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Hi-tech CEOs Say Value of Liberal Arts is Increasing

The following is a statement by leaders of Canadian high-technology corporations underscoring the importance of liberal arts education in the digital economy:

Funding of higher education in this country needn't be an either/or proposition between technology or liberal arts and sciences, as public debate suggests.

As leaders of some of Canada's growing high-technology companies, we have first-hand knowledge of the necessity for a balanced approach.

Yes, this country needs more technology graduates, as they fuel the digital economy. But it is impossible to operate an effective corporation in our new economy by employing technology graduates alone. We have an equally strong need for those with a broader background who can work in tandem with technical specialists, helping create and manage the corporate environment.

A liberal arts and science education nurtures skills and talents increasingly valued by modern corporations. Our companies function in a state of constant flux. To prosper we need creative thinkers at all levels of the enterprise who are comfortable dealing with decisions in the bigger context. They must be able to communicate – to reason, create, write and speak – for shared purposes: For hiring, training, managing, marketing, and policy-making. In short, they provide leadership.

For example, many of our technology workers began their higher education in the humanities, and they are clearly the stronger for it. This was time well spent, not squandered. They have increased their value to our companies, our economy, our culture, and themselves, by acquiring the level of cultural and civic literacy that the humanities offer.

We stand with the chancellors of Ontario's universities, who recently stated that funding must "permit universities to manage enrolment demand and maintain a diverse and forward-looking curriculum."

It is critical that all universities in Canada receive sufficient funding to ensure a well-educated workforce and a new generation of leadership.

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Everett Anstey
President, CEO and Chairman
Sun Microsystems of Canada Inc.

Kevin Bennis
President and CEO
Call-Net Enterprises Inc. (Sprint
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Micheline Bouchard
Chairman, President and CEO
Motorola Canada Co.

Paul Butler, Director
Artech Digital Entertainments

Stuart Butts
Chairman and CEO
Xenos Group Inc.

Peter Ciceri
President and Managing Director
Compaq Canada Inc.

Ashraf Dimitri, President
Oasis Technology Ltd.

Kevin Francis
Chairman, President and CEO
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Grant Gisel, President
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Carl Glaeser, CEO
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Dean Hopkins, CEO
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Robert Johnson
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Jean Monty
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BCE Inc.

Michael O'Neil
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Joseph Pilarski
CEO and Director
EcomPark Inc.

Doug Steiner, CEO
Versus Technologies Inc. (E*Trade)

Carol Stephenson
President and CEO
Lucent Technologies Canada

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