
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development

AWARD OPENS MORE DOORS FOR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS IN B.C.

VICTORIA – B.C. is opening more doors for Aboriginal people to achieve a post-secondary education by establishing the B.C. Aboriginal Student Award through the Province’s \$10 million Aboriginal endowment, announced Murray Coell, Minister of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development.

“This government is committed to ensuring that Aboriginal people have every opportunity to gain a post-secondary education and all its benefits,” said Coell. “The B.C. Aboriginal Student Award encourages Aboriginal students to start, stay in and succeed in higher education. Awards like these increase access, provide more choices and – with B.C.’s five new universities and Aboriginal-guided institutions – more opportunities, closer to home.”

The B.C. Aboriginal Student Award will be funded from the returns on a \$10 million endowment fund established by the Province in 2007 as part of its strategy to improve Aboriginal access and achievement. To ensure that there are more opportunities for people to benefit from this award, the Province is providing an additional one-time grant of \$500,000 in 2008.

Awards of \$1,000 to \$3,500 will be given annually to Aboriginal students pursuing post-secondary education in B.C. The number of awards granted will depend on the type of programs students are enrolled in and the revenue generated by the endowment fund.

The Irving K. Barber British Columbia Scholarship Society manages the endowment in partnership with the Victoria Foundation, and provides the awards based on eligibility criteria and an application process.

“The Irving K. Barber British Columbia Scholarship Society is pleased to manage this program, made possible through an endowment and grant from the provincial government,” said society board chair Mike Apsey. “These awards are an opportunity to open new doors for Aboriginal students to B.C.’s educational system.”

The B.C. Aboriginal Student Award is part of the ministry’s \$65-million Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Strategy announced in April 2007 by Premier Gordon Campbell.

The strategy is meeting the higher learning commitments in the Transformative Change Accord and Métis Nation Relationship Accord and helping to close the gap in the area of education opportunities between Aboriginal people and other British Columbians.

For more information about this award, the application and selection process, the society's other scholarship programs, or to donate to the B.C. Aboriginal Student Award fund, visit www.bcscholarship.ca or call the Victoria Foundation at 250 381-5532.

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