

Remarks

for

**Peter Halpin, Executive Director,
Association of Atlantic Universities
(AAU)**

**Presentation to
House of Commons
Standing Committee on Finance
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Mr. Chair and Committee members.

My name is Peter Halpin, Executive Director of the Association of Atlantic Universities – the AAU.

The AAU is an advocacy organization that represents the interests of universities across our region, ensuring public visibility for the important role they play in preparing future leaders of our communities, in path-breaking research and innovation, and in contributing to the economic prosperity of life in Atlantic Canada.

The AAU's pre-budget submission to this committee is entitled: *Solutions for Atlantic Canada's Future™*.

The AAU's vision for Atlantic Canada is closely aligned with the core principles of *Advantage Canada*.

Advantage Canada states that: We can and must do more to turn ideas into innovations that provide solutions to environmental, health and other important social challenges, and to improve our economic competitiveness.

Since 1997, successive governments have made substantial investment in Atlantic Canada.

Perhaps most significant has been the Atlantic innovation fund – the AIF.

Launched in 2001, the AIF is highly complementary to the core principles of *Advantage Canada*: investing for sustainable growth and, it strategically supports the three pillars of the national Science & Technology Strategy: the Entrepreneurial, Knowledge and People Advantages.

Much has been achieved in Atlantic Canada since the creation of AIF. It provides a strong foundation which can be built upon to further improve Atlantic Canada's productivity and prosperity.

The AAU recommends the federal government invest \$350 million over five years to support a University-led initiative – *Solutions for Atlantic Canada's Future™*. That proposed program is designed to successfully advance the core principles of *Advantage Canada* in Atlantic Canada.

It will further improve regional partnerships, productivity and prosperity.

The AAU's recommendation is comprised of six integrated program components that will ultimately advance *Advantage Canada*.

Atlantic Canada's universities have responsibility to improve our region and the lives of the people who live here.

That is precisely why our universities are embarking on a bold, new strategy to create a brighter, more prosperous future for Atlantic Canada.

Our approach is driven by the strength of ideas found in our universities and our ability to transform those ideas into economic and social value which will determine Atlantic Canada's future prosperity.

Our initiative – *Solutions for Atlantic Canada's Future*TM – aligns with the goals and priorities of the region's governments, business sectors and communities. Our universities and its partners are vital to creating an innovative, successful economy and improved quality of life.

Time does not allow a review of all aspects of *Solutions for Atlantic Canada's Future*TM. However, I will draw your attention to the important role our universities play as talent magnets in Atlantic Canada.

By attracting thousands of new students, academics and research scholars to the region, our universities play a vital role in Atlantic Canada's population strategy.

This academic year, our universities have enrolled **7,388 international students** from over **165 countries worldwide**.

That is an astonishing **16.5% increase** over the previous year!

We also know that more than 30% of those international students will apply for permanent residence status in Canada either during their studies or following graduation.

That is why many agree that our universities are the single most effective immigration policy instrument for Atlantic Canada.

Page five of our submission provides an overview of proposed programs and their funding requirements.

We are now developing a process management and performances measures model for each of the proposed program areas. It is our intention to share that work with this Committee at the earliest possible opportunity.

In closing, I thank you for providing the AAU with the opportunity to present our pre-budget submission to the committee this morning.

And, I look forward to answering any questions you may have.