

# OK College contributions reap rewards

## Educators await details on where dollars to fall

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There's good news in the federal budget for post-secondary education, Okanagan College president Jim Hamilton says.

The federal government is doubling the amount of money in the college and community innovation program which commercializes the fruits of research, he said.

"The most obvious connection, of course, would be with our project in Penticton, the new Centre of Excellence," he said. "We're looking for whatever opportunities present themselves there and elsewhere in

the college, too."

The Association of Canadian Community Colleges, to which OC belongs, has been heavily promoting the program, a partnership of ACCC and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council in concert with the other federal granting councils.

"There also appears to be more funding available for some of the areas of training that colleges typically do, trades and other training," Hamilton said, although he is waiting for more details.

"We're certainly interested and gratified to see the emphasis on knowledge transfer commercialization. Those are areas in which colleges are becoming increasingly involved right across Canada.

"We would like to think that Okanagan College is one of the leaders in British Columbia.

"(The) federal budget acknowledges and supports the key role of colleges in supplying the advanced skills and applied research that underpin economic growth and productivity improvement," added James Knight, president and CEO of ACCC.

"The budget demonstrates an understanding that colleges, institutes and polytechnics are integrated with the industrial and technological drivers of the economy. They help businesses start, develop and grow," he said.

"They support the private sector's need for applied research, product and process innovation, technology access and commercialization. They

are the prime providers of graduates with the advanced skills required by Canadian employers."

Canada lags behind other countries in commercializing the results of research, in part because the country has heavily invested in pure research while providing little support for applied research, he said.

"Colleges support the applied research needs of industry, especially small and medium enterprises, the source of most new jobs."

The budget also announced investments in retraining and apprenticeships, much of which will be delivered by Canada's 150 colleges, institutes and polytechnics.

"Finally, the focus on aboriginal education is welcome."