

FUNDING NOT FEES

**2011 SUBMISSION TO THE
STANDING COMMITTEE
ON FINANCE AND
ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**

Canadian Federation of Students–Ontario

General inquiries regarding this document should be directed to:

Canadian Federation of Students–Ontario

180 Bloor Street West, Suite 900

Toronto, Ontario M5S 2V6

Tel 416.925.3825

Fax 416.925.6774

Email federation@cfsontario.ca

WWW cfsontario.ca

Ce document est disponible en français

Canadian Federation of Students–Ontario

With more than 300,000 members at 37 students' unions and in all regions of the province, the Canadian Federation of Students is the voice of post-secondary students in Ontario. Founded in 1981, the Federation represents students at the college, undergraduate and graduate levels, including full and part-time students.

Algoma University
Students' Union

Brock University Graduate
Students' Association

Carleton University Students'
Association

Carleton University Graduate
Students' Association

Association étudiante de
la Cité collégiale

Student Association of
George Brown College

Glendon College
Student Union

University of Guelph
Central Student Association

University of Guelph
Graduate Students'
Association

Lakehead University
Student Union

Laurentian Association
of Mature and Part-time
Students

Laurentian University
Graduate Students'
Association

Laurentian University
Students' General
Association

Association des étudiantes
et étudiants francophones de
l'Université Laurentienne

McMaster University
Graduate Students'
Association

Nipissing University
Student Union

Ontario College of Art and
Design Student Union

Student Federation
of the University of Ottawa

Graduate Students'
Association des étudiant(e)
s diplômé(e)s de l'Université
d'Ottawa

Queen's University Society
of Graduate and Professional
Students

Ryerson Students' Union

Continuing Education
Students' Association of
Ryerson

Saint Paul University
Students' Association

University of Toronto at
Scarborough Campus
Students' Union

University of Toronto
Graduate Students' Union

University of Toronto
Students' Union

University of Toronto at
Mississauga Students' Union

Association of Part-Time
Undergraduate Students of
the University of Toronto

Trent University Central
Student Association

Trent University Graduate
Student Association

University of Western
Ontario Society of Graduate
Students

Wilfrid Laurier University
Graduate Students'
Association

University of Windsor
Students' Alliance

University of Windsor
Graduate Students' Society

University of Windsor
Organisation of Part-time
University Students

York Federation of Students

York University Graduate
Students' Association

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

Tuition Fees

Immediately implement a province-wide tuition fee freeze.

Cost: \$34 million

Create an envelope of funding for graduate students that would reduce tuition fees during the independent research and thesis writing stages of their degrees.

Cost: \$60.5 million to institute a 25 per cent reduction in ‘continuing fees

Student Financial Aid

Reallocate provincial tax credits and expand existing back-end grants to form a comprehensive system of upfront, needs-based grants.

Cost: \$0

Extend OSAP loan eligibility to part-time students.

Cost: \$800,000

Reduce OSAP loan interest rates to below prime.

Cost: \$1.3 million

Restructure the Student Access Guarantee from an institutionally-funded program into a government-funded, needs-based program.

Cost: \$136 million

Introduce 1,000 new Ontario Graduate Scholarships.

Cost: \$10 million

Funding

Increase per-student funding by two per cent.

Cost: \$117 million

Improve the student-faculty ratio by hiring more tenure-track faculty.

Cost: \$120 million for 1,500 new net faculty members

Ministry of Research and Innovation

Develop a strategy for graduate students to receive full-time-equivalent funding from the Ministry of Research and Innovation.

Cost: \$40 million for a 5 per cent increase in full-time-equivalent funding

Increase funding for MRI programs that support university faculty and students, and research undertaken at post-secondary institutions.

Cost: \$12 million: \$10 million to double funding for the Early Researcher Awards program, \$2 million to triple funding for the Post-Doctoral Fellowship program

Ministry of Infrastructure

Inject funding to address the backlog in deferred maintenance at colleges and universities.

Cost: \$300 million for 15 per cent of the existing backlog

Develop a strategy and provide funding to make public transit more accessible for post-secondary education students.

Cost: \$0

Ministry of Energy

Provide funding for energy retrofitting of deferred maintenance at colleges and universities.

Cost: \$100 million for 5 per cent of existing deferred maintenance backlog

Create a research fund for green and sustainable projects at colleges and universities.

Cost: \$10 million

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Provide coverage for international students through the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP).

Cost: \$54 million

Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs

Provide a refund to First Nations Band Councils to reimburse the funds that tuition fee increases since 2005 have eroded from the Post-Secondary Student Support Program.

Cost: \$4 million

Create a new grant for Métis students

Cost: \$500,000

Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry

Provide funding to expand on-campus housing at Ontario's northern colleges and universities.

Cost: \$10 million

INTRODUCTION

Ontario is at a crossroads. More than ever before in our history, Ontarians are seeking access to the post-secondary education system to expand future opportunities. As average wages have essentially stagnated over the past decade and as the economic base of the province has shifted, the demand for higher education has risen. Rather than making the necessary investments however, the government has decreased its support by shifting an increasing percentage of the cost to operate schools onto students and their families.

Privatizing the system in this way has led to record-high student debt, a reduction of the quality of education offered in Ontario, and for many, the outright denial of access to higher education. This narrows students' abilities to take entrepreneurial risks, their options to succeed in high-cost professional programs such as law or medicine and their purchasing power to participate in Ontario's economy.

This past August, the National Student Loans Program reached its lending maximum of \$15 billion. Ontario has the largest share of Canada's students and Ontario students pay the highest tuition fees in Canada. In addition to this, students owe nearly \$2.3 billion to the Ontario government, and millions more to banks for private lines of credit or personal loans.¹ Combined with high summer unemployment, this generation of students is being asked to study more, work more and pay more than ever before.

Indebting a generation of Ontarians so that they can go to school is a short-sighted cost-saving mechanism that will have long-term consequences. If Ontario's government continues on the current track, user fees will push more Ontario students into debt, limit job choices and deny middle- and low-income people the economic mobility from which generations of post-secondary education graduates before them have benefitted.

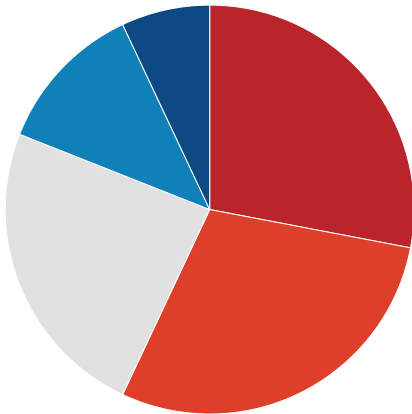
Students understand the need for restraint and efficient use of public money. Students propose that a multi-ministerial approach would better reflect the widespread benefit to many aspects of Ontario's society and economy. There is no sector in which increased funding will yield such important benefit of a well-funded post-secondary education system for Ontario's economy and society at large. Finding revenue sources for these recommendations is obviously important and funding the system adequately requires a sustainable revenue source. Taxes should be used to increase government revenues to help pay for education, as the benefits for Ontario's society and economy are undeniable. In fact, a poll conducted by the Canadian Association of University Teachers, the Canadian Federation of Students and Harris-Decima demonstrated that 61 percent of Ontarians would support tax increases to invest more into universities and colleges.²

1 Ministry of Finance Public Accounts of Ontario 2009-2010

2 CFS&CAUT/Harris Decima Poll, 2010

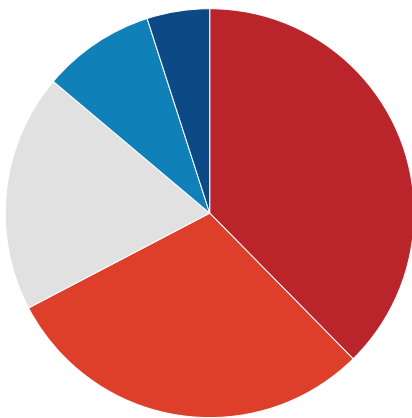
ONTARIANS WANT COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION TO BE A PRIORITY

The Canadian Federation of Students and the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, in partnership with Feedback, conducted a poll during January 2011 into the attitudes of Ontarians toward Post-secondary education.



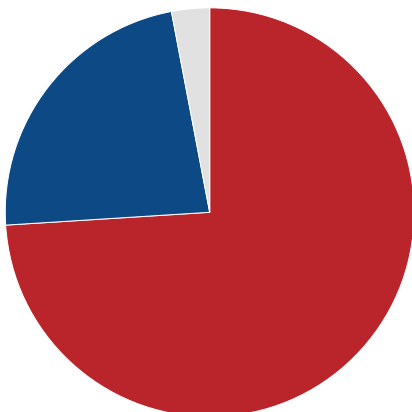
HOW CONCERNED ARE YOU ABOUT THE QUALITY OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION?

- Very concerned (28%)
- Somewhat concerned (29%)
- Neutral (24%)
- Not very concerned (28%)
- Not at all concerned (12%)



HOW CONCERNED ARE YOU ABOUT THE AFFORDABILITY OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION?

- Very concerned (38%)
- Somewhat concerned (30%)
- Neutral (19%)
- Not very concerned (9%)
- Not at all concerned (5%)



HOW HIGH A PRIORITY SHOULD POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION BE?

- High priority (74%)
- Low priority (23%)
- Don't know (3%)

Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

TUITION FEES

The student experience is driven by no other factor as much as cost. Higher fees have forced students to work longer hours outside of the classroom, which has led to students spending less time on their studies. For many students, the prospect of taking on student debt limits their choice to a less expensive credential despite talent and a desire to succeed in a particular field. For many low-income people, debt aversion stops them from even applying to college or university in the first place.

Tuition fee increases remain the primary driver of rising student debt. Fees have outpaced inflation by more than 200 per cent since the policy was implemented in 2006.³

Ontario needs a highly skilled population and any strategy that seeks to broaden access to post-secondary education must begin to reduce the high cost of tuition fees. This year, fees reached above \$6,300 on average for an undergraduate student and over \$9,000 for a graduate student.⁴ It is time for the provincial government to invest in college and university education by reducing the upfront cost. No longer should the government rely on unsustainable funding mechanisms that force students to assume tens of thousands of dollars in debt

to absorb costs that have traditionally been, and should be, paid for by the government. Reducing tuition fees makes political sense, as 88 per cent of Ontarians surveyed believe that tuition fees should be frozen or reduced.⁵

The need to reduce tuition fees has never been greater and as enrolment continues to climb, the impact of such investment would assist more students than ever improve their knowledge and economic circumstances.

For graduate students, the impact of high tuition fees is felt more acutely. Graduate students have had to pay for previous years' tuition fees and forego years of income earnings to study. This limits students who are unable to pay for their education without the assistance of loans from pursuing more specialized college and university credentials.

When a graduate student finishes his or her coursework and moves into the thesis-writing stage of their research, they rely on relatively few resources of their institution. In Ontario, students at this stage of their studies used to be charged lower tuition fees to reflect the fewer institutional resources that they consume. Re-implementing 'continuing fees' will help improve the accessibility and affordability of higher tiers of education, especially in the face of the most expensive graduate tuition fees in Canada.

3 Statistics Canada 2010, Bank of Canada 2010

4 Statistics Canada 2010

5 CFS&CAUT/Harris Decima Poll, 2010

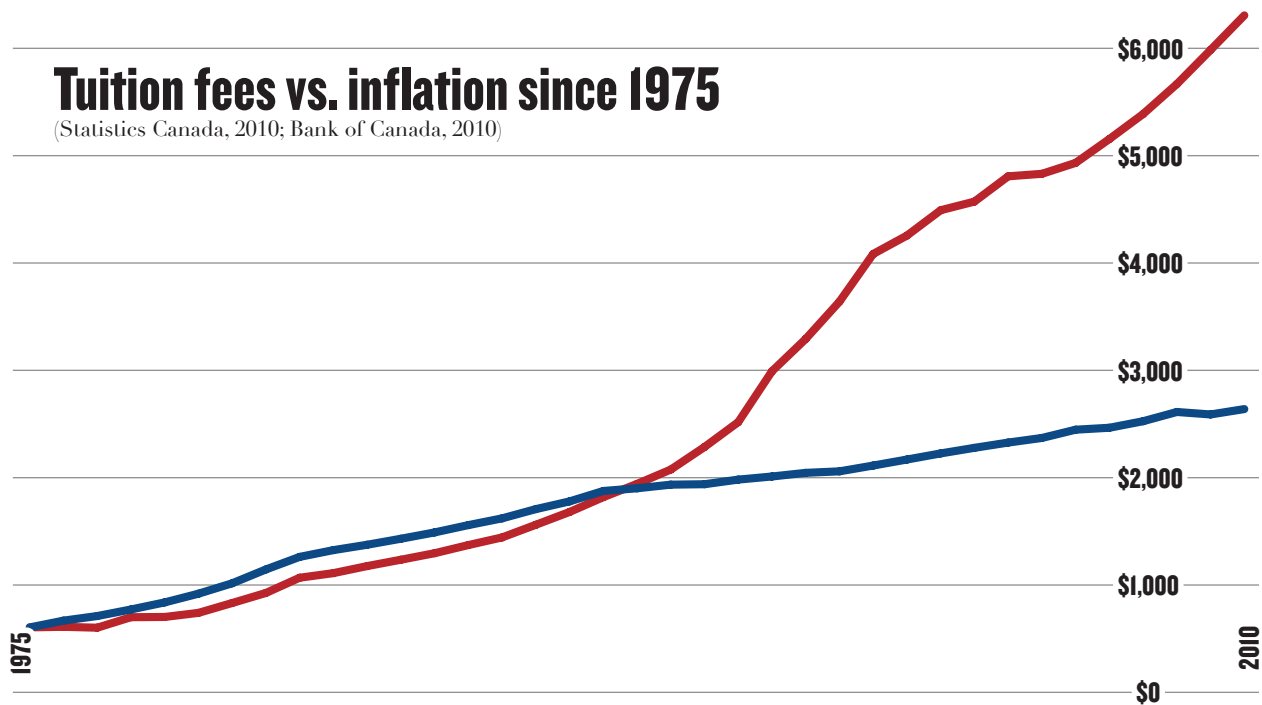
RECOMMENDATIONS

IMMEDIATELY IMPLEMENT A PROVINCE-WIDE TUITION FEE FREEZE.

\$34 million

CREATE AN ENVELOPE OF FUNDING FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS THAT WOULD REDUCE TUITION FEES DURING THE INDEPENDENT RESEARCH AND THESIS WRITING STAGES OF THEIR DEGREES.

\$60.5 million for instituting a 25 per cent reduction in “continuing fees”



STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Since the upfront cost of attending college or university has increased by an average of 28 per cent over the last five years, students in Ontario now owe more money to the government than ever before. Over the past 15 years, the average student debt for a four-year degree has increased by 460 per cent – from \$8,000 to \$37,000⁶ in combined government and private loans. The accumulation of such high debt drastically reduces students' spending power and makes them less able to participate in the economy.

The government has acknowledged that tuition fees are a barrier to access and has implemented a program that attempts to ensure that no qualified student will be turned away from college or university because of cost. The responsibility to fund this program – the Student Access Guarantee – was placed on the institutions themselves, cutting into funding that could otherwise be spent on the operations of institutions. As fees have increased, student

demand for this unsustainable program has also risen. This leaves institutions with fewer resources to maintain the quality of the educational experience.

The resources to fund financial assistance programs like the Student Access Guarantee and other needs-based programs can be drawn from existing back-end grants and provincial tax credit programs, which are often only accessible eight months after tuition fees are required to be paid. By shifting the \$78 million spent on provincial tax credits and back-end grants, toward upfront, needs-based grants, the government can begin to address the high upfront cost of education for those students who are most in need of assistance.

In the face of rising tuition fees, improvements to the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) should be made to expand access to financial aid for students who need provincial loans to finance their education but who are currently excluded from eligibility. Part-time students cannot access loans through OSAP and have only recently been able to access a \$500 grant. For many part-time students, they study on a part-time basis because of family, personal or economic circumstances. These students are often particularly in need of financial assistance, yet they are unfairly excluded from eligibility of OSAP loans. Part-time students should have the same access to financial assistance since eligibility should be based on financial need, not course load.

⁶ *Statistics Canada: Graduating in Canada: Profile, Labour Market Outcomes and Student Debt of the Class of 2005.* Government of Canada, 2009

RECOMMENDATIONS

REALLOCATE PROVINCIAL TAX CREDITS TO FORM A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF UPFRONT, NEEDS-BASED GRANTS.

\$0

RESTRUCTURE THE STUDENT ACCESS GUARANTEE FROM AN INSTITUTIONALLY-FUNDED PROGRAM INTO A GOVERNMENT-FUNDED, NEEDS-BASED PROGRAM.

\$136 million

EXTEND OSAP LOAN ELIGIBILITY TO PART-TIME STUDENTS.

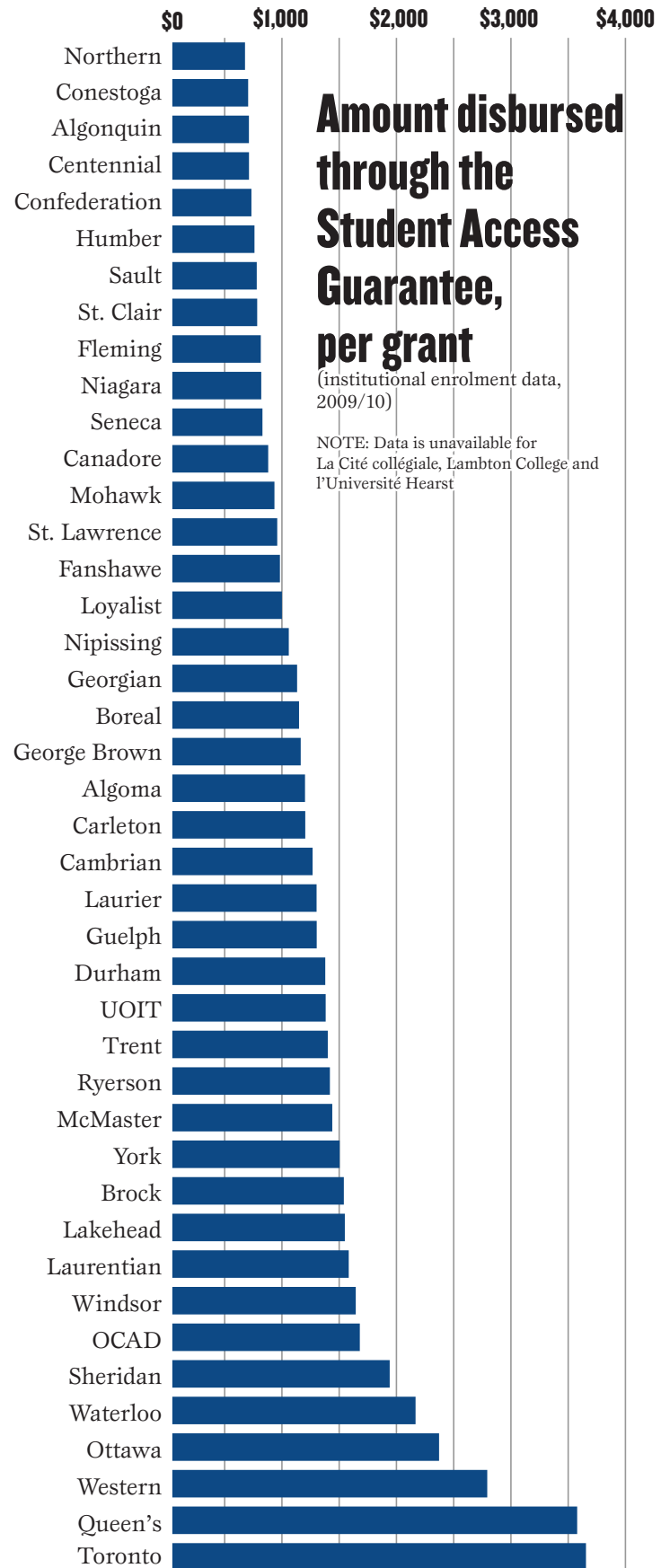
\$800,000

REDUCE OSAP LOAN INTEREST RATES TO BELOW PRIME.

\$1.3 million

INTRODUCE 1,000 NEW ONTARIO GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS.

\$10 million



FUNDING

In real dollars, Ontario spends less on post-secondary education per student than two decades ago and continues to have the lowest per-student funding in the country, at 24 per cent below the Canadian average.⁷

For Ontario's colleges and universities to provide high quality education, while meeting the increased demands of a changing population and economy, they need to have stable and enhanced funding.

The chronic underfunding of the system has resulted in students bearing more of the cost of attending college or university, forcing them to accumulate more debt. The funding gap has also meant that departments and programs in institutions across the province have been cut, and many college and universities have instituted hiring freezes or relied more heavily on sessional and part-time instructors. This reduces the interaction that students can have with their professors and significantly impacts the ability of professors to mentor and oversee research projects of undergraduate and graduate students. Part of a high quality

7 CAUT Almanac 2010-2011. Canadian Association of University Teachers. 2010.

education includes being able to maintain relationships between students and professors. This is impossible if a professor is a sessional instructor who must work elsewhere to maintain a living.

Students in Ontario already have to contend with the largest class sizes and worst student-to-faculty ratio in Canada – 37 per cent higher than the national average and well above the institutional averages in the United States.⁸ The deficit in tenure-track faculty hiring has resulted in less interaction between students and faculty, along with the diminished capacity of instructors to engage in research, professional development and improving pedagogical methods.

Professors cannot be expected to teach classes of hundreds of students and at the same time deliver a lecture that is engaging and of high quality. The Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) estimates that Ontario must hire an additional 11,000 faculty members to restore Ontario's student-faculty ratio. To phase this in over four years, 1,500 new net faculty members should be hired for the academic year 2011-12.

8 CAUT Almanac 2010-2011. Canadian Association of University Teachers. 2010.

RECOMMENDATIONS

INCREASE PER-STUDENT FUNDING BY 2 PER CENT.

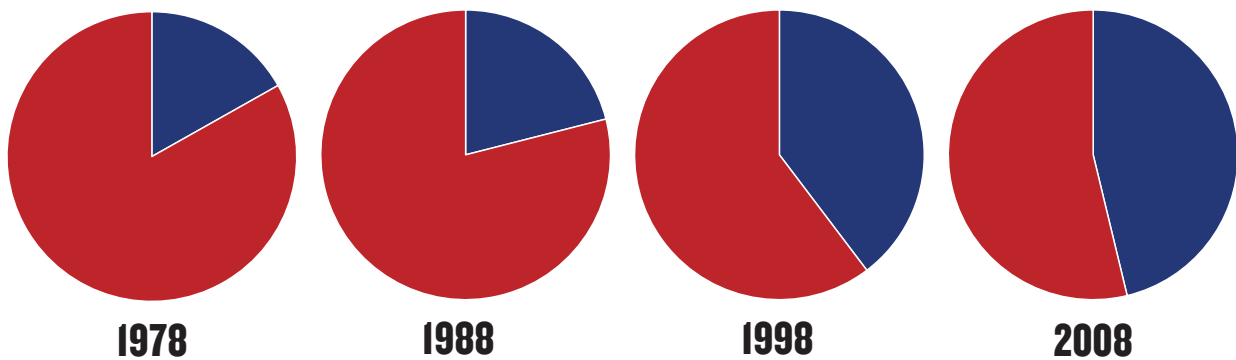
\$117 million.

IMPROVE THE STUDENT-FACULTY RATIO BY HIRING MORE TENURE-TRACK FACULTY.

\$120 million for 1,500 new net faculty members.

Tuition and government funding as a percentage of university operating revenue in Ontario

(Canadian Association of University Teachers, 2008)



Ministry of Research and Innovation

Research is one of the pillars of college and university education. Some of the most innovative research in Ontario is done within public colleges and universities and funded either directly or indirectly by the provincial government. Current and relevant research is critical to the process of develop curriculum that is engaging and stimulating for college, undergraduate and graduate courses. The success of graduate students is also highly dependent on having applicable research opportunities and the financial support to undertake this research.

The government has recognized the need to expand the research capacities of post-secondary institutions and has aggressively expanded graduate student enrolment in the last few years. However, such increases have not been met with commensurate provincial funding. Graduate students in Ontario currently pay the highest tuition fees in the country, while Ontario

institutions are plagued by low completion rates in graduate programs. The lagging support for graduate studies and research has meant that graduate students have had diminished access to research and funding opportunities, less time to devote to conducting high-quality research and fewer mentorship opportunities.

The Ministry of Research and Innovation certainly has a role to play in strengthening the province's research institutions, increasing the capacity of students and faculty to conduct research and promoting innovation. This can be done by enhancing funding and shifting resources within the Ministry to provide per-student funding to graduate students and increases to specific programs that support faculty, graduate students and research undertaken at post-secondary institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

DEVELOP A STRATEGY FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS TO RECEIVE FTE FUNDING FROM THE MINISTRY OF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION.

\$18.5 million for a 5 per cent increase in FTE funding for Masters students

\$23 million for a 5 per cent increase in FTE funding for Doctoral students

INCREASE FUNDING FOR MRI PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT UNIVERSITY FACULTY AND STUDENTS, AND RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN AT POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS.

\$10 million to double funding for the Early Researcher Awards program

\$2 million to triple funding for the Post-Doctoral Fellowship program

Ministry of Infrastructure

Quality public infrastructure is essential to offering a high-quality learning environment and student experience at colleges and universities. The lack of proper classroom and laboratory space means that students cannot be equipped with the learning resources that they need. The absence of study and lounge space leaves students without appropriate spaces to prepare for classes or exams, or interact with their peers. The shortage of office space for instructors and academic support staff prevents students from obtaining the learning support that they need.

In 2001, the Ontario government released the *Report of the Investing in Students Task Force*. The Task Force found that the costs of deferred maintenance – the costs associated with postponing ongoing maintenance expenses – for colleges and universities was a staggering \$1.2 billion. Nearly ten years later, the estimated shortfall of deferred maintenance is \$2 billion. According to the Council of Ontario Universities, over 60 per cent of college and university buildings in Ontario are more than 30 years old.⁹ When buildings are

neglected, the costs can escalate as they fall into a general state of disrepair and require more costly upgrades.

In addition to the need to address deferred maintenance at Ontario colleges and universities, improving access to affordable public transit is also central to student the student experience. Students rely on public transit systems to attend school, travel to part-time jobs and access commercial centres to maintain their day-to-day lives. Many cities in which colleges or universities are located have a form of student pricing or universal pass (U-Pass), but the cost for these passes vary widely.

The Ministry of Infrastructure can play an important part in improving access and service to public transit by developing a province-wide strategy that focuses on regions with post-secondary institutions, as well as under-serviced regions throughout the province. Ontario can learn from other provinces like British Columbia, where the government has implemented a province-wide, student discount U-Pass program that was developed in partnership with local governments, transit providers, post-secondary institutions and students.

⁹ Council of Ontario Universities Submission-Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure Consultations on the 10-year Infrastructure plan. Council of Ontario Universities, 2010

RECOMMENDATIONS

INJECT FUNDING TO ADDRESS 15 PERCENT OF THE BACKLOG IN DEFERRED MAINTENANCE.

\$300 million

DEVELOP A STRATEGY THAT PROVIDES FUNDING TO MAKE PUBLIC TRANSIT MORE ACCESSIBLE FOR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION STUDENTS.

\$0

Ministry of Energy

Students are greatly concerned about the state of the environment and have become leaders in promoting environmental sustainability through initiatives on campus and in residence buildings. Through the national *Students for Sustainability* campaign of the Canadian Federation of Students, students have worked to identify ways to make their campuses more sustainable and have implemented practical solutions toward achieving this goal.

One of the best ways to address the backlog of deferred maintenance at colleges and universities is to ensure that repaired or renovated buildings have a lower environmental impact and operate with a higher energy efficiency to minimize cost. A proactive approach would be for the Ministry of Energy to direct funding toward retrofitting buildings on college and university campuses. In Ontario, York University has taken the lead in adopting a green building policy, emphasizing low-impact development and sustainable principles as evidenced by having five

buildings on campus that meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification standards. Renovating buildings in need of repair brings new opportunities for including students and faculty in the planning process, along with the use of environmentally friendly materials and supplies. Investments such as these will go a long way to ensure that buildings have a lower environmental impact while reducing reliance on energy, thereby lowering costs over the long term.

The Ministry of Energy can further make contributions toward the learning environment by creating a research fund for green and sustainable projects. Retrofitting campuses and providing opportunities for environmental research projects have a positive impact on how students view their time and the quality of their learning experience in Ontario's colleges and universities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PROVIDE FUNDING FOR ENERGY RETROFITTING OF DEFERRED MAINTENANCE AT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.

\$100 million for 5 per cent of existing backlog

CREATE A RESEARCH FUND FOR GREEN AND SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS AT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.

\$10 million

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

In 1994, the Ontario government disqualified international students from the Ontario Health Insurance Program (OHIP). International students must pay private health insurance fees that amount to over \$800 per year. Students with dependents can be required to pay more than \$3,000 in mandatory hospital fees. This health insurance plan provides very limited health coverage that is not accepted universally by physicians, hospitals and clinics in Ontario. As a result, international students can be denied emergency hospital services if they cannot pay the high fees.

International students make valuable contributions to research and the learning environment in Ontario's colleges and universities. They also contribute more than \$2 billion to the Ontario economy each year through spending on school, basic living expenses and other activities.¹⁰ The government has recognized the importance of having international students study in Canada and has committed to aggressively increase international student enrolment. Unfortunately, these students are still

forced to pay for expensive private health insurance plans, despite already having to pay tuition fees that are three to four times higher than fees charged to domestic students.

Students across Ontario sent thousands of petitions to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, calling for OHIP to be extended to international students. In addition to maintaining the Canadian value of universal health coverage, offering students OHIP will be an incentive for students to choose Ontario over other provinces who currently do not extend health coverage to international students. It would also make Ontario competitive with provinces that do cover international students through the public system, like Saskatchewan and Newfoundland and Labrador. The government has a responsibility to the thousands of international students who are making valuable contributions to the province but are not afforded the basic health care that the rest of Ontario residents receive. If the government wants to truly internationalize the economy and the post-secondary education system, it can take an important step by addressing this health care gap.

¹⁰ *Universities Matter: How Canada's universities contribute to economic recovery and long-term prosperity.* Associations of University and Colleges, Canada. 2009

RECOMMENDATIONS

PROVIDE OHIP COVERAGE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS.

\$54 million

Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs

Access to quality education is absolutely critical for First Nations, Métis and Inuit people. However, as a result of social and economic barriers faced by Aboriginal people, educational attainment levels among Aboriginal people compared to the overall population are significantly lower. In 2006, 34 per cent of Aboriginal people 25 and over had not attained a high school diploma, compared to 15 per cent of the Canadian population. Only eight per cent of Aboriginal people have achieved a university degree compared to 23 per cent of the total population.¹¹

Education is a Treaty right and is the responsibility of the Federal government to administer. This happens for students through the federal Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP). However, the PSSSP is capped at two percent growth, with no regard paid to the tuition fee increases mandated by the provinces. Since the introduction of the *Reaching Higher* framework in 2006, tuition fees in Ontario have increased by an average of five per cent annually, effectively reducing the amount of money for people that can be accessed through the PSSSP.

The Federation actively lobbies the

11 Government of Canada. 2006 Census Data

federal government and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada for changes to the PSSSP, but it is time that the provincial government acknowledges its role in creating financial barriers to higher education for First Nations and Inuit students.

There are currently 11,000 Aboriginal students in Ontario studying at post-secondary institutions and research indicates that thousands of students have not been able to attend college or university because of a lack of funding.¹² Since the tuition fee freeze in Ontario was lifted in 2005, money granted through the PSSSP has been further strained for Band Councils who have had to make the difficult choice of fully funding a few students or providing minimal funding to many students to access higher education. The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs has the responsibility to help improve the social conditions of Aboriginal people in the province and this includes providing greater access to post-secondary education. One step toward this goal would be to reimburse Band Councils for the cost of tuition fee increases since 2005 and the strain it placed on PSSSP funds.

12 *No Higher Priority: Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education in Canada*. Report of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, 39th Parliament 1st Session (2007)

RECOMMENDATIONS

PROVIDE A REFUND TO BAND COUNCILS TO COVER COSTS INCURRED AS A RESULT OF TUITION FEE INCREASES SINCE 2006.

\$4 million

CREATE A NEW GRANT FOR MÉTIS STUDENTS.

\$500,000

Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry

Students who study in northern Ontario often face unique challenges while attending college or university, and therefore require additional supports. For those students lucky enough to attend post-secondary education, supports that are over and above those offered to other institutions can be critical to the provision of a high quality post-secondary education and the success of students. Northern institutions do not have the same financial capacity as larger institutions located in southern Ontario and are disadvantaged by having less access to financial centres, endowments or people who have the means to attend college or university.

Students and families who reside in northern and rural regions of Ontario face barriers that are unique from those faced by students in large municipalities and major urban centres. In general, students have to contend with higher prices for commodities, longer and more expensive commuting distances, fewer employment opportunities and lower than average wages.

The Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry should play a central role in building stronger communities and attracting people from other areas of Ontario and the world who want to study in northern Ontario. However, attracting students to northern institutions can be difficult due to a lack of housing availability in these communities. For example, Sudbury and Thunder Bay have experienced the lowest vacancy rates in the province during the last few years.¹³

Students at northern colleges and universities are often stuck with below-standard off-campus housing or they find themselves paying unreasonably high housing costs. In order to attract and retain students in northern Ontario, institutions must have available on-campus housing for students to not only reduce the costs that students incur, but to also provide a positive educational experience for those who travel to northern institutions for school. The Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry should inject funding for northern institutions to increase their on-campus residence capacity and support the housing needs for students beyond their first year of study.

13 Northern Life. *Sudbury has lowest vacancy rate in province*. June 2008

RECOMMENDATIONS

PROVIDE FUNDING TO EXPAND ON-CAMPUS HOUSING AT ONTARIO'S NORTHERN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.

\$10 million



CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS-ONTARIO
WWW.CFSONTARIO.CA