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REACHING HIGHER IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Ontario's graduate education contributes to increasing the number of highly skilled and knowledgeable workers and ensures the province remains economically competitive.

That's why improving the accessibility of higher education is one of the goals of the McGuinty government's Reaching Higher plan, which will invest \$6.2 billion more in the province's postsecondary system over five years.

To achieve this goal, the government is committed to adding 12,000 graduate student spaces by 2007-08 and 14,000 by 2009-10, a 55 per cent increase over 2002-03 levels. To support this increase, the government is providing \$70 million in 2006-07 and \$170 million in 2007-08 in new operating funding to the province's universities. This expansion will ensure Ontario meets anticipated student demand and supports innovation in the economy through the expansion of professional and research-based graduate programs.

Among Toronto-area universities, the University of Toronto will receive support to create 1,700 new spaces for masters students and 827 new spaces for PhD students by 2007-08, Ryerson University will receive support to create 808 masters spaces and 78 PhD spaces, and York University will receive support for 761 masters spaces and 374 PhD spaces.

The government is also funding \$550 million in investments at Ontario universities to support the construction of facilities over the next five years to accommodate the additional students.

The government has already provided \$100 million to create endowments at universities that will provide fellowships for outstanding graduate students and \$25 million to endow new faculty chairs for research and improve graduate education. The government has also established the Ontario Research and Innovation Council to advise the Premier/Minister of Research and Innovation on long-term strategies and priorities to promote research and innovation.

Through the Reaching Higher plan, the people of Ontario will not only see improved access, but also higher quality in the province's postsecondary education system. Initiatives to improve the accessibility and quality of the system include:

More Access – Enrolment and Outreach

- Increasing full-time enrolments at colleges and universities by about 86,000 students since 2002-03;
- Increasing the number of new first-year spaces at medical schools by 23 per cent through the creation of satellite undergraduate medical schools in four new communities and establishing the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

- Investing \$15 million in 2006-07 – rising to \$55 million by 2009-10 – in new programs that reach out to francophones, aboriginals, people with disabilities and students who would be the first in their family to attend college or university;
- Increasing funding by \$20 million over 2004-05 levels for small, northern and rural colleges to provide greater access to high quality programs in these communities. Funding will be \$65 million in 2006-07, growing to \$70 million in 2009-10; and
- Investing in projects that create stronger links between colleges and high school programs to help more students make successful transitions to college and succeed in their course of study.

Higher Quality

- Increasing operating grants this year by about \$700 million compared to 2004-05 base levels for colleges and universities to hire more faculty and staff, purchase additional educational resources and technology, and improve student support services;
- Establishing the Ontario Research and Innovation Council to advise on and co-ordinate research priorities;
- Providing \$48 million in 2004-05 and \$115 million in 2005-06 and ongoing to colleges and universities in tuition compensation to ensure that the costs of the tuition freeze would not be borne by students and that real quality improvements to postsecondary education would be made by institutions; and
- Investing \$540 million by 2009-10 to modernize and repair university and college facilities and buy new equipment at colleges, including a \$250 million one-time investment in 2004-05.

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