



**For Immediate Release**

**Aurora College Budget Cut**

**February 9, 2017 – Ottawa, ON** - The Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) stands in solidarity with the Association of Social Workers in Northern Canada (ASWNC) in deep concern about proposed budget cuts to Aurora College and the potential closure of its 2-year Social Work Program.

As understood, the government of Northwest Territories (NWT) has proposed a decrease in funding to Aurora College by \$1.9 million, which would cause the elimination of the 2-year social work program. CASW calls on the federal government and the government of NWT to rethink this damaging choice, as it would severely negatively impact not only service provision in Northern Canada, but also stand in direct opposition to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC).

“If this budget decision is finalized, it will have dire consequences on the future of post-secondary education in the north, and the key role this plays in supporting northern communities and their ability to provide services for the community from the community” stated CASW President Jan Christianson-Wood.

The Canada Social Transfer (CST) is the primary source of federal funding in Canada that supports provincial and territorial post-secondary education, with the territorial government then allocating funds. According to Aurora College, contributions from the territorial government constitute approximately 66% of the college’s revenue.

“While CASW is sympathetic to the budgeting realities, this is not a decision the NWT can afford to make,” added Christianson-Wood, “and it flies in the face of the TRC, which recommended that the federal government provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking post-secondary education, and bolster the development of culturally appropriate curricula.”

Aurora College is the northern college with the highest Indigenous student enrollment, with 1,813 in past years. Applicants to the Social Work Diploma program came from communities across the Northwest Territories, including Behchoko, Gameti, Deline, Tulita, Fort Good Hope, Fort Smith, Hay River, Fort Resolution, Aklavik, Tuktoyaktuk, and Inuvik.

“The consequences of this proposed change would be far-reaching for Indigenous communities, the profession of social work, and the North as a whole,” concluded Christianson-Wood, “social workers urge the governments to reconsider.”

**For more information:**

For further information:

Fred Phelps, MSW, RSW

CASW Executive Director

Tel: 613-729-6668

E-mail: [fred.phelps@casw-acts.ca](mailto:fred.phelps@casw-acts.ca)