

Universities and colleges have a greater and more important role than basic and applied research and development in ensuring Canada's prosperity in the new, knowledge-intensive world economy. That role is in helping Canada and Canadians shift to a knowledge-based economy.

Universities and colleges have an important part to play in creating the learning culture that is so necessary for our international competitiveness. They are at centre stage in any effort to know about and understand other nations of the world, and to reach out to those nations.

The federal government has already joined in partnership with post-secondary institutions to help them apply their skills, their experience and their knowledge to the task of making Canada a more competitive international trader. Through programs such as Canada Scholarships Program, Science Culture Canada, InnovAction and the Network of Centres of Excellence, the federal and provincial governments support and encourage science and technology. These programs, together with the Corporate Affiliates Program we are inaugurating today, serve to promote the development of a knowledge-based economy -- an economy which invests in human capital and supports life-long learning and international understanding.

Canadian commercial education and training services have considerable potential -- potential that is not being met. My department, Industry, Science and Technology Canada, is committed to strengthening the commercial education and training sector of our economy. ISTC officials are now working with industry and with educators on an in-depth analysis of industry and its competitive environment, and are developing an action plan to improve Canadian performance.

Universities and colleges are an important part of this process, particularly in light of the move to teaching and learning outside the traditional classroom, and the abundant international opportunities. Through organizations such as the Canadian Bureau for International Education, Canadians can meet and deal with scholars and students from other nations -- and scholars and students from other nations can learn about Canada and Canadians.

The linkages created by the Canadian Bureau for International Education can be built on and strengthened for the benefit of all. This Corporate Affiliates Program is an opportunity to create and develop new opportunities for Canadian business and for Canadian post-secondary institutions. It is an important step to moving to where the puck is going to be in international trade.

Thank you.