

**Brief Submitted to the House of Commons
Standing Committee on Finance**

**National consultations in preparation for the
2015 Government of Canada Federal Budget**



Leading, learning and sustainability

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August 2014

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Kwantlen Polytechnic University -- KPU

KPU is a regional polytechnic university driven by teaching and learning, inspired by solving problems through research, and engaged with its dynamic and unique communities. Paying close attention to the specific priorities being set by the growing cities, municipalities, and economies in its region, KPU is focused on addressing existing and emergent labour market demands, and the development of healthy communities that are prosperous, sustainable, safe, and vibrant.

Recognizing our unique mandate south of the Fraser River, KPU takes this opportunity to join our national post-secondary institution networks of the *Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada* and *College and Institutes Canada* to reinforce essential concepts and proposals aimed at ensuring that post-secondary education can mobilize knowledge and discovery, generate ideas and provide our future leaders and entrepreneurs with the critical tools to drive innovation, and inspire positive economic, social and cultural development.

KPU proposes four fundamental recommendations to the pre-budget consultations of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance:

1. ***Support national and provincial strategies that increase access to apprenticeships through incentive programs for industry and sector councils.***
2. ***The Federal Government should establish an ongoing capital and deferred maintenance allocation to support new and /or reconditioned infrastructure to meet current training forecasts and offer learners optimal educational experiences through up-to-date, industry-standard facilities.***
3. ***KPU proposes that the federal government consider increasing support to eligible Aboriginal students, immigrant learners, and low-income youth and other vulnerable Canadians to enable these groups to access post-secondary education with the proper community and system support, targeted towards producing job ready/community meaningful outcomes. This increased support should ideally be provided by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, the Canada Student Loans Program and other relevant apprenticeship training enterprises.***
4. ***Increase the budget of Applied Research and Innovation funds to propel Canada's global competitive position.***

The recommendations above support three key themes of the pre-budget consultations:

- a. Supporting families and helping vulnerable Canadians by focusing on health, education and training.
- b. Increasing the competitiveness of Canadian businesses through research, development, innovation and commercialization.
- c. Maximizing the number and types of jobs for Canadians

Support national and provincial strategies that increase access to apprenticeships through incentive programs for industry and sector councils

According to *BC's Labour Market Outlook 2010-2020*, 43% of the one million job openings between 2010 and 2020 will need trades and technical training; another 42% will require some post-secondary education or a university degree. A cumulative gap between labour market supply and demand of 22,000 to 32,000 BC workers is projected unless planned, appropriate training responses support technical, paraprofessional and skilled occupations. This reinforces the urgency for more access to education and training.

- KPU will work with Industry Program Advisory Committees to identify and address projected labour demand
- KPU will direct a portion of the incentive programs to support secondary school dual credit programs in trades and to strengthen transitions to post-secondary and apprenticeship training.

The Federal Government should establish an ongoing capital and deferred maintenance allocation to support new and /or reconditioned infrastructure to meet current training forecasts and offer learners optimal educational experiences through up-to-date, industry-standard facilities.

Canada's post-secondary institutions are making significant progress thanks to the opportunities for renewal made possible through the previous federal Knowledge Infrastructure Program. KPU was able to make substantial renovations thanks to the allocation of \$7.8 million of KIP funding received in 2011. As our universities, colleges and institutes work toward accommodating the growing challenge of meeting the needs of new and returning students, international students and adult learners, the requirement for an overarching strategy of funding for new infrastructure and deferred maintenance is urgent. The state of many of Canada's institutional facilities is at odds with the increasing (and in some areas urgent) need to train a workforce conversant with new technologies, in applied research and in current practices.

- KPU will continue to nurture essential industry/community partnerships and advancement activities that will enhance our capital infrastructure plans and the stewardship of our building and equipment assets through additional Federal support for infrastructure.
- KPU has strategically committed considerable reserve funds to the expansion of our facilities in the cities of Surrey and Richmond. We recognize the importance of this kind of investment in our future. Federal support for deferred maintenance will ensure the lasting legacy of our mutual investments.

KPU proposes that the federal government consider increasing support to eligible Aboriginal students, immigrant learners, and low-income youth and other vulnerable Canadians to enable these groups to access post-secondary education with the proper community and system support, targeted towards producing job ready/community meaningful outcomes. This increased support should ideally be provided by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, the Canada Student Loans Program and other relevant apprenticeship training enterprises.

Further to the previously stated concern for more access to post-secondary training to meet projected labour market needs, the focus must shift to include more opportunities for the inclusion of Aboriginal and immigrant communities.

Aboriginal learners and immigrants requiring essential skills, mid-career upgrading and skills enhancement are important priorities for KPU. In 2011 the KPU region was home to over 30% of the province's recent immigrants, and 6% of the KPU region's population had no knowledge of English, about double the rate for BC as a whole. Similarly, 42% had a mother tongue other than English or French. Of the nearly 400,000 residents of KPU's region with a post-secondary credential, 31% are foreign-trained. Canada cannot afford to ignore these important sectors of our future workforce.

- KPU's Strategic Plan *Vision 2018* foregrounds diversity, inclusion, access and flexibility. We will apply any additional federal support towards targeted diverse learner groups and vulnerable Canadians by providing academic upgrading, preparatory studies, laddering programs and job-ready, career-focused training.
- KPU intends to use the valuable leverage of additional federal support to elicit additional community and industry funding to enhance access and delivery of our full range of educational programs.

Increase the budget of Applied Research and Innovation funds to propel Canada's global competitive position.

While annual investments by the Government of Canada are making a real difference in enabling Canadian universities, colleges and institutes to build capacity toward achieving global leadership in specific fields of strength and attract the talent required to maintain and improve Canadian research standing in the world, these investments fall short of meeting the increased demand for innovation and discovery. If the post-secondary system in Canada is to maintain a competitive advantage in an increasingly competitive global environment, it must build on existing research capacity and extend the current framework of complementarity that supports this system. Achieving long-term strategic research outcomes that will be a catalyst for positive change in communities throughout Canada will require the attraction and recruitment of top Canadian and international faculty, graduate students and post-doctoral fellows, increased and more effective partnerships among the institutions and researchers, and a stronger commitment to knowledge mobilization and knowledge transfer as integral components of social innovation that can leverage investment in higher education.

- KPU's *Academic Plan 2018* drives our regional mission and empowers us to apply our unique mix of science, technology, trades, health and humanities to disseminate applied knowledge, boost social and economic well-being, propel innovation and to fulfill our regional polytechnic mandate.