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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Edmonton, AB, March 2, 2021 - With the release of Budget 2021, the Government of Alberta has cut teaching and research supports to post-secondary institutions by \$175 million compared with last year's budget. This is the third budget with a significant cut to post-secondary operations, removing over \$400 million in total, and the government is proposing another 7% cut next year. As Albertans return to universities for training and upgrading their skills, this government continues to increase costs to students and their families, claiming that the government cannot bear the costs.

“The easiest way for a university administration to fill a budget gap is to increase fees paid by students,” said Rowan Ley, Chair of the Council of Alberta University Students. “The Government of Alberta is simply downloading costs onto Albertans looking to gain the skills and training they need to participate in the relaunch of our economy. This is a burden that students and their families will be paying for years to come.”

Within the same budget documents, the Government of Alberta indicates its desire for Alberta's universities to increase their own source revenue; that is, sources they control such as tuition, parking fees, research grants, and community rentals. While the ultimate goal is to reach a funding ratio with less provincial funding, the goal fails to account for the fact that the majority of these other revenue streams fall within two categories: the students' tuition and the professors' research grants. Ultimately it is students, their families and faculty who will be paying more for Alberta's post-secondary education system.

“We see this government continuing to download costs on the students and professors,” said Dr. Kevin Kane, President of the Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations. “Expecting faculty to increase their federal and private research grants while they are also facing salary rollbacks is short sighted. This situation is going to drive academic staff to other competing jurisdictions outside of Alberta.”

During this COVID pandemic and economic downturn, the single best thing the government of Alberta can do for our economy is to invest in university students and their professors.

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The Council of Alberta University Students and Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations represents the undergraduate and faculty from Athabasca University, Mount Royal University, Grant MacEwan University, the University of Alberta, the University of Lethbridge, and the undergraduate students from the University of Calgary.

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