

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Alberta's new Mintz Report on post-secondary education hides a red flag, provincial faculty association leader says

October 10, 2025 —There is much to like in the newly-released Mintz Expert Panel Report on Post-Secondary Education Funding and Alberta Competitiveness. So, one can be excused for breezing over the last of its 11 recommendations – but that would be a profound oversight, says Lee Easton, President of the Confederation of Alberta Faculty Associations (CAFA).

Explains Easton, “We are gratified that concerns raised in our May presentation to the Panel – including the risks of ongoing underfunding, a funding model unrelated to enrollment realities, unpredictable budgets, and government interference in institutional matters – are reflected in the report.

“For example, the recommendation to view institutional performance not only on Teaching and the Student Experience and Research but also on Community Impact, is welcome. Universities and colleges are part of the economic and social fabric of the towns and cities they serve. That deserves recognition.

“However, we have reservations about tying post-secondary funding too tightly to jobs and markets. Institutions must also equip students with aptitudes and ways of thinking to successfully navigate an increasingly unpredictable world.”

The devil is in the details: Recommendation 11

Called ‘*Institutional neutrality and diversity, equity and inclusion*’, Recommendation 11 is a catch-all that nullifies the report’s previous seeming endorsement of institutional autonomy by demanding that Albert’s universities, colleges, polytechnics uniformly commit to:

- 1) Neutrality on “controversial issues”, that they not “publicly take sides on political questions”;
- 2) Hiring based on merit with no equity considerations (with the exception of Indigenous candidates).

The details of Recommendation 11 cite the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Human Rights Act*, yet leave out their clear rules against hate speech. Even more worrying, it never mentions academic freedom, whose protection is inherent to the pursuit and practice of teaching and research at any post-secondary institution.

CAFA will watch closely to see how the Alberta government acts on the Mintz Report’s recommendations – both the commendable and the concerning ones.

“We hope the government moves quickly on the Panel’s thoughtful funding recommendations,” says Easton. “Too many reports like this just sit on a shelf. Alberta’s universities, colleges, and its citizens, deserve and expect better.”

The Confederation of Alberta Faculty Association represents more than 3,000 academic staff members of the Athabasca University Faculty Association (AUFA), MacEwan University Faculty Association (GMUFA), Mount Royal University Faculty Association (MRFA), and University of Lethbridge Faculty Association (ULFA).

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