – 2006 academic year.

Selection Process and Criteria

Applications will be judged by a sub-committee of the Professional Affairs Committee of ACIFA. The following criteria will be considered in the selection of award winners:

1. Thoroughness and clarity of the **Proposal for Research** (see Proposal for Research below)
2. The direct impact of the research to teaching and learning
3. The applicability of the research to colleges and technical institutes in Alberta
4. The utility of the research to other applications/disciplines for ACIFA Members
5. The value of the research to ACIFA members.

Application Guidelines

1. Application is made by submitting either electronically (WORD file or PDF) or in hardcopy a **Proposal for Research**. The guidelines for this proposal are listed in the next section.
2. **Applications must be received by the ACIFA Office by April 01, 2005.** Award winners will be notified by June 01, 2005.

Proposal for Research Guidelines

1. Name address, phone number and e-mail address of researcher(s). If more than one researcher please identify lead researcher.
2. Name of college or institute you are a member of.
3. Designated teaching assignment and employment category.
4. Title of research project.
5. Purpose of research project. A brief statement explaining the question that will be answered by your study – what is it you want to find out? What brought this question to your attention?
6. Materials to be used in the study (instructional materials, assessments, other materials).
7. Data collection – describe the type(s) of data you will gather and your collection plan. It would be useful to include a step by step plan of what will be done.
8. Explain the process you will use to analyze and evaluate the data.
9. Describe how you plan to use and/or implement the findings of your study.
10. Describe your plan for sharing the results with the educational community beyond the requirements of the award.
11. Anticipated starting and completion dates of the research project.
12. A letter from the researcher's institution granting permission to do the research. Other supporting letters as the researcher deems necessary may also be attached.

Send three copies of your **Proposal for Research** to:

ACIFA, #412, The Dorchester Building, 10357-109 Street, Edmonton, AB T5J 1N3. Or e-mail to devlinl@acifa.ca.

If you have questions, please contact Lynn Devlin: devlinl@acifa.ca or phone 780-423-4440.

Further information is available on the ACIFA website www.acifa.ca.



**100 Ways to / 100 Years to
Celebrate Alberta**
Showcasing Education:
Stimulate * Create * Agitate

**Radisson Hotel and Conference Center
CANMORE – May 29 – June 1, 2005**



Conference Registration Fee
ACIFA Members \$350.00
(Non-Members \$400.00)

Fee covers registration, keynote address, all sessions, the opening reception, breakfasts, lunches, BBQ, and Banquet.

Registration forms and more detailed information available soon from your association office, in the *Faculty Circuit*, or on the ACIFA website at:

<http://www.acifa.ca/>

Plan now to attend

**ACIFA 2005
Conference Keynote**

Speaker

David C. Jones

David C. Jones is a Professor of History in the Faculty of Education at the University of Calgary. After seven years as a high school Social Studies and English teacher (1966-1974), he was appointed to the University of Calgary in 1977. He has written or edited thirty books, including the award-winning *Empire of Dust: Settling and Abandoning the Prairie Dry Belt* (1987, 2002) and *Feasting on Misfortune: Journeys of the Human Spirit in Alberta's Past* (1998). Concerning teaching, he has edited *The Spirit of Teaching Excellence* (1995), *Sayings for Teachers* (1997), *Sayings for Mentors and Tutors* (2001), and *Sayings for Leaders* (2003). His writing, speaking, teaching and leadership skills have been singled out for recognition many times. In 2000, David Jones received the **President's Circle Award for Teaching Excellence at the University of Calgary.**

Editorial Content

The views in the Faculty Circuit are those of individuals and do not necessarily reflect ACIFA's policies and positions. Please address all inquiries and submissions to:

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