

For Immediate Release

More Tech Grads is Investment in B.C.'s Future

March 14, 2017 VANCOUVER – Today's announcement by Premier Christy Clark to provide a significant boost to technology programs at post-secondary institutions will benefit students, strengthen communities and keep the province's economy strong for the future, says the Research Universities' Council of British Columbia (RUCBC).

Speaking at the opening of the #BCTECH Summit, Premier Clark said the B.C. government will become a leader in the innovation economy by increasing the number of tech grads by 1,000 per year by 2022 while doubling the number of co-op placements to 1,400 per year for those in technology-related programs.

"Research universities play a critical role in B.C.'s strong economy," said Prof. Jamie Cassels, President of the University of Victoria and Chair of the Research Universities' Council of British Columbia. "Today's announcement will drive innovation, productivity and job growth. This investment in our highest demand programs will create new opportunities for students and ensures that B.C.'s university graduates will continue to be at the forefront of new ideas, discoveries and economic growth."

The B.C. government is also contributing \$10 million toward the creation of B.C. Science and Technology Research Chairs across British Columbia, which will support discovery research that is integral to advances in technology and innovation.

Skilled graduates fuel B.C.'s technology industry, with strong demand for science, technology and engineering programs. Graduates in emerging fields such as biomedical engineering, satellite systems, environmental engineering and data science, will lead innovation in energy, health care, aerospace, business, as well as in traditional resource industries.

"This investment will help transform B.C. into a global leader for technology talent," said RUCBC President Robin Ciceri. "By strengthening British Columbia's talent pool today, we are supporting the strong and diversified economy of tomorrow."

RUCBC applauds the government's investment in co-op education, affording students real-world work experience and strengthening relationships between institutions and industry.

Investments in post-secondary education bring substantial economic and social benefits to the province, including higher wages, enhanced productivity, improved health and stronger communities with greater civic engagement.

RUCBC represents B.C.'s six major research universities, promoting quality, accessibility and coordination of university education. Members include The University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, the University of Victoria, University of Northern British Columbia, Royal Roads University and Thompson Rivers University.