

## Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

### Pre-budget consultations 2012

## Camosun College

### Responses

#### 1. Economic Recovery and Growth

*Given the current climate of federal and global fiscal restraint, what specific federal measures do you feel are needed for a sustained economic recovery and enhanced economic growth in Canada?*

**Increasing Advanced Skills** The critical shortage in advanced skills is the principle constraint to business growth according to Canada's largest business organizations. Camosun advocates for increased investment in post-secondary education and for a national action plan to increase the number of persons with advanced skills. The goal is to increase participation in PSE, make pathways to higher education more efficient and enhance the educational achievement of marginalized populations including Aboriginal peoples and disengaged youth.

**Infrastructure and Deferred Maintenance** The Federal Government's 2009 Knowledge Infrastructure Program resulted in upgraded and new facilities at our campuses in Victoria, although the resources available fell far short of demand. Owing to capacity shortfalls, qualified learners are turned away. Many institutions report long waitlists at the same time as employers are reporting shortages in many occupations. We would like to see continued infrastructure investment.

**Innovation** Further federal investment in applied research at colleges would substantially increase the capacity of SMEs to raise productivity through innovation. Increasing the number of Technology Access Centres and Innovation Enhancement Grants under the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council's College and Community Innovation Program would leverage the applied research capacities of colleges to support SMEs, stimulate innovation, increase productivity, and foster business creation and expansion.

**Apprenticeship** Colleges are large providers of apprenticeship training. Increased federal support is needed to improve completion rates. We support incentives such as increased financial support during training, improved mobility for apprentices, mentoring approaches, increased employer engagement and more current equipment and facilities to ensure colleges can meet the demand for these programs.

#### 2. Job Creation

*As Canadian companies face pressures resulting from such factors as uncertainty about the U.S. economic recovery, a sovereign debt crisis in Europe, and competition from a number of developed and developing countries, what specific federal actions do you believe should be taken to promote job creation in Canada, including that which occurs as a result of enhanced internal and international trade?*

#### 3. Demographic Change

*What specific federal measures do you think should be implemented to help the country address the consequences of, and challenges associated with, the aging of the Canadian population and of skills shortages?*

**4. Productivity**

*With labour market challenges arising in part as a result of the aging of Canada's population and an ongoing focus on the actions needed for competitiveness, what specific federal initiatives are needed in order to increase productivity in Canada?*

**5. Other Challenges**

*With some Canadian individuals, businesses and communities facing particular challenges at this time, in your view, who is facing the most challenges, what are the challenges that are being faced and what specific federal actions are needed to address these challenges?*