



**Chambre de commerce
du Montréal métropolitain**
Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal

September 19, 2005

Mr. Jean-Marc Fournier
Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports
Marie-Guyart Building
1035 de La Chevrotière Street, 16th floor
Quebec City, Quebec G1R 5A5

Dear Minister:

On behalf of the members of the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal, I wish to express our complete support for your work in the Council of the Federation to make your counterparts from elsewhere in Canada aware of the importance of increasing funding for postsecondary education.

The vitality of Montreal universities and their ability to compete with the world's other great educational institutions to attract students, researchers and professors are of the utmost importance for the creation of wealth and the economic development of Montreal and Quebec as a whole. The finding of the Conference of Rectors and Principals of Quebec Universities and the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec — that Quebec universities had a 2002-2003 general operating deficit of approximately \$375.3 million compared with other Canadian universities — demonstrates the urgency of taking action to ensure that our universities have the means to excel. The Board of Trade itself recognized this situation in the brief that it presented to the Parliamentary Committee on Education for the Quality, Accessibility and Funding of Universities in February 2004, entitled *Higher Education: A critical issue for the economic engine of Quebec*.

In our latest *Montreal Health Report* (August 2005), we wrote that Montreal universities wield considerable drawing power to attract and retain talent. That drawing power is all the more essential since, in a few years, immigration and training will be two of the mere handful of factors potentially contributing to growth in the GDP. In light of this situation, we consider it crucial to give our universities the means to compete with the rest of the world by attracting budding talent and helping to retain it.

The transfer of gas tax revenues, a file in which you played a major role, clearly shows that by taking a pragmatic approach it is possible to find solutions that meet our needs while respecting the jurisdiction of each level of government.

...2

We therefore encourage you to pursue your efforts, and we wish to assure you of our total support in this matter which is of the utmost importance to the future of the Quebec economy.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Isabelle Hudon'.

Isabelle Hudon
President and CEO

c.c. The right honourable Paul Martin, Prime Minister of Canada
Mr. Jean Charest, Premier of Quebec
Mr. Michel Audet, Minister of Finance
Mr. Roch Denis, Chair, Conference of Rectors and Principals of Quebec Universities and Rector, Université du Québec à Montréal
Mr. Luc Vinet, Rector, Université de Montréal
Ms. Heather Munroe-Blum, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, McGill University
Mr. Claude Lajeunesse, Rector and Vice-Chancellor, Concordia University
Mr. Bruno-Marie Béchar, Rector, Université de Sherbrooke