Growing employment and an aging demographic mean there will be an estimated 1.1 million new job openings by 2020. The problem is, we don’t have enough people with the advanced skills to fill these jobs.

At our current growth rate, the demand for workers with these advanced skills will outstrip supply by 2016. However, a multi-year plan scaled to meet BC’s labour market shortages will make a crucial difference. And that’s where BC’s colleges come in.

BC’s colleges are the most affordable and accessible pathway to post-secondary education.

For over five decades BC’s 11 public, post-secondary colleges have served almost 200,000 students annually in close to 70 communities across BC. Our colleges offer a range of programs and teach the essential and advanced skills needed for students to evolve with a changing workplace and ultimately fill the skills gap. Plus, over 90% of students graduating from BC’s colleges transition into the workforce within 6 months.

Colleges can make a significant impact on BC’s future prosperity by:

1 ENSURING A SKILLED AND EDUCATED WORKFORCE TO MEET BC’S GROWING LABOUR DEMANDS.
   Of the 1.1 million new job openings by 2020, almost 42% will be in occupations like health care, business administration, sales, construction, trades, and accounting—occupations that require college or trade certification. Another 35% will require university education, which many students will begin at one of BC’s colleges.

2 EDUCATING STUDENTS NEAR WHERE THEY LIVE TO BUILD VIBRANT COMMUNITIES.
   Research shows graduates are more likely to work where they’ve studied. Investment to increase access to BC’s colleges— including access for Aboriginals, immigrants and learners with disabilities— grows the fiscal and social well-being of our communities.

3 ENHANCING BC’S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS.
   Workers with advanced skills and education are the 21st century’s most critical resource. BC’s colleges are uniquely positioned to teach a variety of skills ranging from essential to advanced, and help students evolve with our changing workplace.

More government investment is urgently needed.

We need a multi-year plan to produce more job-ready college graduates with the advanced skills in areas vital to BC’s labour market.

Investment will ensure BC’s colleges can prepare the highly skilled workforce needed to fill the skills gap as well as build strong and vibrant communities and enhance our competitive advantage. It’s time we think of advanced education and skills training as an investment, not an expense.

- Our colleges provide a $3.80 return for every $1.00 of taxpayer financial support.
- Our colleges and their graduates contribute $7.7 billion of income annually to the provincial economy.

It’s time we think of advanced education and skills training as an investment, not an expense.

For more information, please visit www.BCColleges.ca
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