

News Release



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Edmonton's NorQuest College benefits from 2007 provincial budget

EDMONTON – The president and CEO of NorQuest College is encouraged with the provincial government's latest cash injection to post-secondary institutions.

“The seven per cent increase in base operating grants will add approximately \$250,000 in revenue to the College annually, which will go toward existing and new program development,” says Dr. Wayne Shillington. NorQuest will also benefit from an infusion of funding to address deferred maintenance. At present, the College's infrastructure maintenance deficit is more than \$14 million. Shillington welcomes funding to offset new policy limiting new tuition fees increases. “Our students, especially those living below the poverty line, will also benefit as a result of these policy changes.”

As for news of an extra \$300 million in government funding for new capital projects over the next three years, Shillington remains optimistic. “The last significant government investment in new infrastructure for NorQuest College was for the downtown Edmonton campus construction in 1971,” says Shillington. “We remain hopeful that NorQuest will benefit from this government's commitment to addressing the current infrastructure deficit because we are ready to proceed with our downtown campus expansion.”

NorQuest College continues to operate in cramped and crowded conditions. In fact, the space per student at NorQuest is half that of other colleges in Alberta. The new building at the downtown campus would accommodate 1,500 students and staff, helping to relieve growing programming and administrative pressures. In September 2005, the province contributed \$1 million for the College to begin planning the expansion at 10215-108 Street. The original project cost was \$100 million; however, due to inflation, the estimated cost has risen to \$120 million.

Shillington adds there is a huge demand for the programs and services NorQuest offers. “We are in a unique position to support the government's commitment in developing a new workforce strategy to meet the demands of the current labour shortage,” explains Shillington, pointing out that about two-thirds of NorQuest's 4,300 students are new Canadians who require some form of English language training.

NorQuest has four primary program areas: health and human service careers; business and industry careers; academic upgrading; and adult literacy and ESL. The College offers specialized programs and services for Aboriginal people and students with disabilities, as well as workplace transition services. NorQuest is the number one provider of practical nurse and health care aides in Canada.

NorQuest College has campuses in Edmonton, Stony Plain and Wetaskiwin, regional learning sites in Hinton, Edson, Whitecourt, Westlock, Drayton Valley, Jasper and Grande Cache, and leads the way in providing distance education. To learn more about NorQuest College, visit www.norquest.ca.

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