

“The Changing Role of Universities in the Economy”
Opening Remarks by Dr. J. Colin Dodds, Chair, Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents

Good morning. It is a pleasure to welcome you to the inaugural forum on the Changing Role of Universities in the Economy. Before we begin what I'm sure will be a very dynamic and thought-provoking session, I would like to applaud each of you for your interest and involvement in this important topic. In Atlantic Canada, we are fortunate to boast a vibrant university community that contributes more than \$3 billion annually to our local economy, is a magnet for immigration, and is a significant contributor to the region's exports. Indeed, the role that our universities play in driving regional, national, and even international economic growth is currently greater than at any time in our history.

The purpose of today's forum is threefold: To highlight the changing role that universities play in our economic development and showcase the benefits of investment in universities as partners in economic growth; to demonstrate confidence in -- and commitment to -- the future of Atlantic Canada; and, finally, to seek timely and meaningful input from stakeholders spanning business, industry and government sectors among others.

This last objective is one that warrants particular emphasis. When the idea for today's forum came about many months ago, one thing was certain: The success of the event will be in large part measurable by the extent to which we participate in meaningful, stimulating dialogue that encompasses a diverse cross-section of perspectives. Today's university community does not exist in a vacuum. It is an integral component of the economic and social landscape. Consequently, our capacity to contribute to that landscape will depend upon our ability to understand and respond to the perspectives of a wide range of stakeholders. And this kind of understanding will come about only if we continue to place a high priority on active communication and dialogue through forums such as this one. To that end, I encourage each of you to participate fully throughout the session and ensure that your voice is heard. There is a tremendous caliber of talent in this room today, and I'm sure each of you will agree that we will all benefit by as much participation as possible.

In closing, I would like to recognize the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and TD Bank Financial for their generous support of today's forum. Now, to begin what promises to be a stimulating day of discussion, it is my pleasure to introduce John Knuble, Vice President, Nova Scotia, of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

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