

January 28, 2008

Government supports innovation in advanced learning

\$7.9 million allocated through Innovation Fund

Edmonton... Fifteen leading edge projects that promote innovation, collaboration and participation in post-secondary education will benefit learners across Alberta thanks to \$7.9 million from the province's Innovation Fund.

Projects receiving funding this year include upgrading university classrooms with the latest microscopes, online opportunities for students to participate in distance learning, and tailoring health care aide training to better reflect situations faced by aides working in remote locations.

The Innovation Fund, which is part of the Access to the Future Fund, supports initiatives aimed at increasing access to and participation in Alberta's post-secondary system. It also boosts creativity and innovative practices among adult learning providers and supports the Campus Alberta approach of partnership among institutions and the broader community.

"The projects receiving funding reflect our commitment to increase access, affordability and quality of Alberta's post-secondary system, as well as our support for community education and literacy programs," said Doug Horner, Minister of Advanced Education and Technology. "These programs find new ways of delivering quality programs to Alberta students."

"The variety and quality of projects is truly impressive," said Terrance Royer, Chair of the Access Advisory Council. "Post-secondary institutions and community organizations are rising to the challenge to find new and innovative ways to increase Albertans' participation in learning opportunities."

This is the first year Innovation Fund grants are being awarded. In addition to the Innovation Fund, the Access to the Future Fund also has a matching grant program. Over the past two years, \$90 million in matching funding has been allocated throughout Alberta to match donations to post-secondary institutions and apprenticeship scholarships. The fund receives income from an endowment that currently stands at \$1 billion.

Strengthening Alberta's advanced learning system is one of the key actions under Premier Ed Stelmach's plan to secure Alberta's future by building communities, greening our growth and creating opportunity.

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Attachments: Innovation Fund project descriptions

Media inquiries may be directed to:

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Innovation Fund 2007-08 Projects

Alberta Nonprofit/Voluntary Sector Community Capacity Innovation Project

Community Learning Network, Literacy Alberta, Volunteer Alberta

This project aims to give more than 160 organizations access to the SuperNet and videoconferencing technology. This will increase access to learning opportunities for students across Alberta, and continue to encourage collaboration between community-based organizations and post-secondary institutions.

Best Practices for Attracting and Retaining Learners from Under-represented Populations

Alberta-North (Athabasca University, Grand Prairie Regional College, Keyano College, NAIT, Northern Lakes College, Portage College)

The goal of this project is to increase services for Aboriginal and rural learners to make the transition into advanced learning effective and successful.

Childcare Training for Low Literacy Immigrant Women

Bow Valley College, Calgary Immigrant Women's Association, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society and other community partners

This pilot project will provide specialized literacy and language training, childcare certification training and mentored work experiences.

Clinical Skills Development Model and Technology Framework

Olds College, NorQuest College, Bell e-Learning Centre

This project aims to increase human and animal health training in rural areas by developing more effective distance learning approaches for clinical training, using the SuperNet.

Curriculum Commons Model for Post-Secondary Institutions

Keyano College, Lakeland College, NorQuest College

This project will assist institutions in expanding program opportunities, enhancing curriculum quality, and improving transferability between institutions.

Enhancing Collaboration and Improving the Learning Environment - Utilization of Advanced Microscopy Equipment in Undergraduate Science Courses

University of Alberta, University of Calgary, University of Lethbridge

This project will equip 39 teaching laboratories with upgraded and interactive microscopes for nearly 7,000 students participating in university introductory science courses.

Health Care Aide Curriculum Enhancements

Keyano College, Northern Lakes College, Portage College

This project will provide health care aide training to better reflect situations faced by aides working in remote locations.

Increasing Clinical Nursing Capacity: A Collaborative Clinical Instructional Model for Baccalaureate Nursing Education

Grant MacEwan College, Capital Health

The goal of this program is to increase the quality and number of clinical work experiences in order to train a larger number of registered nurses.

Increasing Programming Capacity for Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Education: Simulated Learning Environments

Grant MacEwan College, NorQuest College, NAIT, University of Alberta, Capital Health

This project will implement and evaluate standardized interdisciplinary health science education in simulated learning environments. It aims to develop learning opportunities that more closely resemble real world situations across the complete range of health related education.

Nechi Program Recognition Project: Moving Forward

Nechi Training, Research and Health Promotions Institute

This project focuses on increasing the availability and quality of training related to Aboriginal health promotions and addiction. It will support recognition of Nechi's programming through accreditation and the development of increased partnerships with post-secondary institutions, industry and community organizations.

Practical Nursing Education in Rural Settings: Models and Best Practices

Bow Valley College, Northern Lakes College, NorQuest College, Red Deer College

This project will aim to increase access to practical nursing programs in rural settings by using innovative curriculum, distance education and simulation models for clinical practice.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

Yellowhead Tribal College

This project will establish a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) support service at Yellowhead Tribal College to assess whether the knowledge or skills Aboriginal people have acquired are relevant to a particular educational credential, specific workplace training, or a trade or occupational standard.

Secondary to Post-Secondary Career Technology and Trades Skills

NAIT, Edmonton Public Schools

This project will implement a secondary to post-secondary transition program focused on career technology and trades skills. This will provide a clearly defined career path for a larger number of high-school students, including underrepresented populations.

Text to Speech Technology: Supporting English Language Learners in Post-Secondary Education

Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Hanna & District Association for Life-Long Learning, Keyano College, NAIT, Northern Lakes College

This pilot project will evaluate student success and workforce preparation of providing second language learners with interactive computer software that translates written work into audible speech. This will enhance the level of language learning, improve comprehension and retention of course material, increase understanding of the students' chosen field and enable a more successful transition into the workforce.

Transitioning Rural Learners

Olds College, Chinook's Edge School Division, Town of Olds, Mountain View County

This project will develop a coordinated approach to support learner transitions into post-secondary studies. It will assist in developing educational pathways and supports to assist rural learners in post-secondary education and develop strategies for retention of learners and workers in rural

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