

## MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release.  
Friday, June 8, 2018

### Election results a cause for concern for students

TORONTO – Today, students greet the newly elected Progressive Conservative (PC) government of Doug Ford with mixed emotions. The lack of support for public services, like post-secondary education, and for victories such as the \$15 minimum wage shown by the leadership of the PC majority government presents a cause for concern for students.

“For the past several months, students have been advocating for strong public funding for public services, like transit, child care and health care, that impact our everyday lives,” said Nour Alideeb, Chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario. “While we are excited to begin working with new and returning Members of Provincial Parliament from all parties to continue fighting for affordable and accessible education, we must acknowledge that this incoming government has failed to show any commitment to maintaining strong support for the public services we all rely on.”

Over the past several months, students have been organizing around the *Fairness for Students* campaign, which highlights the important role public services play in creating the conditions for students to be successful. Across the province, student organizations have been sharing this message with their members and encouraging them to vote.

During the election, the PC Party promised to find billions of dollars of efficiencies within government, implement significant tax reductions and freeze the minimum wage at \$14 per hour. Premier-elect Doug Ford has so far remained unclear where these efficiencies will be found. However, it is certain that such significant budget cuts will have major implications for students.

“Students are concerned that the efficiencies this government has talked about will come at the expense of important investments in the form of public spending, which means cuts to education and health care,” said Alideeb. “By working together we have been able to secure a \$15 minimum wage and other important investments that provide help to those who need it the most. We can’t afford to move backwards.”

The Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario is the largest student organization in the province, representing over 350,000 college, undergraduate and graduate students.

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For more information contact:

**Ian McRae**, Government Relations and Policy Coordinator:  
306-852-0128 or [i.mcrae@cfsontario.ca](mailto:i.mcrae@cfsontario.ca)

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
29 June 2018

### **Students apprehensive about future of post-secondary education**

Toronto – The Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario welcomes newly appointed Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), Merrilee Fullerton in her position.

Minister Fullerton will play a formative role in setting the direction of the Ministry over the next four years. In this position, Minister Fullerton will be responsible for overseeing colleges and universities, regulating funding for post-secondary institutions and administering financial aid for students.

“Students are apprehensive about the future of post-secondary education in Ontario.” Said Nour Alideeb, Chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario. “The direction the new leadership of MTCU chooses to take over the next few weeks will have major implications for students.”

In the past, Minister Fullerton has made concerning statements regarding Muslim people, which gained widespread attention during her election campaign. These views are a cause of concern for students as she takes on her new role as the head of MTCU.

“Students in Ontario are a diverse community, made up of people from many different ethnic and religious backgrounds. As an elected official, Minister Fullerton must be held to a higher standard of conduct as a representative of the people.” Said Alideeb. “Moving forward, students will hold her accountable for discriminatory statements that do not promote the kind of equitable society we want to live in.”

One of the longstanding campaigns of the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario is the United for Equity campaign that seeks to challenge racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism and colonialism on our campuses and within our communities. The Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario represents over 350, 000 students across the province.

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**For more information contact:**

**Nour Alideeb**, Chairperson: **4169253825** or [n.alideeb@cfsontario.ca](mailto:n.alideeb@cfsontario.ca)

## MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release  
Thursday, July 26, 2018

### **Back-to-work legislation rewards York’s bad behavior**

TORONTO – Students are frustrated with the Ford government’s decision to impose back-to-work legislation on the 3,000 striking education workers of local 3903 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE).

Members of CUPE 3903 had been on strike for five months over issues of job security for contract faculty, protection for teaching assistants, equitable hiring practices and the reversal of a decision made by York University to cut more than 800 unionized graduate assistant jobs.

“Throughout the entire strike process, the administration at York University never bargained in good faith.” said Nour Alideeb, Chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario. “Forcing the members of CUPE 3903 to go back to work before the University makes an effort to engage in meaningful dialogue about the issues undermines the collective bargaining process.”

“Rather than encourage the administration of York University to engage their workers in a meaningful bargaining process, the premier and the minister have used their authority to take away these workers’ rights to strike.” said Alideeb. “This move sends a clear message to employers that they do not have to listen to the issues brought forward by their workers. It also signals to students and academic workers that this is a government for employers and administrations.”

Back-to-work legislations are a dangerous precedent that rob workers of their biggest bargaining chip; the right to legally strike when the employer negotiates in bad faith. Premier Ford’s back-to-work legislation for CUPE 3903 means that the issues that members of the local were fighting for will continue to go unaddressed, thus impacting the quality of education at York University. By forcing CUPE 3903 members back to work, Premier Ford has not only jeopardized the working condition of 3,000 workers, but also the learning conditions of over 50,000 students at York University.

The issues protested by CUPE 3903 are not unique to York University. Over the past decade, cuts in funding have led to an unprecedented increase in the reliance of precariously employed contract teaching faculty, rather than full-time faculty, to conduct the bulk of teaching at colleges and universities across the province. Similar issues were raised in by striking faculty at colleges across Ontario in 2017, which also resulted in back-to-work legislation under former Premier Kathleen Wynne.

“There are no winners in this dispute. By undermining the legitimate efforts of the members of CUPE 3903 to protest their working conditions and supporting the administration at York University in ignoring their obligation to engage in bargaining, this government has made it harder for faculty and students to raise concerns about challenges in the system.”



Canadian Federation of Students–Ontario  
Fédération canadienne des étudiantes et étudiants–Ontario  
302-225, rue Richmond Street West / Ouest | Toronto, Ontario | M5S 2V6  
Telephone / Téléphone: (416) 925-3825  
www.cfsontario.ca

The Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario is the largest and oldest student organization in Ontario, representing more than 350,000 college and university students in all regions of the province.

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For more information:

**Nour Alideeb**, Chairperson, at **416-925-3825** or **chair@cfsontario.ca**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
30 August 2018

### **Government “Free Speech” announcement threatens colleges and universities**

Toronto— Today’s announcement from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities that requires every publicly-assisted college and university to develop and post its own free speech policy by January 1, 2019 represents an unprecedented overstep of the government into the operations of post-secondary institutions.

“The Ford government has a clear agenda in attacking academic institutions and student groups with this directive.” Said Nour Alideeb, Chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario. “By threatening to remove funding for our public institutions should they not comply with this highly unusual policy, and by directing institutions to withhold students’ unions money should they not do the same, the government is forcing these organizations to pick a side in what is a deeply important public debate. What this government is doing isn’t right.”

The directive would compel colleges and universities to implement freedom of speech policies as of September 1, 2019, and directs the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario to begin monitoring and evaluating system-level progress of free speech. Should institutions fail to comply with the government requirements, they would see their funding withheld. Individual students who fail to comply with the directive would also be open to serious consequences.

Please contact Nour Alideeb, Chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario for comment.

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**For more information contact:**

**Nour Alideeb**, Chairperson: **416-925-3825** or **647-896-4065** (cell)

**Ian McRae**, Government Relations and Policy Coordinator: **416-925-3825** or **306-852-0128** (cell)



Canadian Federation of Students–Ontario  
Fédération canadienne des étudiantes et étudiants–Ontario  
302 - 225, rue Richmond Street West / Ouest | Toronto, Ontario | M5V  
1W2  
Telephone / Téléphone: (416) 925-3825  
www.cfsontario.ca

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

31 August 2018

### **Government Free Speech Policy sets dangerous precedent on Ontario campuses**

Toronto, ON - On Thursday, August 30, the provincial government mandated all publicly-assisted colleges and universities to develop policies on freedom of speech by January 1, 2019.

Students across the province are concerned about the government's approach to defining freedom of speech, the timeline for policy implementation and the criteria which all institutions must abide by.

Students have long advocated for freedom of speech and expression, open discussion, free inquiry and academic freedom. However, in recent years we have seen the concept of free speech co-opted to protect and defend hate speech on campus.

“The rhetoric of defending free speech is used to protect racist, homophobic, transphobic and otherwise oppressive discourse on campuses and to silence any dissent against them.” Said Nour Alideeb, Chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario. “All students have the inherent right to attend post-secondary education without fear of their humanity or identity coming under attack.”

Colleges and universities currently have policies that protect free speech on campus, as well as student codes of conduct and collective agreements that outline disciplinary procedures. Implementing a policy within three months will circumvent many institutional structures such as academic senates, advisory committees and stakeholder meetings, and neglect meaningful and vital consultation processes.

“Defining free speech is part of an ongoing important discussion in academia. By imposing such a short timeline for these policies to be developed, the government is undermining existing academic governance structures, which provide space for faculty, students and institutional stakeholders to express their opinions.” Said Alideeb.

The Federation is among various sector stakeholders concerned that this proposal is aimed at undermining college and university administrations, faculty and students who defend the right to classrooms and campuses free of bigotry and hate speech.

The Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario is the largest and oldest student organization in Ontario, representing more than 350,000 college and university students in all regions of

the province. One of the longstanding campaigns of the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario is the United for Equity campaign that seeks to challenge racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism and colonialism on our campuses and within our communities.

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**For more information contact:**

**Ian McRae**, Government Relations and Policy Coordinator: **416-925-3825** or **306-852-0128**  
(cell)

**Nour Alideeb**, Chairperson: **416-925-3825**



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1W2  
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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

For immediate release  
18 October 2018

### **Students and Community Members Rally to Protest Ford Government Policy Directive**

Toronto – Ontario’s universities and colleges are vital spaces where a culture of rich academic debate and free expression should be fostered. Core to the mandate of our postsecondary institutions is the advancement of knowledge, and that requires our campuses to be places where all community members have the right to speak their minds and respectfully challenge each other intellectually. Faculty associations, labour unions, and student unions deeply believe in these rights, and will continue our collective work to uphold them.

There is no free speech crisis on Ontario campuses. This is an ideological fiction advanced by the government to justify interference in the academic governance and autonomy of Ontario’s universities and colleges.

“It is telling that the government did not consult any sector stakeholders before announcing the new requirement for campus “free speech” policies and disciplinary measures tied to possible cuts to university and college funding.” said Nour Alideeb, Chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students Ontario.

“Threatening to discipline students, staff, and faculty actually limits expression rights on campus, especially for systemically marginalized groups.” said Alideeb.

Students have organized a rally at Ryerson today in protest to the attacks on building activism on campus. Students are unwilling to allow such a policy directive that in every sense threatens the growth of activism and critical thought.

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**For more information contact:**

**Ian McRae**, Government Relations and Policy Coordinator: **416-925-3825** or **306-852-0128**





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1W2  
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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

For immediate release  
18 October 2018

### **Vote Local: Municipal Issues are Student Issues**

Toronto – After a couple of months of being in school, today, students from across the province will be heading to the polls to vote in their local municipal ridings. The *Vote Local* campaign, of the Canadian Federation of Students was launched in September to bring attention to 6 key issues students are facing. These issues are; Childcare, Climate Change, Food Security, Housing, Reproductive Justice and Transit.

The Vote Local campaign connected students across the province and helped to bring awareness to these issues. Students were able to engage their candidates and organized townhalls, debates and candidate meet and greets.

“The role municipal services like transit and housing play in the daily lives of students is crucial and that is why many will be heading to the polls to elect candidates who have committed to improve and make these services affordable and accessible,” said Nour Alideeb, Chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students.

Students support strong governance that protect public services and ensure that decision-makers in government recognize the importance of public services in creating the conditions for people in this province to be successful.

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**For more information contact:**

**Ian McRae**, Government Relations and Policy Coordinator: **416-925-3825** or **306-852-0128**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
24 October 2018

### **Students disappointed with cancellation of new campuses**

Toronto – Yesterday, the Ontario government announced that it will be halting funding for three post-secondary campuses in Markham, Milton and Brampton. This announcement came as a surprise to students across the GTA, campus administrators and the affected communities, whom are deeply disappointed by this decision.

Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, Merrilee Fullerton said that the government will not be able to follow through on the \$325 million in funding promised to these projects, citing the province's \$15 billion deficit. The campuses were set to open in 2021 and 2022 and provide an additional 8,000 student seats.

“The communities and institutions affected by the cancellation of the three new campuses are rightfully disappointed with this decision,” said Nour Alideeb, Chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario. “Some of these projects had been underway for years leading up to this point, including extensive work to form partnerships between institutions, create programs and design buildings.”

The Markham campus was part of York University in partnership with Seneca College; the Milton campus was part of Wilfrid Laurier University in partnership with Conestoga College; and the Brampton campus was part of Ryerson University in partnership with Seneca College.

“There is a growing demand for post-secondary education in the GTA. These new campuses would have made it easier for students in Markham, Milton and Brampton to attend college or university in their communities by reducing the costs of housing and transportation,” said Alideeb. “Ontario already has the highest tuition fees in the country, particularly in this part of the province. These new campuses were an investment in our future and in our communities – it's disappointing that this government can't see that.”

The Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario is the largest student organization in the province, representing over 350,000 college and university students, and advocates for affordable, high-quality post-secondary education.

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**For more information contact:**

**Ian McRae**, Government Relations and Policy Coordinator: **416-925-3825** or **306-852-0128**  
(cell)

**Nour Alideeb**, Chairperson: **416-925-3825**