

BILL 1

2005

ACCESS TO THE FUTURE ACT

(Assented to , 2005)

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Preamble

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta believes that the creation and sharing of knowledge through advanced education drives positive transformation of the economy, society and individuals, and is crucial to Alberta's future competitive advantage in a global economy;

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta desires to provide Albertans with advanced education opportunities that enable Albertans to develop appropriate and relevant skills, enrich their quality of life, and assist them in reaching their full potential;

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta is committed to ensuring that all qualified and motivated Albertans have the opportunity to participate in high-quality advanced education; and

WHEREAS the Government of Alberta encourages and supports the development and application of innovation to enhance access, to remove financial and non-financial barriers to participation, and to make the learning experience more successful and rewarding;

THEREFORE HER MAJESTY, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, enacts as follows:

Definitions

1 In this Act,

- (a) “advanced education” means the full range of learning opportunities for adults from basic literacy to all vocational, apprenticeship and academic levels;
- (b) “Fund” means the Access to the Future Fund established under section 4;
- (c) “Minister” means the Minister determined under section 16 of the *Government Organization Act* as the Minister responsible for this Act;
- (d) “public post-secondary institution” means a public post-secondary institution as defined in the *Post-secondary Learning Act*.

Accessibility and affordability

2(1) The Minister, in consultation with public post-secondary institutions, shall identify and establish enrolment targets and minimum entrance requirements.

(2) The Minister, in consultation with public post-secondary institutions and such other persons as the Minister considers appropriate, shall identify and evaluate and, where appropriate, implement plans, arrangements or processes that enhance the access to and affordability of advanced education, including but not limited to the following:

- (a) a common application process for entrance to public post-secondary institutions;
- (b) a searchable inventory and simplified application process for scholarships, bursaries and other financial assistance

available to Alberta students attending post-secondary institutions in Alberta;

- (c) plans to increase the participation in advanced education of individuals who are disadvantaged due to social, economic, geographic or cultural factors;
- (d) arrangements among public post-secondary institutions regarding recognition of prior learning and course credits and the admission of transfer students;
- (e) plans for ensuring that financial need is not a barrier to pursuing advanced education opportunities.

(3) The Minister shall report on the progress in enhancing access and ensuring the affordability of advanced education in the Ministry's annual report.

Quality

3 The Minister shall develop and implement mechanisms to monitor, evaluate and report on the quality of advanced education in Alberta to ensure that it continues to provide high quality learning opportunities in relation to national and international standards.

Access to the Future Fund

4(1) The Access to the Future Fund is established.

(2) The purpose of the Fund is generally to support innovation and excellence that enhances and expands opportunities for Albertans to participate in accessible, affordable and high-quality advanced education opportunities and, without restricting the generality of the foregoing,

- (a) to support initiatives that enhance the quality of learning and instruction;
- (b) to promote the development, attraction and retention of the faculty, staff and graduate students necessary to expand and enhance teaching excellence;
- (c) to support initiatives that foster the application of knowledge to the benefit of communities, the Province and society;

- (d) to encourage the creation or expansion of industry funded and privately funded scholarship and bursary programs;
- (e) to support initiatives that foster innovation and collaboration in education;
- (f) to carry out any other initiatives set out in the regulations.

(3) The Minister shall administer the Fund, and any income of the Fund accrues to and forms part of the Fund.

(4) An account from within the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund is deemed to be established to which is allocated, as considered appropriate by the Minister of Finance, money that is transferred to the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund after April 1, 2005.

(5) The maximum amount that may be allocated under subsection (4) is \$3 000 000 000.

(6) The amounts allocated under subsection (4) shall be adjusted in accordance with section 11 of the *Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund Act*.

(7) The Minister of Finance shall annually, in a manner determined by the Minister of Finance, pay from the General Revenue Fund to the Access to the Future Fund an amount equal to 4.5% of the total amounts allocated under subsection (4), as adjusted under subsection (6).

(8) The Minister may make grants from the Fund to carry out the purposes of the Fund.

(9) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations

- (a) respecting initiatives for the purpose of furthering the purposes of the Fund;
- (b) respecting the circumstances and conditions under which a grant may be made from the Fund.

Access Advisory Council

5(1) The Access Advisory Council is established.

(2) The Minister may, with respect to the members of the Council,

- (a) appoint or provide for the manner of their appointment,
- (b) prescribe their terms of office, and
- (c) authorize or provide for the payment of remuneration and expenses.

(3) The Minister shall designate one of the members as chair of the Council.

Council responsibilities

6(1) The Council may make recommendations to the Minister with respect to payments from the Fund and carry out any other functions and duties determined by the Minister.

(2) The Council may make bylaws respecting the conduct of the business and affairs of the Council.

(3) Subject to the approval of the Minister, the Council may establish committees, which may include individuals who are not members of the Council, to assist it with its responsibilities.

(4) The Council shall report its activities to the Minister in a manner prescribed by the Minister.

Alberta Heritage Scholarship Fund

7 The Alberta Heritage Scholarship Fund shall be increased by \$1 000 000 000, in amounts considered appropriate by the Minister of Finance.

Alberta Heritage Science and Engineering Research Endowment Fund

8 The Alberta Heritage Science and Engineering Research Endowment Fund shall be increased by \$500 000 000, in amounts considered appropriate by the Minister of Finance.

Coming into force

9 This Act comes into force on Proclamation.