



February 3, 2009

The Honourable Stephen Harper  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Harper,

With the current fiscal and economic challenges facing the country, the College Student Alliance (CSA) was quite pleased to see the investment in infrastructure to support deferred maintenance and repairs badly needed on college and university campuses across the country. However, we were taken aback when the Minister of Finance, the Honourable James Flaherty, announced that colleges would only be receiving 30 per cent of the \$2 billion allocated for colleges and universities for their infrastructure improvement.

Given that colleges will be the institutions that Canada's laid off workers will be coming to for re-training, it does not make sense that Canadian colleges and especially Ontario colleges will not be receiving the necessary funds to allow for expansion. Ontario's colleges have seen a major increase in enrolment, which is up 5.6 per cent compared to 2007. Not to mention that businesses facing a labour shortage need college graduates over university graduates by a six to one ratio, according to a report released by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

On January 22, 2009, The Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) provided your government with a list of ready-to-go infrastructure projects for all of the colleges and institutes in the country. Infrastructure projects at Ontario's colleges accounted for \$1.035 billion of the listed projects requiring funding, but with the current 70/30 split between universities and colleges, respectively Ontario will only be provided some \$300 million to tackle deferred maintenance issues and expansion to facilities and labs.

The CSA believes there is a way to improve the system for infrastructure funding distribution for colleges and universities. The necessary changes should be as follows:

- A more equalized split between colleges and universities (e.g. 50/50);
- The removal of the requirement that institutions find half of the funding from other partners; and
- The government must ensure that project approvals are not slowed down through bureaucratic red tape and should be completed during the summer to ensure limited interruption for students.

As we move through these difficult economic times it will be colleges and college graduates leading the way forward to economic stimulus and attracting foreign investment to the country; if we make the necessary investments today. Ontario's college and college/university students are hoping that your government will recognize the critical role played by colleges and college graduates, and make the appropriate changes to your current strategy.

We would welcome the opportunity to speak further on how the Government of Canada can fully utilize the college system and its graduates to revive the Canadian economy. Please do not hesitate to contact myself or any of our member associations.

Kindest Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Tyler Charlebois'.

Tyler Charlebois  
Director of Advocacy

CC'd:

Minister of Finance, Hon. James Flaherty  
Minister of Transport, Hon. John Baird  
Minister of Human Resources & Skills Development, Hon. Diane Finley  
Mr. James Knight, President/CEO of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges  
Ms. Linda Franklin, President/CEO of Colleges Ontario