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| ***Province*** | ***Législature*** | ***Session*** | ***Type de discours*** | ***Date du discours*** | ***Locuteur*** | ***Fonction du locuteur*** | ***Parti politique*** |
| Sasketchawan | 25e | 2e | Discours sur l’éducation | 2005 | Andrew Thompson | Ministre de l’éducation | NPD |

**Saskatchewan: Education Speech, Second session of the twenty-fifth legislature, 2005.**

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I’m pleased today to be joined by a number of officials. Seateddirectly next to me is deputy minister, Bonnie Durnford. Next to her, Brady Salloum, who is the executive director, student

financial assistance. Behind Brady is Kevin Veitenheimer, the director of university services. And behind Deputy Minister Durnford is Wayne McElree, who is the assistant deputy minister. Seated directly behind me is Nelson Wagner, who is the executive director of facilities. Behind him is Glenda Eden, the manager of financial planning. Next to her is Trina Fallows, the director of finance for corporate services. And just over to my right is Rick Pawliw, who is executive director of programs.

Mr. Chairman, I would just say by way of introduction that I am particularly pleased that we have the opportunity to discuss the post-secondary estimates today. Post-secondary education was a focus of this budget. And our continuing efforts to make sure Saskatchewan is a great place for students to learn and to live continues to be emphasized within the initiatives contained in this budget.

This budget focuses on making sure that university is affordable, is accessible, and that we are working to make sure that there is a closer relationship between our post-secondary institutions and the economic environment that this province finds itself in, an economic environment which sees a tremendous growth as Saskatchewan becomes a have province and enters its second century

Mr. Chairman, it is true that in other jurisdictions where we have seen governments act to put in a regulation to minimize the degree that tuition can rise or to effectively freeze it, as provinces like British Columbia have done, that what those measures essentially did was simply postponed tuition increases. The approach that we took in this budget was not to move forward with a regulated or a legislated freeze but rather to provide the universities with sufficient funds

that they could hold the tuition increase to zero this year. This is a decision that the universities have agreed with; they have supported our funding regime this year and have said that they will hold the tuition to what it was this past year. We think this is a good approach to take. It was a co-operative approach.

It was one that met the needs of the university and recognizes that the universities indeed are the ones who set the tuition fees. It at the same time provides them with sufficient funds to carry on their activities in a way that prevents the environment from developing as we saw in British Columbia. So that’s how we undertook this. In terms of simplicity, yes, it provides for an effective freeze of tuition this year, but it is a freeze that has been established by the universities. They have made the decision to hold their tuition fee at the same level it

was last year.

Yes. The money that we provided through the centennial student line, which is in the budget, is contingent on making sure that tuition fees are mitigated this year. That is a specific, targeted fund for this year. What we are working through is next year, how that will be reflected within the budget. And it will need, I would argue, to roll into the general university budget. But we will need to be careful to make sure that that money does not simply become absorbed and then we see a double jump in tuition. That will need to essentially have reset the base for the tuition for this year, and that is part of the discussion that is ongoing with the universities.

Mr. Chairman, every year as we go through the budgeting process with universities and we take a look at what their requests are, obviously we have a great deal of detail. We have had many years of discussion about how the university funding formula should work, and that is a

well-established mechanism in the province. Certainly the universities are autonomous institutions and make their own budget decisions, but the government funding is provided to pay for a level of support that we both understand at the point that it’s provided. I don’t think that we need to be overly coy about it. We obviously understand what the level of funding will mean in terms of likely tuition outcomes. We know what we expect it to be used for. The line-to-line issues are determined by the university boards and they make those decisions appropriately. But the 160-some million that we’re providing to the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] this year and the 50- or 60-some million that we’re providing — 60-some million we’re providing to the U of R [University of Regina], we have certain understandings as to what that money will be used for.

This year we’ve inserted a specific line in the budget to deal with tuition mitigation, in part in recognition to the fact that students and youth are a priority of this government and that we have wanted to reflect that clearly in this our centennial year, in this our centennial budget, and to have that very clearly outlined so that students saw that their efforts were appreciated and were noted in a document as important as the provincial budget.