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Territories sign Memorandum of Understanding to further explore university models

YELLOWKNIFE (Thursday, June 30, 2011)—The ministers responsible for education in Canada’s three territories signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) today to express their mutual interests and goals in exploring approaches for university development in Canada’s North.

The governments of Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut are committed to providing and supporting consistent, accessible, quality post-secondary education opportunities to all northerners, and recognizing the importance of offering an educational environment that includes a balance of academic and traditional lifestyles and pursuits.

“Signing this MOU takes the first step to bring our governments’ shared goal of university development in Canada’s North to reality,” said Minister of Education, Culture and Employment for the Government of the Northwest Territories Jackson Lafferty. “It is the next logical step in the evolution of our post-secondary institutions and will enhance the learning environment for northerners by providing quality post-secondary education close to home, where family and community supports are available.”

“We are excited to explore university models and advance the post-secondary capacity of Canada’s North,” said the Honourable Patrick Rouble, Yukon’s Education Minister. “This Memorandum is a commitment among our three territories to further develop practical, quality post-secondary options for northern students.”

“We know that our young people are the key to building our future and we want to help them develop the skills and abilities needed to take on leadership roles in our territory,” said Premier Eva Aariak, Nunavut Minister of Education. “A high-quality educational environment that maintains a balance between academic excellence and the culture, values and lifestyle of our northern students will provide the support they need to achieve success.”

“This is part of our continuing commitment to Nunavummiut to increase post-secondary opportunities in all occupational categories from career training to professional education,” said the Honourable Daniel Shewchuk, Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College.

To undertake this work, the three governments will form a tri-territorial committee to develop options on how to move forward with university development in Canada’s North. The Committee will work collaboratively to advance discussions with the Government of Canada on investments to support university development in Canada’s North.

The committee will include two representatives from each territorial government and an appointed chair. Participation from additional stakeholders is also being considered. The Committee will produce a discussion and options paper this summer for Ministerial consideration.

For more information, please contact:

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