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# Schools await goodies in budget

## All are hopeful after Rae report

By DEREK GORDANIER  
Metro Ottawa

College and university administrators in Ottawa are rubbing their hands in anticipation of the goodies expected to come out of today's provincial budget.

"Yes, we are anxiously awaiting good news, we hope," said Gilles Patry, the president of the University of Ottawa.

"We'd be very disappointed if it didn't come close to the Rae report recommendations," said Carleton University president Richard Van Loon, who also chairs the Council of Ontario Universities.

Every indication is that increased money for post-secondary schools will be the hallmark of Ontario Finance Minister Greg Sorbara's budget, as the Liberal government tries to refocus

on the health care and education platforms upon which it campaigned.

The new funding comes on the heels of a government-commissioned report by former premier Bob Rae that recommends a cash infusion of \$2.1 billion for the province's post-secondary schools.

"I think the Rae report was fundamental in awakening the sensitivities of governments towards the necessity to increase funding," Patry said. "We will be looking for ... an increase in base budget funding for universities and the main priority there would be to allocate these monies to the hiring of full-time faculty members."

Patry also said the student-to-staff ratio of 25-to-1 at the U of O must be pared and that the university needs money to diversify its francophone programs.

Van Loon said the budget would be judged on how closely it follows the outline of the Rae report.

"We felt the report was a

very, very good package," he said. "The closer the budget comes to essentially saying we will implement the Rae report, the happier we will be," he said.

New money can't come soon enough, says Robert Gillett, the president of Ottawa's Algonquin College. His college recently announced it must slash up to five academic programs in order to deal with an \$8.5-million deficit.

"The No. 1 issue is funding at both the capital and operational levels and obviously that is the first indicator we look for," Gillett said.

"Ontario can't remain 10 out of 10 in Canada and still be a leader," he said. "We'll look to see an indicator we're at least moving to the national average in funding."

In 15 years, Gillett can't remember a provincial budget that had more "optimistic rumours" for the post-secondary system surrounding it.

"Let's just hope that they turn out to be true," he said.