



Earlier today, the Alberta government introduced its 2021/22 budget into the Alberta legislature. As adjusting to new budget realities has been an ongoing challenge for our entire institution over the past two fiscal years, I wanted to share with you what we understand currently. We will communicate further to our community as we learn greater detail.

Overall, the Alberta government announced a 6.2 per cent decrease in operating support for Alberta's post-secondary sector. This reduction is deeper than that previously signaled by the province. Reductions will be applied differentially across institutions.

The University of Lethbridge will see its 2021/22 operating and program support base grant reduced by 5.8 per cent (\$5.7 million) versus the previously communicated reduction of 5.11 per cent (increased grant reduction of \$676,000). This increased reduction will mean additional work is needed to bring a balanced budget to the University of Lethbridge Board of Governors later this spring. Advanced Education has also signaled reductions will be greater than originally forecast for the next budget year (increased from 5.38 per cent to 5.5 per cent in 2022/23, equating to \$750,000 beyond the cut previously communicated).

The Post-Secondary Mental Health Grant (\$635,000), Students with Disabilities Grant (\$275,705), and Health Workforce Action Plan Grant (\$284,000) are each frozen at the same level as last year.

The University will see an increase in its Infrastructure Maintenance Program (IMP) Grant of \$2.8 million to a total of \$7,044,503. This funding is specifically for deferred maintenance projects on campus and cannot be used for operating purposes or to balance the budget.

I know today's additional operating support reductions are disappointing to our campus community. We will continue to advocate to the province how critical our university, and the post-secondary sector, are to the economic recovery and diversification of our province. In the meantime, it is essential we adapt to these budget realities. The budget taskforces are now entering a consultation phase which will be critical in guiding the transformation our institution must undertake.

An online budget town hall has been scheduled for Tuesday, Mar. 9 at 2 p.m. Details can be found in this week's (and future editions of) UWeekly newsletter. At that meeting, we will share additional details, speak to the University's budget process and provide an update on the budget taskforces.

Between budget reductions and the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been a challenging landscape for Alberta's post-secondary institutions. I am grateful for the perseverance our institution has shown in the face of this adversity. While we can expect challenging times for the foreseeable future, I also know that we will continue to meet our mandate for the benefit of the students and communities we serve.

Mike Mahon, PhD
President & Vice-Chancellor