



For Immediate Release
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Federal Budget Infrastructure Lacking for College Enhancements

TORONTO, ON - Ontario's college and college/university students are pleased that Minister of Finance, Jim Flaherty, has committed \$2 billion in new infrastructure funds to repair, improve and expand our postsecondary education institutions in his 2009 Budget, says the College Student Alliance (CSA).

"Although college students welcome today's announcement, we are quite disappointed that colleges will only be receiving 30 per cent of the \$2 billion fund for infrastructure improvements," says Jenn Howarth, President of the College Student Alliance. "Our college campuses are in just as much need of repairs, improvements and expansion as our university campuses and given the focus on re-training and skills development, we would have hoped that the government would have recognized our needs equally."

Budget 2009 outlines how these infrastructure funds are to be allocated at universities and colleges. Universities are to invest in projects that improve the quality of research and development and colleges in their ability to deliver advanced knowledge and skills training. The federal government will only pay up to half of the project costs; thus leaving our already cash-strapped institutions and provinces on the hook to find the other half to ensure these projects get off the ground.

"Not only are college students concerned with the lack of equality of funding for infrastructure, but we are also disheartened to see no expansion of targeted grants and debt relief measures for those students struggling to access and persist with their studies," adds Ms. Howarth.

In a letter to Prime Minister Harper, the CSA and partners underscored two important and positive financial aid measures that if adopted would ease the pressures felt by current students and graduates. These measures were to:

- provide temporary targeted grants to counterbalance the difficulties students and their families may find themselves in during these hard economy times; and
- extend the non-repayment period for Canada Student Loans from the current six months, to 12 months and make it interest-free.

"Today's budget investments and stimulus package must be re-evaluated to ensure that all measures are working together to ensure the viability and sustainability of our economy," says Tyler Charlebois, Director of Advocacy.

The College Student Alliance (CSA) is an advocacy and services organization, which has been proudly serving Ontario's college and college/university students since 1975. The CSA currently represents 16 colleges and 23 student councils with over 109,000 full-time student members throughout the province.

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