



POLICY 9.06

POSITION POLICY

Government Funding: Technology and Infrastructure

POLICY INTENT

To outline the position of AUSU regarding the need for government funding for IT at Athabasca University.

POLICY RESPONSIBILITY

AUSU Council

POLICY RESEARCH

Athabasca University operates as a virtual campus and offers distance education for students across Alberta, Canada, and the world. This requires advanced information technology infrastructure in order to operate efficiently for faculty, staff, and students. As a virtual campus, it also means that the university has different capital needs compared to other post-secondary institutions. While AU does maintain some physical buildings, there is a significant need for IT capital investments to implement new software and technology.

Historically, AU has not received sufficient funding to meet its IT needs especially in relation to capital expenditures. This lack of funding significantly impacts the learning experience that students have, which needs to be addressed. As a leader in distance education, Athabasca University is in a unique position to develop, implement, and maintain leading edge information technology, if they can receive appropriate funding.

The Government of Alberta provided \$184 million in 2018-19 to infrastructure projects across the province, and nearly half a billion dollars since 2015, for a wide variety of projects to ensure students have access to modern learning environments.ⁱ These infrastructure projects have included building and classroom modernization initiatives, new facilities, and repurposing spaces to be modern learning environments among other initiatives. Yet, only \$4.9 million was dedicated to Athabasca University to implement the recommendations of the Coates Report.ⁱⁱ

Be it resolved that the Athabasca University Students' Union will advocate to the provincial and federal governments to provide sufficient funding for the research, development, and implementation of new information technologies and virtual education technologies at Athabasca University.

Be it further resolved that the Athabasca University Students' Union will advocate to the provincial and federal governments to develop and expand high speed internet connectivity to all Canadians regardless of geographic or financial barriers.

POLICY HISTORY

Original Approval Date: June 27, 2005
Last Review Date: September 2020
Review by Date: August 2021

ⁱ 2019 Alberta Advanced Education annual report

ⁱⁱ [Athabasca](#) University (June 8, 2018). *Athabasca University on path to long-term success*. Retrieved from athabascau.ca:

<https://news.athabascau.ca/announcements/announcement-delivering-on-imagine/>