

**ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE**

**QUESTION 677-18(3)/678-18(3):  
ASSOCIATE DEPUTY MINISTER POSITION FUNDING**

**March 11, 2019**

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment, and I am following up on questions I asked about her budget in Committee of the Whole last week. First, could the Minister tell us whether the new ADM of Post-secondary Education is being paid by the college or being paid by the department? Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The associate deputy minister of post-secondary position actually will come out of the Aurora College funding. They do have funding for what used to be a president position, and this person will be taking on the role of overseeing the operations of the college. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. GREEN:** Do I understand, then, from the Minister that the new ADM is the president of the college?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** No. This associate deputy minister is responsible for overseeing the operations of the Aurora College, just like the president's duties. However, this is an associate deputy minister position. The main priority is actually bringing forward the framework, and then, of course, when that work is done, then that position will dissolve and then a president position will be reinstated for our post-secondary polytechnic university.

**MS. GREEN:** The last Aurora College report shows that they were projecting a deficit of \$374,000. I do wonder if that is still the case, given the fact that two programs have been discontinued, the board has been dismissed, and the president resigned just a little bit into the new fiscal year. Is there money available at Aurora College to pay this position and related expenses?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Actually, yes, there is more money. The money for the associate deputy minister is budgeted already. It will come out of the monies that were allocated for a president fee.

The deficit that the MLA from Yellowknife Centre spoke of was a year-end deficit, monies to be drawn down in that year. There was direction from the Education Department that they need to use some of that surplus, but the accumulated surplus for 2016-2017 was over \$10 million, and the accumulated surplus for Aurora College on the 2017-2018 year was over \$13 million. They are trying to use it down, to use some of the money. However, their accumulated surplus keeps increasing yearly, and I will be tabling a report in this week to show the latest surplus.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My temptation now is to bring out my wish list of education spending to help the Minister with that colossal surplus. Are the surpluses going to continue because these positions are unfilled, and can Aurora College keep these surpluses as they occur? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** These are accumulated surpluses. They add up over the years. Like I said, the last one that was tabled here was 2017-2018. It was over \$13 million. That money will be used for the polytechnic university to assist with the implementation plan, although, Mr. Speaker, I must qualify that that is one pot of funding. If there is additional funding that is drawn up that is expected through the implementation plan, then I, as the Minister, or whichever Minister is in this position at that time, I am hoping, will be bringing forward that figure to the government to ask for additional funding. We will be looking at monies from the federal government. We will be looking at outside funds, as well. That is part of the comprehensive plan in developing this strategic work as we go forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**QUESTION 678-18(3):  
ASSOCIATE DEPUTY MINISTER POSITION FUNDING**

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a couple more questions for the Minister. The first one is: how much is the budget for this position in the next fiscal year? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My understanding is that, if she is actually asking for the salary of a person, there might be some confidential issues on that. I am willing to meet with the Member outside the Chamber to define that more in depth, if she would like. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. GREEN:** Let me ask this question in a different way. I am assuming that there is an office with an assistant, travel, contracting capabilities, and so on. The line item that is called "development of a polytechnic," how much is that budget for the next fiscal year?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I do know that we give approximately \$32 million to the Aurora College at this point. They provide a plan for how they are using that money. I don't, at this time, have the exact figure that is for the associate deputy minister's office, including travel, et cetera. Again, I can get that for the Member.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you to the Minister for that commitment. In order to increase transparency, can the Minister commit to creating a line item in the next budget which shows taxpayers what is being spent on the development of a polytechnic university?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I will take that under advisement. I can't make that commitment on the floor. I would have to talk with my colleagues in Finance, et cetera, to find out what is confidential, what is not confidential, and how we share that information. It is a little bit more complicated than I would like to make a commitment at this point.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** I beg your pardon, Mr. Speaker. I was just digesting the information that was just given. I guess I am not understanding how spending on a government program could be confidential. It needs to be part of the mains, part of the program spending that we look at and review every year. I would like Minister to make a commitment that she will make this information public, if not today, then shortly. Mahsi.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** My understanding, again, and I am sure I will be corrected if I am not right, is that there are certain areas that we report on. There are other areas that we don't report on so in-depth because of confidentiality, such as line items. The commitment is that, the first couple of years, we will be developing an implementation plan to move us into a polytechnic university, and during that work, there will be financial targets that will be identified in that work, and then also looking at partners, not only us, but other partners also to find those resources. That will be part of the implementation plan, the money needed to move it forward, because there are more expenses than just a wage. There may be capital. We don't know. There are a lot of other things that we may be looking at. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.