



**Thursday, October 29, 2015**

On October 27, 2015, the Alberta government released its 2015/16 budget. The University of Lethbridge has strongly advocated for stable and predictable funding for our University and the post-secondary system as a whole. We appreciate that the Alberta government understands the important roles of universities in diversifying the economy. The budget affirmed the funding to post-secondary institutions that was previously announced in the interim supply bill released in June 2015. The following are the measures previously announced:

**1. Restoration of Funding**

- a. The Alberta government reversed the 1.4 per cent decrease in the 2015/16 Campus Alberta Operating Grant previously announced under the former Progressive Conservative government. Additionally, it committed an additional 2 per cent increase to our Campus Alberta Operating Grant for 2015/16. The government intends to increase the 2016/17 and 2017/18 Campus Alberta Operating Grants as well.
- b. The government has restored the grant funds allocated for targeted enrolment on approved programs.

**2. Tuition, Market Modifiers and Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees**

- a. The Alberta government is maintaining the freeze on tuition for two years at 2014/15 levels. Mandatory non-instructional fees (MNIFs) and tuition market modifiers approved by the previous government in Spring 2015 have been rolled back. The government will compensate institutions for these monies (both previously approved 2015/16 tuition and market modifiers increases will be rolled into the base operating grant.)
- b. Moving forward, no new market modifiers or MNIFs will be entertained until a comprehensive review of funding in the post-secondary system has been completed by the government in consultation with stakeholders.

**3. Destination Project**

- a. Regarding capital investment, the U of L commends the government for increased expenditures in building capital during the current economic downturn. The Destination Project, a new science and academic facility to be constructed on the Lethbridge campus, will create jobs during its construction and also through activities and partnerships forged in the

building. This project will be transformational for our University and for communities across southern Alberta. In addition to significantly enhancing the University's science teaching and research activities, the project will also engage the community through high school experiences, science outreach for K-12 and beyond, and create a connection point for industry, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government and community groups.

We are very pleased the government has affirmed the Destination Project as a critical piece of infrastructure for our community's continued economic success and has included its construction in its capital plan. This project is shovel-ready and we will continue to work with the government to ensure the funding schedule matches the project's construction schedule.

This budget is good news for our University and our students. We do not anticipate receiving any new information from government as it was noted our grant letter from the Minister received in June 2015 is still accurate.

The Budget Advisory Committee has already begun its deliberations for the 2016/17 operating budget of the University. Our hope is that the government funding commitments for future years remain and that additional clarity will be provided soon on a number of very important initiatives – the Mental Health grant that provides critical mental health supports to students, the flow of funding for the Destination Project and specific funding envelopes for a variety of Faculty-based initiatives are among these. Sustained funding for these initiatives have significant implications for future operating budgets of the University of Lethbridge.

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President and Vice-Chancellor