

For Immediate Publication

Access to university differs significantly across Canada's regions

Montreal, December 14, 2004 – Access to university in Canada is divided sharply along regional lines, a new study released today by the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation revealed.

Applicant Data in Canada: Another Perspective on Access reveals that, in particular, British Columbia's universities are having trouble keeping pace with the increase in demand from secondary school students. Universities in the Atlantic, on the other hand, have kept pace with demand both from within their own region and from the rest of the country. Nova Scotia universities have proven quite capable at accepting large numbers of students from outside the region. The report finds that Ontario universities coped adequately with the large influx of first-year students caused by the double cohort following the elimination of grade 13.

"The demand for a university education has never been higher, but in some provinces there may not be enough room to accept all those who want to study," said Andrew Parkin, the Foundation's director of research and program development. "This creates a situation where a student in the west is refused admittance to a university in her province, while an equally qualified student in the east is offered admission to the school and program of his choice."

Ken Snowdon, the report's author, underlined the importance of examining applicant data in order to gain a better understanding of access to university in Canada. "The creation of a national collection of applicant data would greatly enable Canadian policymakers to better understand the many factors associated with applicant demand," he said.

In examining the issue of access to university education, the report finds that recent increases in the demand for a university education have already begun to lead to a significant rise in admission standards. The report goes on to note that, while students may gain admittance to university, they do not always gain entry to their preferred course of study.

The Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation is a private, independent organization created by an act of Parliament in 1998. It encourages Canadian students to strive for excellence and pursue their post-secondary studies. The Foundation distributes \$285 million in bursaries and scholarships each year throughout Canada. Since its inception, it has awarded more than \$1.5 billion in the form of over 500,000 bursaries to Canadian post-secondary students.

-30-

The report, *Applicant Data in Canada: Another Perspective on Access*, can be downloaded from the Foundation's Web site: www.millenniumscholarships.ca.

For more information:

Joseph Berger
Communications Department
(514) 284-7246
jberger@bm-ms.org