

October 17, 2016

Standing Committee on Resource Stewardship
Committee Clerk
3rd Floor, 9820 – 107 Street NW
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 1E7

RE: Public Input on the *Lobbyists Act*

Alberta's Comprehensive Academic Research Institutions (CARIs) are writing today to provide input to the committee's review of the *Lobbyists Act*. As a distinctive and valuable component of the six-sector Campus Alberta model, we are partners in social, cultural and economic development, fostering and establishing connections and understanding. We would like to request that no changes be made to the current status of our universities under the *Lobbyists Act*.

The critical role played by the CARIs in Alberta's research and development landscape cannot be overstated. We are the primary drivers of publicly-funded research in the province and the recipients of more than 95 per cent of total sponsored research in Alberta. In addition to building economic opportunity for Albertans, this research helps develop public policy and best practices pertaining to everything from the environment to supporting citizens with special needs. A mutually dependent relationship exists between the province and CARIs. As such, the CARIs are particularly keen to ensure that the current status as prescribed provincial entities, under the *Lobbyists Act*, is maintained.

Post-secondary institutions are embedded in the Government of Alberta's consolidated financial statements. Institutions are also required to appear before the Public Accounts Committee to review financial statements and recommendations of the Auditor General. Furthermore, the majority of an institution's funding comes directly from the government and there are strict rules on the disbursement of these funds. Essentially, capital dollars allocated to post-secondary institutions are, in effect, being spent on provincial government infrastructure.

As public bodies, post-secondary institutions are also governed by significant provincial legislation ensuring the institution operates in a transparent manner, and that the public can access key information about our practices, decisions, and activities. This includes, but is not limited to, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the *Public Sector Compensation Transparency Act*, and the *Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act*.

The province has the power to establish universities as well as to appoint university Board Chairs and Governors to oversee post-secondary institutions. As a result, all institutions must conduct business in accordance with the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*. In this way, the province determines how post-secondary education is delivered and how institutions are governed.

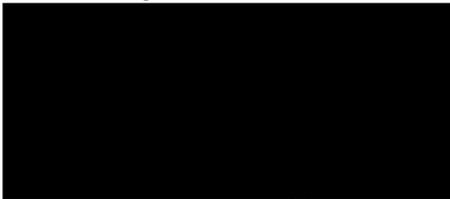
Due to the nature of, and relationship between, post-secondary institutions and the province, the

frequency of interaction occurs at a much higher rate and covers a wider range of topics than would its dealings with the federal government; thus, reporting would be a very onerous and extremely taxing burden on administrative resources. Engagement at the current level is necessary to ensure alignment of research and learning priorities to the benefit of Albertans.

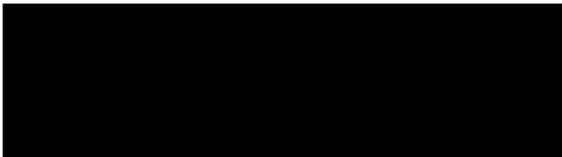
It is for these reasons that we request that post-secondary institutions should retain their status as a prescribed provincial entity, exempt, through the regulation from the *Lobbyists Act*.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input in the review of the *Lobbyists Act*.

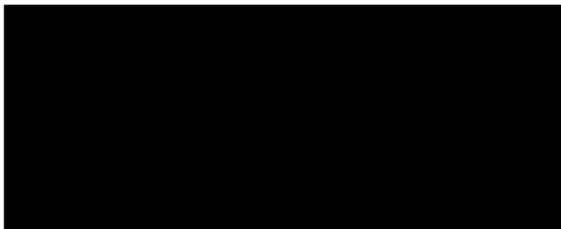
Sincerely,



David H. Turpin
President and Vice-Chancellor
University of Alberta



Elizabeth Cannon
President and Vice-Chancellor
University of Calgary



Mike Mahon
President and Vice-Chancellor
University of Lethbridge