

For Immediate Release

Alberta 2030 Review's excessive cost and lack of consultation

Edmonton, July 14, 2020 - The Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations has serious concerns about the new Alberta 2030 review and the company, McKinsey & Co, that was hired to produce the report. While the expertise of McKinsey & Co in the Post-Secondary Education is lacking, CAFA's main concerns with the current Alberta 2030 report revolve around the extravagant cost and the lack of meaningful consultation with stakeholders.

Right-wing commentator, Alex Usher, claims that the \$3.7 million price tag of the Alberta 2030 review is excessive and roughly \$2.5 million more than needed to complete the report.¹ When put in the Alberta context, that is slightly more than the 2020-21 Alberta Campus Grant reduction at either MacEwan University or Olds College. This is not a small amount of lost funding for these institutions, and it is counterintuitive to have a review which will focus on efficiencies, to cost Alberta taxpayers such an excessive amount. The money wasted on this expensive report could fund the retention of important support staff, keep tuition affordable, or maintain the current educational experience for this year at a single institution in Alberta.

"Recent budget cuts have started a series of internal reviews and restructurings at Alberta universities," said Dr. Kevin Kane, president of CAFA and Professor of Medical Microbiology & Immunology at the University of Alberta. "By proposing an external review, the UCP is setting up our institutions to go through two rounds of restructuring within a single calendar year."

Lack of meaningful consultation by the Government of Alberta and McKinsey & Co, forces CAFA to conclude that outcomes in the review are pre-determined, rather than developed from an Alberta-specific context. For example, the Alberta 2030 RFP's timeline has McKinsey & Co finishing the review and presenting it to the Cabinet before the consultation period (referred to as a validation period in the RTF) even begins. A report on best practices and the future of Alberta's PSE sector should at least include dialogue with frontline workers who make Alberta's PSE sector the success that it is.

Dr Kane states: "Academic staff are integral to the post-secondary education sector: by excluding consultation with these experts on the frontlines, the Government of Alberta is missing an opportunity to transform the PSE system into one that Albertan students and businesses will flourish from for the next decade."

As professors and researchers, we regularly produce reports for governments and train our students in these methods. We believe that the Alberta 2030's timelines are tight, but meaningful consultation would still be possible. CAFA calls on the Government of Alberta, and McKinsey & Co, to meet with stakeholders and participate in constructive consultation with all sections of Alberta's post-secondary education sector, including academic staff, before they submit a final report.

CAFA is a federation of academic staff associations in Alberta. The five member associations are: The Association of Academic Staff University of Alberta, Athabasca University Faculty Association, Grant MacEwan Faculty Association, Mount Royal University Faculty Association and the University of Lethbridge Faculty Association. The objectives of the Confederation are to promote the quality of education in the province and to promote the well-being of Alberta universities and their academic staff.

- 30 -

Contact: *Lori Morinville, 780-232-6812 or lori.morinville@ualberta.ca*

¹ <http://higheredstrategy.com/that-alberta-transformation-contract/>