

# Alberta universities working together to elevate province's tech reputation

Calgary (15 April 2002) — Key players from Alberta's universities and government programs are meeting today to look at ways to jointly boost Alberta's profile in the information technology sector.

"The need to plan and realize Alberta's goals for top performance in information and communications technology is critical," according to meeting organizer Dr Brian Unger, President of Alberta's Informatics Circle of Research Excellence (iCORE). "Research and innovation in this area is more important to the economy than many people realize, and Alberta needs to establish an original foothold now. We can only do that if we work together."

The strategic planning workshop brings together over 30 decision makers from the University of Alberta, University of Calgary and the University of Lethbridge, including the vice-presidents (academic) and vice-presidents (research), the deans of science and engineering, and department heads in computer science, and electrical and computer engineering. It also includes the iCORE board and committees, with the presidents of the Alberta Ingenuity Fund and TRILabs as guests.

"This is the who's who responsible for seeding innovation in this province," iCORE's Director of Programs Lynn Sutherland explains. "Until recently, it was more common for the universities to compete for top talent, rather than collaborate. Now, the competitive climate has changed, as jurisdictions worldwide aim to attract the top researchers and industries. All of us in Alberta have to work together to ensure success"

The theme of the workshop is collaboration and will ask:

- How can Alberta institutions collaborate to recruit researchers and graduate students?
- How can they work together to improve information and communications technology research in the province overall?
- How can the institutions jointly attract more funding to Alberta and participate fully in the Government of Canada's Innovation Strategy?

Alberta has created several programs to attract top talent in new technology fields, including iCORE ([www.icore.ca](http://www.icore.ca)). The investment stems from a belief that strong fundamental research is at the core of a healthy ICT economic sector, which in turn creates social, cultural and economic advantages for Albertans. Due to the high demand for ICT researchers, it is considered a difficult area in which to attract and retain top people.