

# **Issues Policy**

**Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario  
As amended at the 2019 Annual General Meeting**



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## STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

We, the students of Canada, recognizing the need to speak with one voice in asserting our legitimate needs and concerns, wish to express our support for one national student organization whose basic aims will be as follows:

- To organize students on a democratic, cooperative basis in advancing our own interests, and in advancing the interests of our community;
- To provide a common framework within which students can communicate, exchange information, and share experience, skills and ideas;
- To ensure the effective use and distribution of the resources of the student movement, while maintaining a balanced growth and development of student organizations that respond to students' needs and desires;
- To bring students together to discuss and cooperatively achieve necessary educational administrative, or legislative change wherever decision-making affects students;
- To facilitate cooperation among students in organizing services that supplement our academic experience, provide for our human needs, and which develop a sense of community with our peers and other members of society;
- To articulate the real desire of students to fulfil the duties, and be accorded the rights of citizens in our society and in the international community; and
- To achieve our ultimate goal – a system of post-secondary education that is accessible to all, which is of high quality, which is nationally planned, which recognizes the legitimacy of student representation and validity of student rights, and whose role in society is clearly recognized and appreciated.

In consideration to these needs, students from throughout Canada met in October, 1981, to found the Canadian Federation of Students/ Fédération canadienne des étudiantes et étudiants.

The organizations that founded the Canadian Federation of Students were:

- The National Union of Students/Union nationale des étudiant(e)s
- The Association of Student Councils (Canada)/Association des conseils étudiants (Canada)
- The Students Union of Nova Scotia
- The Ontario Federation of Students/Fédération des étudiant(e)s de l'Ontario
- The Saskatchewan Federation of Students
- The Federation of Alberta Students
- The British Columbia Students Federation

**ADOPTED: SAGM 1979**

**AMENDED: SAGM 1989, SAGM 1990, SAGM 1992, SAGM 1993, SAGM 1994, SAGM 1999**





# ACADEMIC CODES OF CONDUCT

## Preamble

Academic codes of conduct are official and publicly viewable documents that inform the expectations and regulations registered students at a given institution should or must follow. They provide examples of breaches of conduct, and outline the steps that should or must be followed by appropriate authorities if such breaches occur.

The Federation recognizes the importance of a fair, transparent and clear code of conduct to ensure the protection and safety of all registered students at a given post-secondary institution. It is also vital for institutional codes of conduct to provide a clear and thorough process as to how sanctions or discipline, if needed and appropriate, are applied. In all instances where disciplinary measures are found to be necessary, the individuals involved should have had a right to due process and a fair hearing, including the right to representation.

The Federation recognizes that, in keeping with the large majority of student codes of conduct, informal and quiet resolutions to disputes or incidents are preferred when possible. The ultimate purpose of a student code of conduct is to present the standard of behaviour that is to be observed by the university or college community. It serves also to provide a formal process of resolution for disputes or incidents, and, when absolutely necessary, recommend discipline, once an informal process has failed or has become impossible.

The Federation would find cause for great concern in the event a student received a sanction based upon an interpretation of a code of conduct without a right to due process, or was imposed a sanction that did not correspond to the nature and severity of an offence.

## Policy

The Federation supports student codes of conduct which:

- Interpret the code of the conduct in a manner that does not discriminate based upon gender identity, race, ethnic origin, religion, socio-economic status, disability, immigration status, sexual orientation and/or any other forms of discrimination; that, in short, all students are subject to the code of conduct equally;
- Explicitly respect the right to peaceful assemblies and/or demonstrations and the right to free speech;
- Encourage disputes to be resolved informally;
- Are used to protect the personal safety of all registered students at the institution that the code regulates;
- Provide clear and explicit guidelines as to how a student might file a complaint;
- Provide clear and explicit guidelines to the due process required when investigating or charging a student with an offence under the code of conduct;
- Outline sanctions that are appropriate to the offence(s) for which a party, or parties, are found guilty;
- Provide students with representation at any point, at the request of the student and at no cost to the student; and
- Have a mechanism for fully informing students of their rights under the codes.

The Federation opposes student codes of conduct which:

- Are not made available publicly or online, or that might be viewed as a "Non-Academic Code of

Conduct" under the corresponding Federation policy;

- Are used to protect, exclusively, administrative representatives or employees at the expense or to the detriment of students;
- Are used to bully or censor students;
- Do not provide the basic principles of natural justice including, but not limited to, the following rights: notice of the allegations, due process, a hearing to be held within a reasonable time frame, the ability to investigate the evidence, the opportunity to prepare for and present a defence, the presentation of witnesses and access to an impartial appeals process;
- Are applied in an arbitrary, invasive, biased or discriminatory manner;
- Are used to punish students, rather than protect their rights;
- Are in violation of the laws of Canada, or that are used in such a manner that their enforcement by institutional authorities violates the laws of Canada;
- Obligate students to report misconduct when it has happened or remove themselves from situations in which misconduct is occurring; and
- Are not developed, implemented and adjudicated by a body in which student unions have representation.

**ADOPTED: AGM 1993**

# **ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

## **Preamble**

Academic freedom refers to the right to teach, learn, study and publish, free of reprisal and discrimination. It includes the right of an individual to criticize the institution and the right to participate in its governance. Academic freedom also includes: the right to freedom of teaching, discussion, and debate; the right to research; the right to publish and disseminate research results; the freedom to produce and perform creative works; the freedom to express one's opinion freely about the post-secondary institution and its administration; the freedom to access educational materials; and the freedom to participate in institutional governance bodies.

The intrusion of proprietary interests into the classroom and research environments places pressure on public institutions of higher education to alter their mission in order to secure and/or retain funding from private and government sources. Such intrusions negatively affect the right of instructors and students to academic freedom. Examples of the negative implications of restricted academic freedom include, but are not limited to: researchers critical of industry, university or government practices having positions threatened; courses and research not considered commercially relevant being underfunded or eliminated; and, in general, the democratic voice of dissent becoming increasingly silenced. Students and faculty see academic freedom compromised when faced with reprisals from private interests. For colleges and universities to remain true to their mission to pursue knowledge for its own sake and "to promote, through teaching and research, the principles of freedom and justice, of human dignity and solidarity" (UNESCO international conference, 1950), the tenets of academic freedom must be held as indispensable.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- The right of students, teaching faculty members and academic researchers to exercise academic freedom;
- Academic freedom that is exercised in accordance with nationally and democratically established ethical and professional standards; and
- A respectful attitude towards others and the right of all people to express their views and opinions in a safe and non-discriminatory environment.

The Federation opposes:

- Any agreement or contract that infringes upon a student's, teaching faculty member's, or academic researcher's academic freedom; and
- The intrusion of proprietary interests into the classroom and research environments.

**ADOPTED: AGM 2008**



# **ACCESSIBILITY**

## **Preamble**

A system of accessible education is one in which all applicants who wish to attend a post-secondary institution may do so. The Federation recognizes that income inequality in Ontario, as well as systems of oppression including racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ageism and ableism continue to limit the ability of people to obtain a quality post-secondary education.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- The elimination of all financial and economic barriers to a post-secondary education;
- The elimination of tuition fees and other incidental user fees;
- The elimination of higher differential fees including, but not limited to, those applied to international and out-of-province students;
- The right of students to attend the post-secondary institution of their choice, without additional financial burden;
- The elimination of all other barriers to post-secondary education which may affect entry into post-secondary education institutions, including, but not limited to discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, political affiliation, family status, citizenship or ancestry, socioeconomic class, age or disability;
- The removal of all conditions and barriers – as described above – within the post-secondary education system which may prevent students from attending and completing a program at a post-secondary institution;
- The right to the provision of universal, free, high quality child care;
- The elimination of barriers to accessibility resulting from geography;
- The elimination of enrolment quotas; and
- The implementation of a guaranteed minimum income for all students.

The Federation opposes:

- Any systemic discrimination in any educational setting, including but not limited to the streaming of students into classes and programs of different academic status that impedes post-secondary education opportunities.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 1993**

**AMENDED: SAGM 1996, AGM 1996, AGM 2014**



## **ADMISSIONS**

The Federation encourages the recognition by university, college and/or professional school admission departments of the cultural, language and gender biases inherent in general admission tests, and the considerations of these biases when making offers of admission to professional or graduate programs.

**ADOPTED: AGM 1987**





# **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

## **Preamble**

While the cost of college or university serves as the most significant barrier to accessing higher education, there are a myriad of economic barriers that shut out many communities from our institutions. Across the province, students have reported finding it nearly impossible to access safe, affordable and accessible housing, with the waiting list for affordable housing reaching record highs. This issue is made worse by the difficulty in finding affordable housing in areas with affordable transit options and accessible quality food services.

The inability to access safe, affordable and accessible housing is an issue that disproportionately impacts marginalized communities, more specifically people living with disabilities, Inuit, First Nations, and Metis people, Racialized people, and queer and trans individuals, particularly youth; all of which are more likely to live below the poverty line.

Recognizing that housing is a fundamental right and a social determinant of health, students have long called for the government to invest in affordable housing, citing its economic and social benefits to our communities.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- The elimination of homelessness through increased public investment in affordable housing;
- Increased public investment in co-operative housing;
- Increased investment in affordable and co-operative housing made accessible to people living with disabilities;
- The use of inclusionary zoning policies, where it does not contribute to gentrification, to ensure affordable housing is built into new developments; and
- A landlord licensing structure that requires private landlords to maintain states of good repair and respect tenants' rights.
- Increased support for, and promotion of, programs that assist people to locate affordable housing opportunities, particularly programs that are by and for marginalized communities.

The Federation opposes:

- The creation of affordable housing units in areas where there is inadequate access to public transit, services and shopping areas;
- The privatization of public affordable housing units; and
- The continuation of oppressive processes and systems that allow for the continued disproportionate homelessness of marginalized communities.

**ADOPTED: AGM 2016**



# **APPRENTICESHIPS AND LABOUR MARKET TRAINING PROGRAMS**

## **Preamble**

In the 2005 Canada-Ontario Agreement \$3.5 billion in funding was announced for labour market training. Three Labour Market Partnership Agreements (LMPAs) were immediately signed between the federal government and Ontario, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. These agreements covered apprenticeships, labour market integration of recent immigrants, literacy and essential skills, workplace skills development (i.e. incentives to upgrade the skills of new and existing workers), assistance to Indigenous people, and assistance to those facing labour market barriers (age, disabilities, etc.).

With the hopes of more closely integrating labour related training with Ontario's system of post-secondary education, particularly at the college level, in May 2006 the government announced the development of a One-Stop Training and Employment System.

By moving apprenticeship training into the college system, college administrators would gain control of apprenticeship standards, and force trainees to incur additional costs through tuition fees.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports Labour Market Partnership Agreements that:

- Are accessible to students who work while they study;
- Enhance the role of the public education system in delivering employment related training and provide adequate public funding to support this training;
- Include instruction by full-time or tenured faculty in the post-secondary education system;
- Strengthen training programs by offering more training and educational opportunities, such as free high school completion for adults and specialized programs for older immigrant and women workers and workers with disabilities; and
- Are accountable, equitable, of high quality, not for profit, long term and sustainable in their delivery.

The Federation opposes Labour Market Partnership Agreements that:

- Increase the role of post-secondary education institutions without providing funding to properly support them;
- Cause apprentice training to include additional tuition and/or other user fees as a result of moving them into the post-secondary education system;
- Streamline and narrow the apprenticeship programs so as to reduce the scope and standards of traditional apprenticeship training;
- Erode services and benefits currently delivered by the Federal Government through Human Resources and Social Development; and
- Displace current spending to such things as, but not limited to: skills development, literacy programs, apprenticeships, employment benefits and support programs.

**ADOPTED: AGM 2006**



## **BILINGUALISM**

The Federation supports the principle of an officially bilingual Ontario and supports groups committed to this goal.

The Federation supports the implementation of a provincial government regulatory program to prevent diversion of bilingual funds at individual institutions.

The Federation urges the creation of Bilingual Degrees that recognize students who complete their degree in both French and English.

The Federation encourages francophone and bilingual postsecondary institutions to offer all courses and programs in English and French and that all new programs created in English, also be offered in French.

The Federation demands that francophone and bilingual postsecondary institutions provide materials and academic support resources in the language of the course or program.

The Federation demands that the government ensures that both francophone and anglophone students have equal opportunities to pursue their post-secondary education in the language of their choice.

Recognizing that not all programs are offered at all post-secondary institutions, and that students often have to travel to study in their program and language of choice, the Federation supports the creation of grants and scholarships for students who are obliged to travel and move away from their homes to study.

The Federation demands that francophone and bilingual post-secondary institutions support their professors' requests for teaching resources in the language in which the courses are taught.

**ADOPTED: AGM 1987**

**AMENDED: AGM 1991, AGM 2013**



# **CHILD CARE**

## **Preamble**

Student parents face additional barriers to accessing post-secondary education. Current provisions for child care costs through the Ontario Student Assistance Program are inadequate in addressing the real costs of child care. Additionally, there is a chronic shortage of available child care spaces on or near campuses. Financial barriers to post-secondary education, combined with the lack of accessible child care, have meant that student parents are particularly at risk of leaving college or university before their programs of study are completed.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- A greater number of spaces in child care facilities on college and university campuses;
- The construction of on-campus child care facilities where none already exist;
- Partnerships between institutions and their communities in running child care facilities;
- Guaranteed spaces in on-campus child care facilities for the dependents of students;
- Not-for-profit child care run as a service by the institution;
- The funding of child care costs through grants, not loans; and
- An increase in non-repayable assistance through the Ontario Student Assistance Program to cover the actual cost of child care.

The Federation opposes:

- Eligibility requirements for child care grants, bursaries or loans that are contingent upon a minimum number of dependents;
- Financial subsidies for child care coming from a cost-sharing program within the facility, rather than the government;
- Prioritization of community members or faculty with children over students with children, especially for financial reasons where students pay a subsidized rate;
- Exclusion of students based on age or type of program (including graduate programs) from child care subsidy policies; and
- Exclusion of students from child care policy consultation processes.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 2005**

**AMENDED: AGM 2013**





## **CIVIL LIBERTIES, HUMAN RIGHTS**

The Federation condemns the refusal to include sexual orientation as a prohibited ground for discrimination in the Canadian Charter of Rights.

The Federation opposes publications that contravene Federation policy on discrimination.

The Federation opposes sexual harassment as defined below:

- Unwanted sexual attention of a persistent or abusive nature;
- Implied or expressed promise or reward for complying with a sexually oriented request;
- Implied or expressed threat of reprisal, in the form either of actual reprisal or the denial of opportunity, for refusal to comply with a sexually oriented request; and
- Sexually oriented remarks and behaviour that may reasonably be perceived to create a negative psychological and emotional environment for work and study.

The Federation opposes gender harassment, defined as follows: gender harassment consists of derogatory or degrading remarks and/or action which are directed toward members of one gender group or one sexual orientation group.

The Federation calls upon the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to ensure that all post-secondary institutions in the province have, and enforce, an employment equity policy.

The Federation opposes discrimination including but not limited to the basis of age, colour, place of origin, ethnicity, citizenship, class, financial status, ancestry, native language, political or religious affiliation, beliefs or activities, gender, gender orientation, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, number of dependents, place or residence, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), positive Human Immune Deficiency Virus status, physical, learning or mental disability, or physical or mental health.

The Federation opposes the establishment of organizations on campus whose public policy contravenes the Ontario Human Rights code or Federation policy on discrimination.

The Federation acknowledges March 22nd as the official day to recognize the academic, traditional and spiritual work of Indigenous Students.

The Federation supports the creation of safe spaces for groups that have been disempowered. The Federation believes that safe space promotes honesty, caring, sharing and respect.

The procedures and outcomes carried out under any Student Code of Conduct must reconcile with the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

**ADOPTED: AGM 1985**

**AMENDED: AGM 1986, AGM 1987, SAGM 1991, SAGM 1992, AGM 1993, SAGM 1994, SAGM 1996, AGM 1996, AGM 1999**



# CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

## Greenhouse Gas Emissions

### Preamble

Climate change poses one of the biggest challenges and threats to humanity. Increased greenhouse gas emissions have caused the average temperatures across the world to rise, intensifying the frequency and severity of natural disasters, contributing to rising sea levels, and causing worldwide drought, famine and flooding. The effects of ecological degradation are felt particularly hard in communities of the Global South, who bear little to no responsibility for impending climate change. The very future of life on earth hangs in the balance, but world leaders have either been unwilling or unable to come to a practical agreement on how to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide.

Concentration of gasses in the atmosphere is measured by parts per million (ppm), which also measures the ratio of carbon dioxide to other gasses in the air. Until the advent of the industrial revolution, Earth's atmosphere contained approximately 275 parts per million, which kept important gasses from escaping the Earth's atmosphere and kept the earth warm enough to make life possible and sustainable. As of 2012, the earth's atmosphere contains 392 parts per million, with scientists advising that the planet must be below 350 parts per million to continue sustaining life. Scientists from dozens of countries, domestic, regional and international agencies, including the United Nations, have all sounded the alarm on climate change; warning swift action must be taken lest the planet risk massive ecological disaster.

Since the beginning of the new millennium, Canada has risen to become one of the planet's top polluters. After abandoning the Kyoto Protocol, the Federal government began a massive expansion of the toxic Tar Sands project in Northern Alberta, which forcibly infringed upon the sovereign land of Indigenous peoples and has seen a rise in cancer and other illnesses in the areas surrounding the project. Canada has consistently undermined international efforts to reduce carbon emissions, such as in 2007, when it blocked a Commonwealth resolution binding industrialized countries to emission reduction targets. Proposals to expand oil and gas pipelines across the fragile Northern British Columbia wilderness in 2012 further display the governments callous disregard for the ecological health of the country and the planet.

The Federation believes strongly that affordable, accessible and public colleges and universities can play a role in our society in providing research and education to turn the tide on climate change before it is too late. The Federation stands in solidarity with students, faculty, staff, scientists, researchers, politicians, Indigenous communities, activists and concerned people around the world working tirelessly to reverse the effects of climate change and build sustainable, inclusive and open communities.

### Policy

The Federation supports:

- Local, provincial, national, regional and international efforts to slow climate change by investing in renewable energy generation mechanisms and a phasing out of fossil fuel consumption;
- International agreements that encourage cooperation between countries and regions to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and transition to sustainable economies;
- The mass expansion of affordable and accessible public transit through a National Transit Strategy that discourages reliance on cars for personal transportation;
- The introduction of feed-in tariffs that provide tax incentives to personal home and business renovations that generate sustainable power and heating for residences and businesses;
- Investments in public post-secondary education and research to evaluate the challenges posed by climate change and propose thoughtful solutions to the threats it poses;

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- The transition towards a green economy, with focus on localized production and sustainable manufacturing;
- Grassroots mobilizations and civil disobedience to halt the expansion of ecologically harmful projects and shift public policy on climate change, energy, waste and the environment;
- Broad-based coalitions of students' unions, labour unions, Indigenous communities, scientists and researchers, and other concerned communities designed to challenge climate change denial and the influence of natural resource corporations on public policy;
- Groups that work within environmental justice frameworks; and
- Research and education that investigates and reports on the disproportionate distribution of environmental hazards in low income, racialized, Indigenous and other marginalized communities.

The Federation opposes:

- The continued reliance upon fossil fuels for power generation;
- The influence of oil, gas and other natural resource extraction corporations on public policy and government at municipal, provincial, national, regional and international levels;
- The unfair demand placed upon countries in the Global South to pay the same cost for climate change prevention and reversal as industrialized nations in the Global North;
- Ecologically hazardous natural resource extraction projects such as the Tar Sands that pollute the environment, infringe upon the sovereignty of Indigenous communities and cause personal, social, environmental and economic harm to those living and working in or near extraction sites;
- Natural resource projects that displace Indigenous communities from their sovereign lands and communities;
- Cuts to public science and research efforts designed to examine ecological health, climate change and the impact of fossil fuels;
- Muzzling of scientists, civil servants and politicians wishing to speak out on the ecological health of the planet;
- The social, political, and economic forces that shape the disproportionate distribution of environmental hazards in low income, racialized, Indigenous and other marginalized communities; and
- Public-private funding research initiatives pursued by oil, gas and other natural resource extraction corporations to advance their interests, and which impose an agenda that undermines academic freedom.

**ADOPTED: AGM 2007**

**AMENDED: SAGM 2013**

# **COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMS**

## **Preamble**

As the post-secondary education system in Ontario has evolved, so too have the nature of college and university studies. As students seek new paths through the system, programs have emerged which have both a college and a university component. These programs enable students to explore both the theoretical and the practical aspects of their discipline.

In some cases, collaborative programs exist between colleges alone and universities alone. These programs can allow for students to have a diverse range of learning opportunities, including access to a broad pool of professing staff and the resources a different institution of learning is able to provide.

Students who study in collaborative programs have the opportunity to diversify their post-secondary education experience while attaining a diploma or degree. Collaborative programs allow students to experience both college and university in the same time it would take to get a university degree at one institution.

Such programs are also often more affordable since college fees are typically lower than those at a university. The expanded number of facilities offering particular specialty programs also provides greater possibility for students to study in their home communities.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- Collaborative programs between colleges and universities that help to diversify a student's education by combining practical and theoretical methods of learning;
- Collaborative programs that allow for choice between which university or college a student chooses to attend to complete their studies;
- Fee structures that allow a student to complete a diploma and/or a degree by paying college-level fees for years studied at college;
- Collaborative programs that recognize and value credits earned at another institution;
- Collaboration between students' unions whose membership is shared over the time a student is studying;
- The provision of funding and resources for the delivery of high quality collaborative programs;
- Collaborative programs where a student can obtain both a university degree and a college certificate; and
- Collaborative programs where dedicated, accessible study space is provided at both institutions for students to access.

The Federation opposes:

- Programs which claim to be collaborative but offer the same education as traditional programs for a higher cost; and
- A disparity in financial support for students among institutions providing a collaborative program.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 2009**



## **COLLEGE ISSUES**

The Federation supports:

- The establishment of a funding formula for colleges that ensures the quality of education received and the ability of the institution to continue to operate while providing students with the technology and equipment required for learning;
- The efforts of college students and students' unions to gain full voting membership on the board of governors; and
- The achievement of absolute autonomy of college student unions from their institutions administration.

The Federation opposes:

- The implementation of differential fees accordingly to status or program;
- The use of sessional and contract faculty to address budget shortfalls;
- The creation of new classroom space separate from the institution without the necessary supports in place for student success; and
- Having members of the administration with voting seats on students' unions boards or committees.

**ADOPTED: AGM 1987**

**AMENDED: SAGM 1989, AGM 1992, AGM 1996, AGM 1997, AGM 1999, AGM 2011**





# COMMERCIALIZATION OF RESEARCH

## Preamble

The commercialization of research broadly refers to the influence of corporate and private interests on research and knowledge, and the public policies which seek to define research and knowledge in market terms. Corporate and private participation in research often takes the form of a public-private partnership, where public and private dollars are combined to support research and development.

Even research that is not privately funded has become subject to the effects of the commercialization of research, since public funding has become geared towards research that may be seen as profitable to corporations. Research is seen as an investment that the government or corporations can make, and as such only profitable fields of study receive research funding.

The negative effects of commercialization of public research are recognized by faculty internationally and in Canada. The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) commits to safeguarding and supporting the integrity of academic research and campaigns to defend the freedom of academic researchers to pursue their work. The CAUT also opposes attempts by corporations or any other funders to suppress academic research results that they deem as unacceptable.

The Federation supports post-secondary education as a public good. Matching public money with private funds effectively redirects public resources toward the private sector. An example of the commercialization of research primarily benefiting the private sector can be found in the Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI) where 90 per cent of the funds are directed towards private research.

Public-private funding, or matched funding as it is sometimes called, for research can be defined as the merging of public funds with money from private sources. Public-private or matched funding for research is a model that benefits private interests.

As research institutions become reliant on money from the private sector, corporate interests influence the direction of research. The negative impact of this changing direction and influence can be seen in the case of Dr. Nancy Olivieri, a medical researcher at the University of Toronto who was receiving research funding from Apotex, Canada's largest drug manufacturer and one of the University of Toronto's wealthiest donors. Olivieri was researching a new drug which held the promise of replacing the intrusive needle based treatment for the blood disorder thalassemia. After discovering several disturbing side effects of the drug and recommending that the trial be discontinued, and after attempting to publish their results, they were threatened with legal action. Private interests can therefore interfere in the free flow of information and peer review publishing and potentially ban the dissemination of negative results.

The establishment and expansion of "incubators" at post-secondary institutions are typically supported by government and threaten the academic integrity of research.

These incubators – marketed as entrepreneurship mentoring centres for students – serve as additional levers for institutions to obtain private funding. As a result, public money and institutional space that goes into establishing these incubators is used to subsidize private companies who greatly profit from the use of students' skills.

## Policy

The Federation supports:

- Public research that benefits the public good;
- Public research initiatives which are accountable to the general public and which support the right of the researcher to free speech and academic freedom;

## **Issues Policy – Commercialization of Research**

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- Increased public funding for public research; and
- The immediate elimination of all matched funding requirements on government research funding.

The Federation opposes:

- Instituting a commercialization mandate in public research initiatives;
- Matched public/private funding research initiatives;
- Independent, private, for-profit foundations, organizations, community liaisons or industry liaisons supporting financial returns on academic research and intellectual property;
- Research that may not be funded contingent upon the results of that research;
- Publicly funded research that primarily benefits the private sector being carried out at a public college or university; and
- The subsidization of private entrepreneurship incubators by public colleges and universities.

**ADOPTED: AGM 2004**

**AMENDED: SAGM 2013**

# COMMODIFICATION OF PUBLIC WATER SOURCES

## Preamble

Water, like education, is a public right, not a privilege. Like the invasion of commercial values into education, the treatment of water as a commodity that can be sold poses the risk of potentially denying access to this life sustaining resource. It is a common responsibility of all people and governments to ensure that water is used sensibly to minimize negative environmental impacts and guarantee the free and universal access to clean drinking water into the future.

Most city water in Canada is much more highly regulated and monitored for quality than bottled water. In addition, public water systems are the most responsible mechanism for ensuring that water is accessible.

In addition, mass production of bottled water has negative environmental impacts due to the creation of landfills full of empty bottles and plastic leaching toxins endangering the surrounding environment and communities and posing hazardous risks.

According to the Polaris Institute, the bottled water industry is presently growing at a rate of 18 per cent annually, becoming one of the key products being pushed in the public school system and on college and university campuses across the country. Beverage exclusivity contracts on campuses are the marketing tool of choice for water bottling companies to guarantee access to the student and youth market.

Private beverage companies are engaged in aggressive marketing campaigns claiming that bottled water is the only safe source of drinking water available and creating a culture of dependence and reliance on private water sources that undermine public confidence in public water systems.

There are currently no legally enforced rules to protect water systems in Ontario and buying bottled water sends a powerful message to our elected leaders that there is little need to maintain and improve Canada's water infrastructure.

## Policy

The Federation supports:

- Public ownership of natural water sources;
- Adequate funding for clean and accessible public water systems;
- Public drinking fountains in spaces and public buildings, including college and university campuses;
- Enforced government regulations to establish standards and guidelines for public water systems that set international standards;
- Government initiatives to clean up polluted water sources;
- The right of Indigenous peoples to exercise control and influence over the use of natural resources;
- Adequate funding and support for clean and accessible water systems (to reach all communities including Indigenous communities);
- Bottled water bans for all events held by municipal, provincial or federal governments or public institutions;
- Container deposit laws and other effective ways of cutting down the amount of bottles piling up in landfills and polluting the environment; and
- Enforced government regulations to establish standards and guidelines for public water systems that set international standards and respect the autonomy of Indigenous communities and their traditional governance.

The Federation opposes:

## **Issues Policy – Commodification of Public Water Sources**

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- The use of bottled water when tap water is potable;
- The privatization of water services;
- Bulk water imports and exports;
- Water takings by bottled water corporations of public water and public water sources;
- Any change to public policy that serves the private and commercial interests of bottled water companies instead of the public interest;
- Government under-funding of public water systems and water testing programs;
- The allocation, sale or lease of land or natural resources by any level of government to bottled water companies; and
- National or international trade agreements that limit or undermine Canada's ability to regulate and protect public water systems.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 2008**

**AMENDED: AGM 2010**

# **COPYRIGHT**

## **Preamble**

Students both create and use artistic and literary material during their studies. While it is important to protect creators' copyright in these works, the rights of users of copyright material must also be considered because access to works is essential to the learning process.

Overly rigid legislation prevents individuals from accessing publicly available materials. It can prevent students, researchers and scholars from willingly exchanging knowledge and information.

Those who argue for greater owner rights are frequently private and commercial interests while non-profit groups representing the public interest have fought to keep access to knowledge public.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- Copyright legislation that achieves a balance between the rights of creators and users of copyrighted works; and
- The move towards an information commons in which ideas and information are not property, but rather are shared heritage of humanity, as integral to Canada's social and economic well being.

The Federation opposes:

- Copyright legislation that prevents students from reasonable access to information on the Internet; and
- Extended licensing in educational institutions that leads to increasing ancillary and user fees for access to academic material on the Internet.

**ADOPTED: AGM 2008**



# CREDIT TRANSFER

## Preamble

The high cost of attending college or university in Ontario makes obtaining a certificate, diploma or degree less attainable. Those who do manage to attend a post-secondary institution may be limited in their choice of program and location of study. For a variety of reasons, many students who start a post-secondary diploma or degree at one institution may choose to finish it at another institution. Changing market demands and new programs offered by colleges and universities have also led to an increase in the number of students who chose to supplement a diploma or degree with a second designation.

Ontario does not have a standardized system of credit transfer between post-secondary institutions. In the absence of a province-wide system to facilitate the articulation, transfer and admissions arrangements among degree and diploma granting institutions, hundreds of agreements have emerged between colleges and universities. While this rapid emergence of inter-institutional cooperation has improved educational opportunities, it has also led to increased confusion, inconsistency and duplication.

As a result, students are often left to try and navigate a system where programs may be offered at separate institutions, guided by separate policies or, when transferring from one institution to another, forced to negotiate on their own which credits will be recognized. Due to the ad hoc nature of these agreements, many students find themselves paying for and earning the same credits more than once, adding to additional costs for the student and the government. Creating a structure to facilitate the appropriate transfer of credits between institutions is integral to creating a more affordable and accessible post-secondary education system.

## Policy

The Federation supports:

- Maintaining clear, transparent and predictable pathways to learning;
- Eliminating unnecessary duplication of learning and related inefficiencies in public spending;
- A provincial framework for credit transfer that fits into a broader pan-Canadian system;
- Enhancing student mobility through the creation of a mandatory, credit transfer system;
- A body to oversee and review the progress of a credit transfer system;
- A system that prioritises block transfers over a credit-to-credit transfer system;
- The promotion of accurate and fair prior-learning assessment that also recognizes institutional autonomy;
- A credit transfer system that mandates that credits earned in French and Indigenous programs be accepted for equivalent credits at English-language institutions;
- Standardised assessments of credits, diplomas and degrees; and
- Adequate funding to ensure the maintenance and success of a credit transfer system.

The Federation opposes:

- Agreements that undermine a students' ability to transfer between institutions of their choice;
- A credit transfer system without the adequate funding needed for operational success;
- A credit transfer system that is optional for universities and colleges to participate in; and

**Issues Policy – Credit Transfer**

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- A credit transfer system that implements a user fee.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 2011**



# CRIMINALIZATION OF DISSENT

## Preamble

Students have long engaged in dissent across our province to advocate on the issues that most affect them and to speak, in solidarity, for others who are engaged in struggle. However, in recent years, there has been an increase of repressive action taken towards events and actions of student protest and outward dissent towards grave policies of government, some of which culminate in violence.

The use of legislation, in particular, to override or limit the freedoms of students to engage in these activities is troubling and counter to both the letter and spirit of the Charter and other law which provides some measure of protection to students and all people.

As a body that is representative of students throughout the province of Ontario and that stands in solidarity with students elsewhere, the Federation must raise the alarm when the spectre of such oppressive action and government edicts is raised.

## Policy

The Federation supports:

- The expression of dissent uninhibited by law enforcement, government or other institutions within society;
- The rights and freedoms of students and others to dissent, including rights of assembly and free speech as defined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and other related legislation;
- The preservation of personal and bodily integrity of protesters and organizers;
- The collaboration of faculty, staff and students of post-secondary education institutions to organize and express dissent;
- Freedom from discrimination on the basis of affiliation or identification with a political organization; and
- Individuals who have been criminalized or incarcerated for exercising their right to dissent.

The Federation opposes:

- The passage of legislation that engages in the criminalization of dissent and oversteps the rights provided in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms along with other related legislation;
- The use of tactics by police forces to maximize the effectiveness of the oppression of students and other groups, such as:
  - Pre-emptive arrest and detention,
  - Charges of conspiracy based upon action taken for lawful dissent and subsequent restrictive bail conditions designed to prevent actions taken for lawful dissent,
  - Techniques of personal intimidation including:
    - The use of sexual violence, including but not limited to sexual harassment, sexual assault and the pursuit of sexual relationships by undercover police officers or investigators for the purpose of infiltration, intimidation or investigation;
    - Intrusion of personal spaces such as the use of undercover officers;
    - Violence;
    - Detainment lacking charge or cause or warrant;

## **Issues Policy – Criminalization of Dissent**

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- The incitement of hatred, harassment, and discrimination against any marginalized group based on, but not limited to their colour, race, religion, ethnic origin, ability, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual choice or other grounds covered by the Ontario Human Rights Code;
- Kettling and other forms of mass detainment;
- Unlawful arrest of members and raiding of student union premises based upon the prevention of lawful dissent; and
- The removal of identification of law enforcement officials to prevent prosecution of unlawful acts;
- The collaboration of post-secondary educational institutions and their administration with government and others in the above instances, particularly when said institutions take an active role to oppress or place the general well-being of students and others at risk; and
- The use of agents provocateurs.

**ADOPTED: AGM 2012**

# DEMOCRACY IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

## Preamble

The governing bodies of most colleges and universities are generally composed of administrators, institutional and provincial appointees, alumni, private donors, faculty, staff and students. Many governing bodies do not give adequate representation to the largest stakeholders within the university or college environment, being the students and community members. Many boards are populated with provincial and institutional appointees that include bankers and businesspersons who often have vested interest in increasing tuition fees and student debt. At some institutions, arbitrary rules prohibit students within certain programs or from certain jurisdictions (e.g. international students) from seeking positions as student representatives. When students are able to seek such positions, some institutions appoint the student representatives, rather than allowing the student body to select their representatives through a democratic election. In many situations, there are no formal ties between the students' union and the student representatives.

The negative impacts of the current structures may be seen in many of the motions passed by governing bodies that are contrary to the interests of the student body. These include but are not limited to large tuition fee increases, frivolous ancillary fee increases, and the passage of non-academic student codes of conduct.

## Policy

The Federation supports:

- Greater representation of students on university and college boards of governors, board of trustees, senates, governing councils and other governing bodies;
- Selection of student representatives by democratic elections rather than administrative appointments;
- Faculty, student and staff representation on governing bodies;
- Student input into the selection of community representatives on governing bodies;
- The eligibility of all students attending the college or university to run for election as a student representative on the governing body;
- Members' efforts to lobby the government and their administrations to establish formal procedures for appointing, and/or electing a minimum of one-third student membership to all post-secondary institutions governing councils and committees;
- Equal student, staff, faculty and community representation/voting rights on post-secondary governing structures. The Federation opposes corporate representation on these decision-making bodies; and
- All students in their struggle for democracy.

The Federation opposes:

- Administratively appointed student representatives; and
- Higher proportion of administratively appointed stakeholders from outside the college or university community than students, staff and faculty within the college or university community.

The Federation insists on equitable representation from all sectors of the community in the decision-making processes at post-secondary institutions.

The Federation demands that universities fully and publicly disclose all research awards.

The Federation demands that every university establish a Research Review Board with staff, faculty, administration, community and student representation.

**ADOPTED: AGM 1973**

**Issues Policy – Democracy in Post-Secondary Education**

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**AMENDED: SAGM 1990, AGM 1991, SAGM 1992, AGM 1992, AGM1995, SAGM 1996, AGM 1997, SAGM 1998, AGM 2004**

# DIFFERENTIATION

## Preamble

Differentiation is a policy that aims to streamline colleges and universities into providing specific and specialized programming. This policy is largely driven by an interest in cutting government funding to colleges and universities based on a pretext that there is duplication in the system. Differentiation offloads the responsibility and blame for program cuts and mergers onto institutions, ignoring the impact of long-term underfunding of Ontario colleges and universities.

*Ontario's Differentiation Policy Framework for Postsecondary Education* forces institutions to prioritize program offerings based on the government objectives, threatening access to comprehensive post-secondary education for Ontario students. Attempts to limit comprehensiveness particularly impact students at rural, northern, francophone or bilingual institutions, as well as women and Indigenous students and students from marginalized communities who may have difficulties relocating.

## Policy

The Federation supports:

- Government policy that prioritizes high quality and comprehensive post-secondary education in all regions of the province in both English and French;
- System-wide planning for post-secondary education program offerings that prioritizes improving the quality and availability of programs, expands public funding for institutions, and is based on student and faculty needs; and
- Decision-making processes about program development, including creating new programs and changing, cutting or merging existing programs that prioritize faculty peer review and democratic student involvement.

The Federation opposes:

- Funding incentives to cut or merge programs;
- Program cuts that limit access for students in rural or northern communities, francophone or bilingual students, as well as women and Indigenous students and students from marginalized communities;
- Funding incentives or policies that encourage or force institutions to turn to the private sector for research funding; and
- Program cuts or changes driven solely by labour market outcomes of graduate or labour market trends.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 2014**



# **DISTANCE AND ONLINE EDUCATION**

## **Preamble**

Distance learning in Ontario has grown substantially in the last few decades, especially with the establishment and expansion of regional distance learning networks. This growth has occurred because of the understanding that students in northern and rural communities in Ontario often face additional challenges to accessing post-secondary education due to the costs associated with traveling great distances to a college or university, and the cost of relocation. In recent years, distance-learning networks have been created to service small and rural communities across the rest of Ontario. However, many remote communities and First Nations territories do not have the infrastructure to provide distance and online education.

With the technical advancements of the last decade, institutions have incorporated online features into teaching practices. Instructors use online teaching tools to organize course material and communicate with students, while some courses and programs are delivered through a combination of onsite and online instruction or may be taught entirely online.

Distance and online delivery of courses and programs are relatively new and while they can be seen as tools for providing greater access for students, any investment in post-secondary education needs to address the underlying barriers to access, which can include cost, distance, family and work responsibilities, and lack of accommodation for disabilities.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- Learning environments that foster the social and intellectual interaction between students and teachers;
- Distance or online learning that is used in a way that enhances the learning experience and accommodates the unique needs of students;
- Building on the knowledge and expertise that college and university faculty have developed in distance or online learning throughout the province;
- Government investment in broadband internet access to underserved areas of the province, which is important for increasing access to post-secondary education;
- Reducing tuition fees for distance or online courses;
- Online interfaces that are fully accessible and user friendly;
- Student financial assistance programs that are equitably accessible to full- and part-time students, with the recognition that a significant number of part-time students enroll in online courses, often because they are balancing family life, employment or disability needs; and
- The creation and maintenance of proper infrastructure in northern and rural communities.

The Federation opposes:

- Distance or online learning as a substitute for in-class, face-to-face education;
- The application of distance or online learning as the solution to large class sizes;
- The application of distance or online learning as the solution to the lack of space at institutions and shortfalls in deferred maintenance;
- The application of distance or online learning as the solution to the underfunding of post-secondary education; and
- The application of distance or online learning with the primary goal of cost-saving or revenue generation, and seeing it as a cheaper and convenient alternative to attending a college or university in person.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 2011**



# **DOOR-TO-DOOR MAIL DELIVERY**

## **Preamble**

The Canada Post Corporation Act of 1981 contains a mandate to provide mail services in a reliable manner and to ensure the corporation's financial security and independence.

Canadians rely upon affordable door-to-door mail services throughout the year. On December 11, 2013, with the support of the federal government, Canada Post announced drastic cutbacks to our public postal service, designed to eliminate door-to-door mail delivery for 5.1 million Canadian households, as well as significantly increase the cost of postage. Canada Post is a public service and crown corporation therefore these cuts are a clear attack on our public postal service. A cut of door-to-door mail service negatively and disproportionately impacts seniors and persons with disabilities. Hundreds of mayors have complained about the decision to cut door-to-door delivery, and Hamilton and Montreal have already launched their own legal challenges.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- Public services that are publicly funded, maintained and supported by unionized workers;
- The establishment of fair and reasonable postage rates;
- Accessible delivery of mail for rural and urban communities;
- Postal service practices that reinforce ecological sustainability;
- The implementation of postal banking to serve rural and urban communities;
- Substantive public consultation on any changes to the postal service;
- Respect, fairness and decent working conditions for public servants employed at Canada Post; and
- The continuation of Canada Post as a public service.

**ADOPTED: AGM 2015**



# **ECONOMIC POLICY**

## **Preamble**

In a fair and equitable society, education, social welfare programs, a living wage, health care, child care and other forms of social infrastructure should be accessible to all. Particularly in times of economic recession, such social infrastructure is often at risk by governments who look to implement deep cutbacks as a means to decrease budgetary deficits. Contrary to the notion that austerity measures are the only solution to economic downturns, social cutbacks are always a reflection of government priorities, as the creation of alternative budgets attest. Systematic cutbacks represent the shrinking of the public sector and the opening up of even profitable public assets to private exploitation and profit.

Supporting strong public infrastructure necessitates defending the public sector from such attacks and recognizing that it as a central component of ensuring a sustainable and equitable society. Such infrastructure mitigates socio-economic inequity and ensures that the rights of individuals are upheld. On an international scale, protecting a strong public sector and domestic markets means opposing free trade agreements that can undermine the right of citizens and governments to maintain the public sector and determine its scope democratically.

Strong economies that are fuelled by domestic job creation and sustainable industries can contribute to a society that is more equal and where wealth is more evenly distributed.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports

- A post-secondary education system that is fully-funded by government;
- Long-term, democratic economic planning for sustained and predictable investments in public services that include education, social welfare programs, and employment creation;
- Increases to employment opportunities through direct job creation; and
- The implementation of progressive taxation as a means to fund social programs including post-secondary education.

The Federation opposes

- Any exchange or consumer-level taxation of goods necessary for learning or the educational environment;
- Any and all research for the purposes of economic or physical harm to any nation by public or private agencies on university and college campuses;
- Economic policy that promotes, facilitates and directs the use of university research as a means to subsidize corporate sector research and development;
- Any economic and social policy that discriminates against those individuals receiving social assistance including, but not limited to, unemployment assistance, disability assistance and family allowances;
- The displacement of social assistance payments in any form by financial assistance for post-secondary education;
- The over-riding of domestic economic and social policy by international agreements;
- The undermining of local, democratic control over economic and social policy by international trade organizations; and
- The commodification of public education including references to educational markets in free trade agreements.

**Issues Policy – Economic Policy**

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**ADOPTED: SAGM 1981**

**AMENDED: AGM 1986, SAGM 1987, SAGM 1988, SAGM 1990, SAGM 1991, AGM 1991, AGM 1992, SAGM 1992, SAGM 1993, SAGM 1994, AGM 1997, SAGM 1998, AGM 2010**

# EMPLOYMENT

## Preamble

Everyone has the right to full-time, stable, fulfilling and unionized employment with livable wages and fair benefits and pensions. Employment serves the interests of both the individual and society, and is a key part of social, political and economic development. To the individual, employment provides income and purchasing power, a higher sense of self-worth and confidence, and a chance to be a productive member of society. The social benefits of employment include a broader tax base and increase in revenue from tax collection, which in turn provide predictable and stable funding for high-quality, affordable and accessible public services.

The post-war period of economic development in Europe and North America saw significant investment in public industries and services and a commitment towards stable, full-time employment with livable wages, benefits and pensions. Today, the labour market landscape has shifted dramatically away from the employment model of decades past towards an economic system that relies on part-time, casual and contract labour – mostly found in the low-paying service and hospitality sectors.

Students today find themselves trapped under mortgage-sized debts with little prospect for meaningful employment. Often, students find themselves working as unpaid volunteers or interns for private firms and companies simply to increase their chances of getting more stable employment in the future.

As a result of these factors, students graduate with more debt, less opportunity and lower pay than the generation before them. In the interest of fairness, equality and economic stability, significant investment must be made to stimulate growth in good, stable, full-time jobs with livable wages and fair benefits and pensions.

## Policy

The Federation supports:

- The right of everyone to receive full-time employment that pays livable wages and has fair benefits and pensions;
- The right of labourers to collectively organize into trade unions for the purpose of defending and advancing their rights as workers and members of society;
- The principle of pay equity, which would ensure that women have the right to be paid the same wage for the same labour as a man in the same position;
- Equal Opportunity Employment programs that seek to advance employment opportunities for traditionally marginalized communities such as racialized, queer and trans, status and non-status First Nations, Métis and Inuit, and immigrant people as well as persons with disabilities;
- Public investment into publicly-owned and operated services and industries as a method to fund and support full-time, stable employment;
- Public investment into sustainable and green energy initiatives to stimulate growth and employment in the “green economy”;
- The integration of summer student employment programs into general employment creation programs;
- Government programs that cover some or all of the costs associated with internship or employment in the public and not-for-profit sectors;
- The right of foreign trained workers and professionals to have their credentials recognized by the Canadian government and private employers; and
- The creation of a 32-hour work week as a way to stimulate full-time employment.

## **Issues Policy – Employment**

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The Federation opposes:

- The shift towards part-time, casual and contract labour that has increasingly become standard practice in both the public and private sectors;
- Labour without financial compensation, both in principle and as part of any post-secondary education curriculum;
- Arbitrary summer savings requirements for the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP);
- The use of unpaid student labour such as through unpaid internships or competitions that ask participants to design, build, sell or solve a problem of a private company;
- Systems of two-tiered wages that see new and younger employees paid less than more senior employees when they were hired;
- Any attack on workers' right to organize into trade unions, such as back-to-work legislation or changes to unionization processes that make it more difficult for employees to reorganize their workplace;
- The exploitation of international student labour;
- The outsourcing of employment to regions where labour and environmental laws permit substandard wages and jeopardize the safety and security of workers; and
- The outsourcing of employment to regions where labour and environmental laws permit lower wages and ignore the safety and security of workers.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 1976**

**AMENDED: AGM 1976, AGM 1985, AGM 1986, AGM 1987, SAGM 1989, AGM 1991, SAGM 1993, AGM 1996, SAGM 1996, AGM 1997, SAGM 1998, AGM 2011**

# **ENROLMENT AND RETENTION TRACKING**

## **Preamble**

Ontario post-secondary institutions lack the standardized statistical information to assist with the analysis of trends in enrolment, completion and accessibility in post-secondary education.

In cases where some data is collected it is rarely publicly released and does not allow longitudinal and cross-institutional comparisons.

Ontario requires a standardized data collection procedure that is monitored and administered by a centralized public institution that is accountable to the public.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports the standardized collection of anonymous demographic information on new and graduating students by a public institution, including:

- Sex;
- Age;
- Ethnicity;
- Country of birth;
- Religion;
- Dependency status;
- Number of dependents;
- Gender identity;
- Disabilities (developmental, physical, learning, etc.);
- First language spoken, language spoken at home and language of study;
- Family income background;
- Sources of income;
- Level of study previously attained;
- Significant change in program of study;
- Highest level of parental education;
- Type of study: full-time or part-time;
- Type of student: domestic or international;
- Level of personal debt from private sources; and
- Level of personal debt from government sources.

The Federation supports that the data collected be made publicly available.

The Federation opposes the non-anonymous collection of personal demographic information of any students.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 2007**





# FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS AND INUIT EDUCATION

## Preamble

The Federation recognizes that First Nations, Métis and Inuit people are Indigenous to the land that is currently occupied by Canada and have inherent rights and titles, and that students should have the right to self-identify their First Nations, Métis and Inuit ancestry, regardless of labels used by the federal government's Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs. The Federation recognizes First Nations, Métis and Inuit people's inherent right to unlimited access to traditional and non-traditional education. Education at all levels is a First Nations, Métis and Inuit and Treaty right recognized in the Canadian Constitution Act of 1982.

The effects of the legacy of colonial oppression of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people and the subsequent access available to post-secondary education are exacerbated by regressive government policy, which has perverted the Treaty right to education to exclude post-secondary education and denied access to thousands of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students. Although education is a provincial jurisdiction, education for Status First Nations and Inuit students falls under federal jurisdiction defined by the Indian Act, regardless of whether schooling is pursued on-or off-reserve. At present, non-Status First Nations, Métis and Inuit students are not covered by the same federal policy, and as such, funding that should be available to them through the Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) is not available.

In addition, the funding provided by the federal government for Status First Nations through the PSSSP is inadequate to ensure access. Funding for the PSSSP is distributed by band councils under their own eligibility criteria. Funding for Indian and Northern Affairs' Post-Secondary Education Program, which includes the PSSSP, has been capped since 1996 and has failed to account for inflation and population growth. This funding shortfall, coupled with the increased demand for a post-secondary education and dramatic provincial tuition fee increases in Ontario, has progressively undermined the value of the federal government's contribution to the PSSSP and other support programs since the mid-1990s.

These factors create substantial barriers to post-secondary education for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners and Canada continues to exist on occupied land. Therefore, it is important that all students gain a better understanding of the historical and contemporary issues that First Nations, Métis and Inuit people face on their land. As it stands, students are not required to complete a course on First Nations, Inuit and Métis studies, and most programs do not offer such courses.

## Policy

The Federation supports:

- Access to funding for First Nations, Métis and Inuit people that ensures the opportunity to participate in, and complete, a quality post-secondary education; and
- Educational opportunities that reflect the lifestyle and needs of First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities; and
- Full and fair funding for First Nations, Métis and Inuit access to post-secondary education and other support programs that increases annually to account for inflation and population growth; and
- Recognition of First Nations, Métis and Inuit languages for post-secondary entrance requirements into relevant programs; and
- Recognition of First Nations, Métis and Inuit languages as an option for post-secondary institution language course requirements; and
- Promotion of understanding and respect for First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures, knowledge, languages, spirituality, history and technology in the Canadian post-secondary education system, including all curricula; and

## **Issues Policy –First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education**

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- The inclusion of Indigenous spiritualities in religious observance policies at post-secondary institutions; and
- The authority of local Band councils to administer federal funding for First Nations, Métis and Inuit post-secondary education and other student support programs; and
- Campaigns initiated or supported by the National Indigenous Caucus; and
- The introduction of Indigenous Course Requirements for all students in all programs in all Ontario post-secondary education institutions; and
- The inclusion of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, Faculty and staff in the creation, development and any revision of Indigenous Course Requirements and Indigenous content in curricula.

The Federation opposes:

- Any cap on government funding for First Nations, Métis and Inuit access to post-secondary education and other support programs;
- Government systems which grant access to post-secondary education for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students through loan-based mechanisms;
- Curricula that ignores the contribution made by Indigenous cultures to the history of the formation of North America or the ongoing contributions made by such cultures to the social fabric of modern North American societies; and
- Any change in municipal, provincial or federal policy that does not uphold the right of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people to self-governance and official recognition.

**ADOPTED: AGM 2016**

# **FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS AND INUIT POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMS**

## **Preamble**

It is a primary belief that education is a right for all. In Ontario, there are over a dozen First Nations, Métis and Inuit institutes and programs that are currently offered through partnerships with many of Ontario's public post-secondary institutions. Some of these institutions, such as the Six Nations University and First Nations Technical Institute, have partnerships with a number of public post-secondary institutions, just to be able to grant degrees and certificates. Institutions enter into these partnerships to be able to grant government-recognized degrees and certificates within a funding structure that still makes the institution accessible.

However, these partnerships force First Nations, Métis and Inuit institutes to conform to the academic policies of external institutions, thereby weakening their autonomy. It also creates a bureaucratic nightmare for administrators to navigate, with academic policies changing year to year at many colleges and universities.

These institutions and programs are often funded through a complicated combination of sources from the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and Indigenous Affairs. This is in contrast to the basic income unit operating grants that enable Ontario's recognized public colleges and universities to operate.

This funding is inadequate and often unstable, creating a situation where students who enrol in first year have no way to determine if funding will be available for their education by the time they are in their final year. Governments insist that these institutions rely on grants and donations from external sources and alumni.

This instability led to a situation where the First Nations Technical Institute risked closing in winter 2008 due to a debate over which level of government should fund its operating cost shortfall.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- Full accreditation for Ontario's First Nations public post-secondary institutions;
- Adequate funding from the Ontario Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, as well as the Federal government, to bring these institutions in-line with funding structures of public post-secondary institutions;
- Predictable and stable funding to enable for these institutions to allow for long-term planning; and
- Predictable and stable funding for First Nations, Métis and Inuit programs in public post-secondary institutions.

**ADOPTED: AGM 2008**

**AMENDED: SAGM 2017**



# FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS AND INUIT STUDENT ISSUES

## Preamble

The Federation recognizes that First Nations, Métis and Inuit people are Indigenous to the land that is currently occupied by Canada and have inherent rights and titles, and that students should have the right to self-identify their First Nations, Métis and Inuit ancestry, regardless of labels used by the federal government's Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. The Federation recognizes First Nations, Métis and Inuit people's inherent right to unlimited access to traditional and non-traditional education. Education at all levels is an Indigenous and Treaty right recognized in the Canadian Constitution Act of 1982.

The effects of the legacy of colonial oppression of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people and the subsequent access available to post-secondary education are exacerbated by regressive government policy, which has perverted the Treaty right to education to exclude post-secondary education and denied access to thousands of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students. Although education is a provincial jurisdiction, education for Status First Nations and Inuit students falls under federal jurisdiction defined by the Indian Act, regardless of whether schooling is pursued on or off reserve. At present, non-Status First Nations, Métis and Inuit students are not covered by the same federal policy, and as such, funding that should be available to them through the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) is not available.

In addition, the funding provided by the federal government for Status First Nations through the PSSSP is inadequate to ensure access. Funding for the PSSSP is distributed by band councils under their own eligibility criteria. Funding for Indian and Northern Affairs' Post-Secondary Education Program, which includes the PSSSP, has been capped since 1996 and has failed to account for inflation and population growth. This funding shortfall, coupled with the increased demand for a post-secondary education and dramatic provincial tuition fee increases in Ontario, has progressively undermined the value of the federal government's contribution to the PSSSP and other support programs since the mid-1990s. Together, these factors create substantial barriers to post-secondary education for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners.

## Policy

The Federation supports:

- Access to funding for First Nations, Métis and Inuit people that ensures the opportunity to participate in, and complete, a quality post-secondary education;
- Educational opportunities that reflect the lifestyle and needs of First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities;
- Full and fair funding for First Nations, Métis and Inuit access to post-secondary education and other support programs that increases annually to account for inflation and population growth;
- Recognition of First Nations, Métis and Inuit languages for post-secondary entrance requirements into relevant programs;
- Recognition of First Nations, Métis and Inuit languages as an option for post-secondary institution language course requirements;
- Promotion of understanding and respect for First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures, knowledge, languages, spirituality, history and technology in the Canadian post-secondary education system;
- The inclusion of Indigenous spiritualities in religious observance policies at post-secondary institutions;
- The authority of local Band councils to administer federal funding for First Nations, Métis and Inuit post-secondary education and other student support programs; and

## **Issues Policy – First Nations, Métis and Inuit Student Issues**

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- Campaigns initiated or supported by the National Circle First Nations, Métis and Inuit Students.

The Federation opposes:

- Any cap on government funding for First Nations, Métis and Inuit access to post-secondary education and other support programs;
- Government systems which grant access to post-secondary education for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students through loan-based mechanisms;
- Curricula that ignores the contribution made by Indigenous cultures to the history of the formation of North America or the ongoing contributions made by such cultures to the social fabric of modern North American societies; and
- Any change in municipal, provincial or federal policy that does not uphold the right of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people to self-governance and official recognition.

**ADOPTED: AGM 1993**

**AMENDED: AGM 1997, AGM 1998, SAGM 2010, SAGM 2017**

# **FOOD SERVICES**

## **Exclusivity and Multi-Year Contracts in Food Services**

### **Preamble**

Food services and food service providers play an important role in providing adequate nutrition to students on campuses across Ontario.

The current trend in food service agreements is for contracts offering exclusivity to providers. Environments free of exclusivity foster competition, such competition leading to better services at lower rates and with more options for students.

### **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- The inclusion of students in food service contract negotiations and contract reviews;
- The requirement that vendors must offer meals at similar prices as, and adhere to special offers of, the same off-campus franchises; and
- Open and transparent food service contracts.

The Federation opposes:

- All multi-year and/or exclusive food services contracts.

## **Local, Organic and Culturally Specific Food**

### **Preamble**

Food services and food service providers play an important role in providing adequate nutrition to students on campuses across Ontario. As such, food services on campus must meet the cultural needs of students, and to not do so would be discriminatory. Appropriate meal options should also be provided to students who have, for a multitude of reasons, chosen to be vegetarian or vegan. It is also important to local economies and the environment to use foods that are locally produced. Students should also have the option of avoiding genetically modified foods and choosing organic food options.

### **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- The provision of foods that are locally produced, organic, and culturally appropriate by food service providers on campus;
- The right of each and every student to have access to food on campus that is suitable to their personal beliefs, faith, and conscious choices, and provides for a healthy balanced diet;
- The right of every student to be made aware of the nutritional value of the food they are consuming;
- Open standards and policies for the identification of organic and genetically modified foods on campus; and
- Open standards and policies for the identification of Halal, Kosher, vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free and nut-free foods on campus.

The Federation opposes:

- Food service providers who deny access to culturally appropriate foods, or vegetarian and vegan food options because of claims of insufficient demand.

## **Fair Wages and Working Conditions in Food Service Operations**

### **Preamble**

food service providers maintain operations through the hard efforts of their workers. Many workers in the food services industry, working for corporate providers or providers internal to post-secondary institutions are working in non-unionized conditions with unfair wages and little to no benefits.

### **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- Safe and secure working conditions in campus food service operations;
- Fair wages and benefits packages for all on campus food service workers;
- Job security in all levels of employment; and
- Unionized working environments with strong collective agreements.

The Federation opposes:

- Unsafe working conditions for all workers in campus food service operations; and
- Offering solely part-time employment in food service operations, to the exclusion of full-time employment.

## **Student-Run Food Operations**

### **Preamble**

Many post-secondary institutions are governed by multi-year exclusivity contracts between the university college administration and food service providers. These exclusivity contracts contravene the autonomy of students' unions that wish to operate food services to promote inexpensive, diverse, culturally specific, fair trade and/or organic food options on campus.

### **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- Student owned and operated businesses that include but are not limited to pubs, restaurants, convenience stores, canteens and cafes;
- Student union autonomy, and exemption from exclusivity arrangements signed by post-secondary institutions, where such agreements are in place; and
- The use of fair trade products for student-run operations.

The Federation opposes:

- Lack of food options available on campus; and
- The imposition of food service exclusivity arrangements on students' unions operations.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 2008**

**AMENDED: AGM 2012, AGM 2013**



## **FRANCOPHONE ISSUES**

The Federation recognizes that education in French is a right in Ontario. The Federation also recognizes that francophone students face many barriers to education and services in French.

The Federation supports:

- The creation of quality primary, secondary and post-secondary education programs and institutions in French, fully accessible and fully funded by the government;
- The expansion of the secondary school book grant program to include French-language books for post-secondary education;
- The development of a greater number of courses taught in French in all post-secondary institutions in Ontario;
- Full access for the French-speaking population to post-secondary institutions in the province; and
- Collaboration with all member locals and their coalition partners to increase the number of programs offered in French and the number of courses taught in French in all post-secondary institutions, and to ensure that other needs of students who wish to study in French in Ontario are met.

The Federation opposes:

- The elimination of French programs in some post-secondary institutions after new French-language institutions are created.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 1984**

**AMENDED: AGM 1986, AGM 1987, AGM 1988, SAGM 1992, SAGM 1994, AGM 1996, AGM 2011**



# **FREEDOM OF SPEECH**

## **Preamble**

Freedom of speech is of paramount importance to the democratic functioning of public post-secondary educational institutions. In Canada, the freedom of conscience and religion, thought, belief, opinion and expression is a Constitutional right. This valuable principle has been misused by individuals and organizations that seek to promote hate on university and college campuses across Ontario.

According to Section 319(2) of the Criminal Code of Canada, freedom of speech does not include hate speech. The Code states that "Every one who, by communicating statements in any public place, incites hatred against any identifiable group where such incitement is likely to lead to a breach of the peace is guilty of a) an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years; or b) an offence punishable on summary conviction." The Supreme Court's decision on R vs. Keegstra [1990] references Section 319 (2) of the Criminal Code, noting that "hate propaganda contributes little to the aspirations of Canadians or Canada in either the quest for truth, the promotion of individual self-development or the protection and fostering of a vibrant democracy where the participation of all individuals is accepted and encouraged."

Beyond these provisions within the Criminal Code, opposition to hate speech exists within a number of bylaws, human rights acts and codes throughout the country.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- The constitutional right to the freedom of conscience and religion; freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication; freedom of peaceful assembly; and freedom of association; and
- Retaining and strengthening hate speech and discrimination prohibitions in the criminal code and the human rights code.

The Federation opposes:

- The incitement of hatred and discrimination against any marginalized group based on, but not limited to their colour, race, religion, ethnic origin, ability, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual choice or other grounds covered by the Ontario Human Rights Code.

**ADOPTED: AGM 2008**



# **FRENCH LANGUAGE UNIVERSITY IN ONTARIO**

## **Preamble**

The Federation recognizes the rights of Francophones and Francophiles in Ontario to attend post-secondary education in the official language of their choice.

The Federation recognizes that although bilingual post-secondary institutions play an important role in Ontario, the use of English still dominates these academic settings due to of government underfunding. Because of these financial shortfalls, bilingual institutions are unable to and do not prioritize ensuring that students are able to complete their entire degree in French. This means that students who wish to pursue post-secondary education in French are unable to do so in Ontario.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- Increased funding to Francophone and bilingual post-secondary education institutions, so that all students who wish to pursue French post-secondary education may do so;
- The creation of a stand-alone French language university in Ontario that responds to the needs of Francophone and Francophile communities in Ontario, that serves students from diverse backgrounds and regions, that delivers a wide range of programs identified as necessary by Francophone and Francophile communities in Ontario, and that affirms the vitality of the French language and francophone identities and cultures in Ontario; and
- That this university be governed by the Francophone and Francophile communities in Ontario, including significant and meaningful student and faculty representation.

The Federation opposes:

- Decreases in government funding from bilingual institutions in Ontario; and
- The withdrawing of government funding and program cuts from current bilingual institutions in Ontario.

**ADOPTED: AGM 2014**



## **FUNDING**

The Federation demands the Ontario government publicly reject any federal policy implementing further cutbacks in fiscal transfer payments.

The Federation opposes post-secondary education funding based on any assessment of the qualitative merit of individual post-secondary institutions.

The Federation opposes the rationalization proposals of post-secondary institutions put forward by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities as a solution for the funding crisis.

The Federation condemns any diversion of federal transfer payments away from education, health care and other social programs by the Ontario Government.

The Federation supports the equal distribution of basic operating funding for the Ontario post-secondary education system.

The Federation supports the increase of corridor levels to address the inordinate number of unfunded students in Ontario.

The Federation supports the equalization of Basic Income Unit ratings between programs and the equitable distribution of government funded external grants across disciplines

The Federation supports the allocation of any new resources to the current funding envelope to correct existing grant inequities.

The Federation believes that the funding formula for post-secondary institutions should account for the provinces transitional student population.

The Federation believes that students should play a direct role in the provincial funding formula review process.

**ADOPTED: AGM 1976**

**AMENDED: SAGM 1978, SAGM 1981, SAGM 1988, SAGM 1993, AGM 1993, SAGM 1994, SAGM 1998, AGM 2000**





# GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

## Preamble

Youth and students are traditionally under-represented in municipal, provincial and federal elections and referenda. This lack of participation gives cause for many politicians, government officials and other decision-makers to ignore students and youth as an important constituency because they do not fear their impact at the ballot box.

However, the lack of student and youth participation in elections and referenda is not reflective of political apathy or disengagement, as evidenced by the high level of youth and student involvement in volunteerism, community service and campaigns or initiatives to promote environmentalism, equity, social justice, human rights and many other public causes.

Elections campaigns are important opportunities to raise public awareness about issues important to youth and students, capture the attention of the media, and to galvanize public support for such issues. Public concern and attention to social issues during an election can pressure candidates to change or affirm their commitments to addressing issues of public policy.

Increased participation of youth and students in elections and referenda will result in more political leverage for students on many important issues.

Post-secondary students and youth are often a highly transient population that face many barriers to voting in municipal, provincial and federal elections and referenda, including the lack of standard forms of identification and proof of residence.

Establishing voting habits in youth and students is an important aspect of developing a civic culture of voting that will extend throughout a lifetime.

Increasing student and youth voter turn-out in municipal, provincial and federal elections and referenda should be a public priority and all levels of government need to work to reduce the barriers between students and the ballot box.

## Policy

### Timing

The Federation supports:

- Fixed election dates for all municipal, provincial and federal elections; and
- The calling of elections when the majority of students are attending classes on campus.

The Federation opposes:

- The calling of elections when the majority of students are not attending classes on campus.

### Eligibility and Enumeration

The Federation supports:

- The use of the term “ordinary residence” for the purpose of determining a voter’s electoral district;
- The right of dependent students to declare the electoral district of either their in-study residence or their family residence to be their ordinary residence for the purposes of enumeration and voting;
- The acceptance of post-secondary student identification cards as proof of identification for the purpose of enumeration and voting;
- The acceptance of post-secondary institutional documentation, official correspondence from post-secondary institutional administrations, residence agreements and ministerial documentation, such as financial aid documents, as proof of residence for the purpose of enumeration and voting;
- The establishment of enumeration stations on university, college and institute campuses with a focus on creating as many opportunities for students to vote as possible, which may include a

## **Issues Policy – Government Elections**

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minimum of one; and

- The right of non-partisan organizations, like the Canadian Federation of Students, to register voters prior to commencement of the election period and during non-event times.

The Federation opposes:

- The use of the term “permanent residence” for the purpose of determining a voter’s electoral district; and
- Any government legislation that restricts or limits a student’s right or ability to vote, excluding age and citizenship requirements.

### **Voting and Polling Stations**

The Federation supports:

- Polling stations established at all university, college and institute campuses, even where no residence is available;
- A minimum of two weeks of advance polling, with a minimum of one day of advance polling to be held on every university, college and institute campus;
- The granting of academic amnesty for all post-secondary students for the purpose of voting on the official election date;
- Polling hours that are accessible;
- Campus polling stations that allow for simultaneous voter registration and voting;
- Campus polling stations that allow for special ballot voting, wherein voters are able to register and vote in any electoral district; and
- The placement of polling stations in on-campus locations that are determined in consultation with campus students’ union representatives.

The Federation opposes:

- The use of minimum pre-election voter registration rates as a pre-condition for establishing on-campus polling stations.

### **Student and Youth Voter Outreach Strategies**

The Federation supports government-sponsored student and youth voter outreach strategies that:

- Encourage student and youth participation in the electoral process;
- Provide clear and consistent information to potential voters about their rights and the voting process;
- Support active discussion between the students’ union and the returning officers for their district.
- Are developed in consultation with the Federation and campus students’ unions; and
- Post-election impact studies to evaluate government-sponsored student and youth voter outreach strategies.

### **Third-Party Campaigning**

The Federation supports:

- The right of non-partisan organizations to inform potential voters about relevant issues at stake in an election or referendum;
- The right of membership-driven organizations, like students’ unions, to engage in campaign strategies throughout the electoral period and on voting days, that include, but are not limited to:

- Presentations and classroom speaks;
  - All-candidates' fora;
  - Postering;
  - Leaflet mailouts and distribution;
  - Residence literature drops and visits; and
  - Television, radio, print and online advertising;
- The consideration of all non-partisan campaign material, including issues-based material, as “public service announcements” for the purpose of regulation and financing; and
  - Reduced advertising rates, in all forms of media, for public service announcements.

The Federation opposes:

- The classification of any campaign material as “partisan” where it does not explicitly endorse a political party, candidate or referendum position; and
- Censorship of information and outreach campaign materials, especially by public services and corporations such as transit agencies.

**Tracking and Participation Rates:**

The Federation supports:

- Collection of voter participation and anonymous demographic data, including data on the participation from groups covered under protected grounds;
- The collection of such data on a poll by poll basis;
- Trend analysis of voter participation; and
- The public release of all voter participation and tracking data.

The Federation opposes:

- Any data collection that is non-anonymous or would otherwise compromise the secret ballot process.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 2008**



# **GRADUATE STUDENTS' ISSUES**

## **1. General Issues**

The Federation supports the right of students to have gender-neutral degree terminology on degrees, diplomas, class lists and all official communications.

## **2. Graduate Student Association Autonomy**

The Federation supports the right of graduate students to form a graduate students' association, independent of undergraduate student associations at each university.

## **3. Graduate Student Employment Restrictions**

The Federation opposes any administrative restrictions on the number of hours graduate students are allowed to work per week - on or off campus - in order to maintain program status or eligibility for research funding, financial support and scholarships.

## **4. Graduate Student Funding**

The Federation demands that each university fully fund full-time graduate students for the duration of their program. Funding must be provided for at least two years for Masters students and six years for Doctoral students.

The Federation supports increases in graduate funding packages indexed to the consumer price index and equal to tuition fee increases.

The Federation opposes reductions in graduate student funding as a means to offset teaching and research assistant wage increases.

## **5. Graduate Student Representation**

The Federation demands that each university allocate at least one voting seat per graduate students' association for each university governing council. Furthermore, this seat shall be appointed by, and be responsible to the graduate students' association.

## **6. Graduate Student-Supervisor Relationships**

### **Preamble**

Graduate students are often dependent upon faculty member(s) for academic supervision and financial support during their period of study. This relationship can leave students extremely vulnerable academically and financially in the event that a conflict arises between a graduate student and their supervisor. The influence that an improperly guided supervisor-student relationship can have over the career and study of a graduate student can include isolation from the academic community, blocking from advancement of the student, and unchecked environments that can include bullying and harassment. Furthermore, graduate student research and scholarship can be jeopardized should a student's supervisor leave their institution of study.

### **Policy**

The Federation supports the development of clear university policies and procedures governing graduate student supervision that:

- Are developed in consultation with campus students' associations representing graduate students and faculty associations;
- Establish clear expectations for both the supervisor and the graduate student;
- Include mechanisms to evaluate thesis supervisors;

- Provide procedures for mediating disputes between graduate students and their supervisors;
- Protect the academic and financial interests of graduate students;
- Protect the academic freedom and intellectual property rights of graduate students;
- Commit the university to provide graduate students with alternate but equal funding when a faculty member(s), upon whom the graduate student is financially reliant, leaves the institution or, without demonstrating just cause, ceases to honour their financial obligation to the student; and
- Respect collective agreements.

## **7. Part-Time Graduate Studies**

The Federation supports the existence of part-time graduate programs.

The Federation supports access to funding for part-time graduate students including, but not limited to, student loans, scholarships, and bursaries.

## **8. Summer-Session Graduate Studies**

The Federation demands that graduate students pay only nominal fees in the summer term if a department does not provide courses a student requires or ensures that the student’s supervisor is available throughout the summer term.

## **9. Teaching Assistant Issues**

The Federation supports the practice of having all teaching assistants and markers compensated for all hours worked at a fair rate of pay that should be reflected in the prevailing rate of such work at that institution.

The Federation supports the efforts of research and teaching assistants to organize into unions.

The Federation demands that no teaching assistant/research assistant be required to work more than an average of ten hours per week per contract to a maximum of 140 hours per term.

## **10. Graduate Student Unions’ Right to Advocate**

### **Preamble**

Some university administrations have rejected the right of graduate students’ unions to advocate on behalf of students and consider graduate students’ unions as extensions of university administrations.

### **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- The right of graduate students’ unions to autonomously and independently advocate on behalf of students.

## **11. External Scholarships**

### **Preamble**

External scholarships are financial support that graduate students are awarded through public granting councils such as the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Canadian Institutes for Health Research and the

Ontario Graduate Scholarships program.

Many students rely on external scholarships to meet basic living necessities, pay tuition fees, support living costs associated with conducting research, and enhance themselves through professional development. These scholarships can be a necessary support to students in advancing through their programs.

Most student funding packages offered by graduate faculties in Ontario universities do not cover education and living costs throughout the academic year.

University administrations sometimes treat external scholarships as funding to be disbursed at their discretion or on conditions that increase financial hardship among students.

In many cases university administrations use external graduate student scholarships to meet their own funding guarantees, or place conditions such as having all account balances paid before dispersing scholarship funding.

This can mean that students lose access to financial resources at a point when they need it the most.

### **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- The right of students to gain access to external scholarships without displacing basic funding guarantees offered by the university; and
- The principle that external scholarship funding is independent from university funding guarantees and should not be used as a means for meeting university funding obligations.

The Federation opposes:

- Conditions for receipt of scholarships, such as having all account balances paid before scholarships are distributed to the student by university administration.

## **12. Health and Safety**

The Federation acknowledges that it is the responsibility of the institution to provide adequate supervision, information and instruction on how graduate students can protect their health and safety while working in all spaces on- and off-campus as required by their research and/or for completion of their degree program.

The Federation supports the right of graduate students to conduct their studies in an environment that is free from violence, bullying and harassment.

The Federation supports the right of graduate students to refuse unsafe working conditions. Graduate students should not be penalized, disciplined or otherwise threatened in any way for exercising this right.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 1982**

**AMENDED: AGM 1986, AGM 1991, AGM 1995, AGM 1996, SAGM 2004, SAGM 2009, AGM 2013**





## **HEALTH ISSUES**

The Federation supports the inclusion of students in medicine, nursing or dentistry under the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) definition of an “AT RISK GROUP” that parallels that of their respective professional practitioners.

The Federation supports students, staff and faculty with AIDS or who are HIV positive who choose to remain in an academic setting. The Federation urges university and college administrations to establish comprehensive AIDS policies that recognize and addresses the discrimination that these people face.

The Federation supports the right of all students to work, study and recreational spaces in an environment free from violence, bullying and harassment.

The Federation supports the creation and maintenance of safe campuses. The Federation urges university and college administration to respect their responsibility to provide safe work, study and recreational spaces to all students using labs, offices, classrooms, libraries and all shared spaces provided by the institution.

The Federation supports free and fully accessible mental health services on campuses. The Federation urges university and college administration to develop and implement policy that protects students from academic and non-academic persecution as a result of mental health issues.

The Federation supports the creation and maintenance of degree granting midwifery programs in Ontario universities. The Federation supports the autonomy of midwifery programs and professions.

The Federation supports and encourages any endeavours by member associations to promote safer sex on campuses, healthy sexuality as well as to support informed sexual and reproductive health choices.

The Federation opposes the discrimination of systemically oppressed peoples in all forms of medical research.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 1989**

**AMENDED: AGM 1992, SAGM 1993, AGM 1996, SAGM 1998, AGM 1998, AGM 2013**



# **HONORARY DEGREES**

## **Preamble**

Honorary degrees recognize the outstanding achievements of individuals through their service to the community or academic leadership. As models to the university community, honorary degree recipients are chosen to inspire graduates to excel in their chosen careers, professional pursuits, and personal lives. It is important, however, that standards of excellence be demonstrated not only in the area of recognition, but also in their professional associations and values.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- The selection of honorary degree recipients who have contributed significantly to their respective academic or local communities and warrant such recognition;
- The recognition of individuals who hold progressive values and who do not discriminate against marginalized people based on but not limited to their age, race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, religion, country of origin, ethnicity and/or family status; and
- Honorary degree selection processes that incorporate a broad range of student and community input.

The Federation opposes:

- The awarding of honorary degrees to individuals who through their actions undermine university human rights, non-discrimination and safe space policies;
- The conferring of honorary degrees as a fundraising or lobbying mechanism; and
- Selection processes that lack transparency, consultation and opportunities to reverse poorly informed selections.

**ADOPTED: AGM 2006**



## HOUSING

The Federation supports:

- Publicly funded, owned and operated campus student residences;
- Residence contracts that adhere to the provisions of the Tenant Protection Act;
- The right of students living in campus residences to be represented by independent student-run residence councils that coordinate activities, administer services and represent the interests of campus student residents;
- Efforts to inform students of their legal rights as tenants;
- Student participation in tenants' and/or residents' groups at the municipal and provincial level;
- Rent controls determined democratically through public agencies and not by the private sector;
- Government policies restricting rent increases, specifically those increases implemented when there is a change in tenants and when improvements are made to rented residences;
- Allowing the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to finance student residential projects and encouraging mortgage assistance for co-operative housing through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation; and
- The provision of high-quality, affordable and accessible student housing, including, but not limited to:
  - Guaranteed availability of campus student residence spaces for all incoming students;
  - Guaranteed eligibility of all part-time and mature students for campus student residence spaces;
  - Fair and equitable allocation of campus student residence spaces to all students;
  - Full accessibility and inclusivity of campus student residence facilities for students with disabilities;
  - Guaranteed availability of campus student housing to all international students;
  - Consultation with autonomous elected student representatives during all phases of development of student residences;
  - Gender neutral, private, single stall, washrooms/change rooms/showers in campus student residences to address the issues of harassment and discrimination that students may face; and
  - Housing accommodation for students with religious needs.

The Federation opposes:

- Any and all forms of privatizing campus student residences including, but not limited to:
  - Contracting private firms to administer campus student residences;
  - Public-private partnership funding arrangements as a substitute for the full public funding of campus student residences;
  - Contracting out campus student residence accommodations to private hotels and other commercial facilities; and
  
- Charging student residents for campus accommodations above and beyond the actual cost of such accommodations; and

## **Issues Policy – Housing**

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- Preferential treatment for designated housing based on program of study.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 1973**

**AMENDED: AGM 1974, AGM 1986, SAGM 1987, SAGM 1991, AGM 2000, SAGM 2004, AGM 2008**

# INCOME INEQUALITY

## Preamble

Since the 1970's, the gap between the highest and lowest income earners has widened dramatically. The end of the post-war period of economic investment and growth followed by the financialization of the economy brought about tremendous changes in the distribution of wealth and resources, with the highest earners owning an enormously greater share of net wealth than those in the middle- and lower-income brackets.

While the incomes of the wealthiest in North America have risen for the last forty years, the real average incomes of the majority have stagnated or fallen. In Ontario alone, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives has reported that distribution in shares of income has remained stagnant since 1998, despite a rapid growth in the number of jobs. As of 2011, the richest 20 per cent of Ontarians enjoy 44.3 per cent of after-tax incomes while the poorest 20 per cent own just 4.7 per cent of that wealth.

Recently, studies by sociologists, economists and epidemiologists have shown that income inequality is either directly or indirectly linked to many of the social inequities that manifest in our contemporary lived experiences: issues of crime, productivity, economic growth, mental and physical health have all been linked to an unequal distribution of economic resources. The problems of inequality are further exacerbated for marginalized communities that already face significant economic, social, and political barriers.

Even the International Monetary Fund released a report that linked income inequality to shorter and more unsustainable periods of economic growth.

Status and non-status First Nations, Inuit and Métis people are particularly vulnerable to the widening gap between the highest and lowest income-earners. As the fastest-growing population in Canada, poverty continues to be widespread and will continue to grow until the proper funds are allocated to provide post-secondary education. Often after post-secondary education, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people continue to live near to their institutions, becoming part of the tax base. An educated First Nations population can generate revenue in excess of \$400 million in taxes alone.

In light of these new insights, governments and societies must strive to close the massive gap between the highest earners and the remaining population. Ethically and economically, there must be a commitment from all parties and political institutions to minimize the income gap and to ensure the fair distribution of our collective economic resources.

## Policy

The Federation supports:

- A system of progressive taxation that ensures all members of society pay their fair share towards high quality, affordable public services and industries;
- Efforts to close loopholes in the income tax system that enable wealthy individuals and corporations to place money in overseas bank accounts to avoid paying taxes;
- The institution of a financial transaction tax – also known as the Tobin or Robin Hood Tax – that takes 0.05 per cent of speculative financial transactions to pay for efforts to fight climate change, fund public services and end global poverty;
- Caps on the incomes and bonuses of CEO's and other corporate incomes;
- The creation of a new tax bracket for individuals making \$500,000 per year or above; and
- International efforts to clamp down on corporate tax evaders.

The Federation opposes:

- Tax preferences that almost exclusively benefit the wealthiest citizens – such as the capital gains

## **Issues Policy – Income Inequality**

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policy that sees only 50 per cent of such assets taxed;

- Tax loopholes that allow businesses and wealthy individuals to unilaterally deduct lavish “business” expenses from their tax returns – such as first-class flights, stays in five star hotels, or dinner at expensive gourmet restaurants;
- The institution of “flat taxes” to supplement the loss of corporate tax revenue; and
- Efforts to reduce corporate rates of taxation.

**ADOPTED: AGM 1986**

**AMENDED: SAGM 1989, AGM 1991, SAGM 1992, SAGM 1995, AGM 1996, SAGM 1995, AGM 1996, AGM 2011**



# **INTERNATIONAL ISSUES**

## **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- Any efforts that help traditionally marginalized international students to obtain post-secondary education in Canada;
- Solidarity with all oppressed people;
- All efforts for a full democracy and equality of all people;
- All people in their struggle for democracy and a free and just society;
- A commitment to internationalism and the active forging of relationships with student organizations in other countries;
- Any just and non-violent act of demonstration and protest; and
- Fair and just elections.

The Federation opposes:

- All forms of apartheid;
- Any actions of torture and any attempt to infringe on human rights;
- All actions of violence against civilians by government forces and private agencies;
- Any acts of forced displacement; and
- Conditional loans by agencies such as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank whereby the state's social and economic development is impeded.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 1989**

**AMENDED: AGM 1991, SAGM 1992, SAGM 1995, AGM 1996, SAGM 1995, AGM 1996, SAGM 2012**



# **INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' ISSUES**

## **Preamble**

The participation of international students in Ontario colleges and universities:

- Fosters the international exchange and development of knowledge;
- Promotes cultural diversity and understanding within Ontario's colleges and universities, and the communities in which they are located;
- Enriches the educational experience of international students and of Canadian students and academic staff; and
- Facilitates international cooperation and development.

Federal and provincial governments, granting councils, universities and colleges, employers participating in co-operative educational programs, police authorities, and other organizations or persons involved in the education of international students should not discriminate against international students on any grounds including race, creed, colour, ancestry, citizenship, ethnic or national origin, political or religious affiliation, belief or practice, sex, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, family relationship and responsibility, personal or social lifestyle or behaviour, or age. Colleges and universities in particular should not discriminate in the admission of, or the provision of services to, international students.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports the:

- Rights of international students, as laid out in the national policy of the Canadian Federation of Students;
- Establishment and continuance of campus international student clubs, societies and organizations;
- Establishment and continuance of campus international student services and centres; and
- The entrenchment of international student representation within local students' unions.

The Federation opposes:

- Any and all differential tuition, ancillary or administrative fees for international students;
- Quotas placed on international student enrolment;
- Provincial health care charges for international students;
- The use of 900 series Social Insurance Numbers and other mechanisms that identify workers based on their citizenship status;
- The expulsion of international students from Canada because of unexpected financial difficulties or unanticipated cost increases;
- Discrimination against international students by federal and provincial governments, colleges, universities, granting councils, employers participating in co-operative education programs, police authorities, and other organizations or persons involved in the education of international students;
- The use of xenophobic initiatives and policies that discriminate against international students; and
- The restriction or removal of financial support and funding opportunities for international students based on their status as non-citizens.

The Federation supports the establishment of public policy that ensures that:

- There are no differential fees applied to international students;
- The Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada engage in formal co-operation to establish and implement policy and programs for international students at all post-secondary institutions;

## **Issues Policy – International Students' Issues**

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- International students are eligible for access to sufficient student financial assistance and special emergency funds in order to ensure they are able to access and maintain studies at Canadian colleges and universities irrespective of their family income background;
- International student access to colleges and universities in Canada is based on the merit of candidates, where the criteria, and judgment, of merit are be determined by students and academic staff;
- The governments of Ontario and Canada provide appropriate financial assistance to ensure that students admitted to public colleges and universities in Ontario from the forty poorest countries in the world (as determined by the United Nations) are not denied access to a college or university in Ontario for financial reasons;
- International students are free to work in Ontario during the period of their studies, on the same basis as domestic students;
- Restrictions of the federal granting councils on the employment of international graduate students are abolished;
- International students are able to obtain visas, at the time of their enrolment, lasting for the duration of their studies in Canada; and
- International students receive coverage under the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) that is equivalent to that for domestic students.

The Federation supports the establishment of institutional policies that ensure that:

- There are no differential fees applied to international students;
- International student access to colleges and universities in Canada should be based on the merit of candidates, where the criteria, and judgment, of merit are be determined by students and academic staff;
- The purposes of recruiting international students are those outlined in the Preamble, not financial gain;
- The employment of specialized, trained staff and the provision of support services, commensurate with the number and diversity of students recruited, to meet the special needs of international students, and to comply with the legal duty to provide services free from discrimination;
- Academic staff are provided with resources and professional development opportunities to facilitate teaching, supervision, evaluation methods, etc. that accommodate the special needs of international students; and
- All reasonable assistance is provided to international students in their interactions with municipal, police, immigration, and other authorities and take all reasonable measures to ensure that such authorities do not discriminate against international students.

**ADOPTED: AGM 1973**

**AMENDED: SAGM 1987, AGM 1987, SAGM 1990, SAGM 1991, AGM 1991, SAGM 2006**

# INTER-PROVINCIAL TRADE AGREEMENTS

## Preamble

Inter-provincial trade agreements, such as the Trade and Investment Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA), threaten the ability of provinces and its public agents (e.g. municipalities) to maintain or create policies in the public interest relating to trade, investment and labour standards. TILMA was signed by British Columbia and Alberta on April 28, 2006 to create a “free trade” like agreement between the provinces. TILMA seeks to enhance corporate rights in such sectors as energy, transportation, agriculture and investment. Much like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), TILMA does not allow regulations to restrict trade, investment or labour mobility between the two provinces, nor allow preferential treatment for a province’s residents, goods or investments. This may have the effect of a ‘race to the bottom’ placing a downward pressure on standards as provinces compete with each other to attract investment at the expense of protecting the public interest.

Corporations often view provincial regulations as “barriers” rather than necessary protections that are needed to ensure social, environmental, economic and labour standards. TILMA enhances the rights of corporations to sue provincial or municipal governments over public-interest regulations that they believe infringe upon corporate trade or investment interests. Disputes are adjudicated by a NAFTA style panel that has the power to penalize and issue fines as high as \$5 million should a regulation be interpreted as a barrier to trade or investment. The panel is unelected and its mandate is to determine the extent to which a regulation violates TILMA provisions.

There is a risk that TILMA will be expanded to other provinces. In Ontario there has been discussion and some support for TILMA with the leaders of two of the three major political parties exploring the possibility of an inter-provincial agreement.

## Policy

The Federation supports:

- Provincial regulations that establish and protect social, environmental, economic or labour standards.

The Federation opposes:

- Any agreement that prevents or limits the ability of the Ontario government, municipalities or Indigenous communities to establish or protect regulations or policies that serve the public interest over private and corporate interests;
- Any agreement that enhances the power of for-profit corporations to challenge social, environmental, economic or labour regulations;
- Any negotiations involving the province of Ontario that will give for-profit corporations the power to sue governments or public entities for policies that protect the public interest; and
- Any inter-provincial negotiations that undermine social, environmental, economic or labour regulations and standards.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 2008**



# **LABOUR, WORKING CONDITIONS**

The Federation opposes any differential in minimum wage based on any criteria.

The Federation encourages the improvement in workplace standards.

The Federation supports the principles of workplace democracy and opposes any further attacks.

## **Unionization and Student Employees**

### **Preamble**

Unionization and collective bargaining of workers is a fundamental right. The Supreme Court of Canada has upheld this interpretation, ruling that collective bargaining is protected for all workers in Canada under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Unionization of workers is the best mechanism to ensure dignity, safety, equity, fairness and the self-determination of workers.

Students are directly affected by the right to unionize. Growing numbers of students work while in and out of study, on and off campus. Students are typically transient workers, working temporary or part-time jobs with little job protection. As on-campus employees, students make significant contributions to their institutions and deserve proper remuneration and employment standards.

### **Policy**

The Federation Supports:

- Unionization and collective bargaining as fundamental rights of all workers, full-time or part-time; and
- Employee unions at post-secondary institutions as important partners and allies in the fight for an accessible, high quality, public post-secondary education system.

The Federation Opposes:

- Denial of the right to unionize on the basis that campus employment is related to training or student assistance;
- The implementation of technological replacements for labour (i.e. automatic plagiarism detection and grading software such as turnitin.com);
- Unsafe working conditions, harassment and discrimination at the workplace;
- Employer intimidation or management interference in unionization drives; and
- The reliance on contract or non-unionized workers at post-secondary institutions.

**ADOPTED: AGM 1975**

**AMENDED: AGM 1997, AGM 2007**





# **MANDATORY LEVIES FOR STUDENT FINANCIAL AID AND CORE STUDENT SERVICES**

## **Preamble**

Drastic cuts to post-secondary institution operating budgets since the early 1990s have resulted in sharp tuition fee increases. These tuition fee increases have not improved college and university operating revenue because government cuts have been more excessive, leaving a steep financial shortfall. As a result, there has been a dramatic shift in the proportion of college and university operating budgets that is financed by students through tuition fees. In order to make such increases palatable to the public, the Government of Ontario mandated a 30 per cent set-aside on all tuition fee increases, to be allocated to student financial assistance. This has meant that not only are students increasingly funding their own education, but are also funding their own financial assistance.

Many college and university administrations have sought “creative” ways to circumvent government-imposed limitations on tuition fee increases (where such regulations exist) by increasing non-academic ancillary and administrative fees charged to students. In many cases, core student services formerly funded through tuition fees have been separated out of student services packages and charged to students through separate and distinct mandatory levies, some of which are set by referendum and some by institutional governance bodies. These services include, but are not limited to, library acquisitions, transcripts, computer and technology resources, and athletics facilities.

Still more “creative” college and university administrations have sought the support of campus students’ unions for such referenda, and in some cases, students themselves have even been encouraged to fund and administer core student services, such as student financial assistance, through independent student levies. Such efforts attempt to make students a party to the further privatization of their campuses.

Regardless of their altruistic intention of improving access and quality, mandatory student levies for financial aid programs and core student services increase the individual cost of post-secondary education. Such levies, especially when endorsed by students, provide a political alibi for a reduced public role in ensuring quality, accessibility and affordability in post-secondary education.

## **Policy**

The Federation opposes the establishment of mandatory levies for financial aid and core services including, but not limited to:

- Financial aid and scholarship endowment funds;
- Student loans programs;
- Library acquisitions;
- Computer and technology resources;
- Athletics facilities; and
- Construction and maintenance of buildings.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 2003**



# **MEDIA**

## **Preamble**

Independent student organizations on campus are vital to the creation of a vibrant community. Having a space where students can self-organize and create news is a necessary part of this community. The campus press allows for students to tell their own stories, challenge the decisions made by institutional decision-making structures, expose injustices on campus and inform the general student body about events organized on campus. The campus press can also empower students to become storytellers or journalists and tell stories about their own communities that may be left out of the mainstream press. Student publications should be autonomous and offer a student-centred perspective that tends to be absent from university or college publications produced by administration.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- Editorial autonomy of student publications;
- The fair remittance of student levies passed democratically that guarantee funding for student newspapers;
- The Canadian University Press and their Statement of Principle; and
- Recognized student-led campus publications attending and reporting on General Meetings of the Canadian Federation of Students, including both the Opening and Closing Plenary, and excluding committees, caucuses and constituency group meetings.

The Federation opposes:

- Campus journalism that contravenes the Ontario Human Rights Code and/or contravenes the civil liberties/human rights policy of the Federation;
- Publications that are established and controlled by the campus administrations as an affront to independent newspapers on campus;
- Interference in the collection or remittance of student levies for student media outlets by institutional administrations; and
- The obstruction on the autonomy and integrity of recognized student-led campus publications.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 1976**

**AMENDED: AGM 1986, SAGM 1987, AGM 1991, SAGM 1992, SAGM 1998, AGM 2010, AGM 2019**

# MENTAL HEALTH

## Preamble

Students adapting to a post-secondary institution need to adjust to significant changes, including but not limited to moving to a new area, separation from family and friends, establishing a new social network, managing a budget given the realities of high tuition fees, combining academic study with other commitments, coping with access in a new environment and, for international students, living in a new country and adjusting to a different culture. For students attending northern institutions, these challenges are intensified with regard to distance from family and friends, fewer options for intercity transit, and with regard to increased financial, employment, and housing pressures. Moreover, students for whom English or French is not their first language may have additional difficulty expressing mental health issues and engaging with mental health services on their campus. Lastly, students who are marginalized may experience minority stress and as a result face additional barriers. While these changes can be exciting and challenging and are intrinsic parts of the attraction of going to university or college, they can also give rise to anxiety and stress.

Students may face challenges, experience stress and/or a personal crisis, which without appropriate supports inhibit their ability to participate fully in higher education. These difficulties may be long-term or temporary but nonetheless debilitating for students' mental health. In addition, some students may arrive at university or college with a pre-existing psychological condition, either declared or undeclared.

Mental health issues can seriously impair academic performance and overall well-being. Minor difficulties that interfere with a student's capacity to work may also result in distress, undermine academic progress and compromise academic success. Post-secondary institutions have a responsibility to provide adequate services and support, and to raise awareness to promote the mental wellness of students, staff, faculty and other members of their community.

## Policy

The Federation supports mental health strategies that:

- Utilize on-campus committees mandated to investigate mental health services and ensure delivery of quality service. These committees should be comprised of representatives of the institution, students' union representatives, student group representatives, faculty associations and staff unions;
- Recognize and address the diversity of experiences faced by students in post-secondary institutions;
- Prioritize the representation of individuals with lived experience of mental health barriers who may be able to significantly contribute to the discussion to improve mental health services on campus;
- Recognize the impact of racism, xenophobia, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, colonialism and other forms of oppression on the mental health of members of marginalized communities;
- Recognize the unique needs of mature and part-time, graduate, and distance education students as well as students operating outside of a first-language context;
- Recognize the unique needs of northern students;
- Recognize the need for both fall and winter breaks to allow students time to travel to access and draw on personal means of support;
- Address the impacts of high tuition fees, underemployment, unemployment and precarious employment on students' mental health;

## **Issues Policy – Mental Health**

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- Adequately fund and provide resources for campus mental health and counselling services, including crisis and trauma centers;
- Work to destigmatize mental health issues within the student population and to promote safe spaces to address these issues;
- Respect the confidentiality of personal information provided by students and service-users;
- Are jointly funded and administered by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, and/or individual institutions; and
- Acknowledge and respect traditional ways of spiritual healing.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 2015**

**AMENDED: AGM 2015**



# **MILITARY CO-OP PROGRAMS**

## **Preamble**

High school co-op programs offer students an opportunity to gain experience in a chosen field of work through job placement for course credit. These programs provide a diverse and hands-on way for students to be engaged, learn skills outside a classroom setting and gain work experience.

District school boards have the power to decide which co-op programs are appropriate for students and approves those that they deem fit. This means that the district school boards have the ability to allow or deny the military co-op programs.

Unlike other programs, military co-op programs offer payment to students as incentive to participate. The programs also target high school students who are marginalized, many of whom are from racialized or First Nations, Métis Inuit backgrounds. These co-op programs give the military an opportunity to target and recruit high school students.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- High school co-op programs designed to promote advocacy and awareness through social justice work and involvement;
- Implementation of co-op programs that ensure a safe space for high school students to realize their talents and potential; and
- Co-op programs that protect high school students from discrimination, harassment and stereotyping.

The Federation opposes:

- The presence of all military co-op programs in high-schools. This includes:
  - Co-op programs that are used to recruit students to the military;
  - Co-op programs that are designed for military training purposes;
  - The presence of military recruiters in high-schools;
  - Tactics by military recruiters to offer financial means to entice student participation; and
  - The targeting of marginalized students by military recruiters.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 2009**





# NON-ACADEMIC CODES OF CONDUCT

## Preamble

Non-academic codes of conduct generally exist at universities and colleges across Canada as a means of penalizing students who are viewed by the administration to have acted in a way that is deemed destructive to the interests of the institution. These codes are often written with minimal or no student input and are adjudicated by bodies that are not administered by the students' union, or are otherwise accountable to students.

In many instances, non-academic codes of conduct are used to punish students for activities that are unrelated to their studies or their campus and may range from comments posted on internet social networking websites to political activities and demonstrations. As such, the application of such codes can be arbitrary, invasive, biased and discriminatory.

Such codes seek to expand the institution's influence in the personal lives of students even while off campus and threaten to limit or impede the free expression of students and their political activities. In addition, these codes treat students in a manner that is separate and distinct from other members of the post-secondary community, namely professors, administrators and other staff of the institution.

Increasingly, college and university administrations have used the non-academic codes of conduct to penalize students who engage in political activities, especially when those political beliefs are not ones shared by the administration of the day. These codes threaten the democratic rights of students to actively participate and engage in issues that they so wish to support.

## Policy

The Federation opposes any college or university non-academic conduct policy that:

- Seeks to regulate or penalize the off-campus conduct of students;
- Seeks to regulate or penalize any conduct that is not relevant to or directly related to the student's role and responsibilities at the institution;
- Sanctions or threatens sanctions that negatively impact a student's academic standing;
- Applies different standards to students than those applied to administrators, professors or other employees of the institution;
- Is not developed, implemented, and adjudicated by a body comprised, in the majority, by students' union representatives;
- Does not provide the basic principles of natural justice including, but not limited to, the following rights: notice of the allegations, due process, a hearing to be held within a reasonable time frame, the ability to investigate the evidence, the opportunity to prepare for and present a defence, the presentation of witnesses and access to an impartial appeals process;
- Places the burden of proof on the accused and not the accuser;
- Is applied to any students' union, group or campus organization, or the registered leadership thereof;
- Treats students acting individually, or as a representative of a students' union, club or campus organization, who does not hold office or employ with the institution, as "Representatives" of a university or college for the purpose of punishment;
- Seeks to penalize students for any incident for which the Criminal Code of Canada, or any other ordinance or statute has been enacted;
- Seeks to compel students to report misconduct when it has happened or remove themselves from situations in which misconduct is occurring;
- Is applied to online social, or other, networks sites, such as Facebook, MySpace, Yahoo, AOL, MSN and Google;

## **Issues Policy – Non-Academic Codes of Conduct**

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- Limits, blocks, or hinders a students' right to free expression, political activity, assembly, or any other right under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms;
- Does not provide students with appropriate legal council at no cost to the student;
- Penalizes students for political activity, including potentially disruptive behaviour; and
- Is applied in an arbitrary, invasive, biased, or discriminatory way.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 2008**

# **NORTHERN STUDENTS' ISSUES**

## **Preamble**

For a variety of reasons, northern colleges and universities require additional supports, over and above those offered to other institutions, in order to provide high quality post-secondary education. There are a variety of government funding programs that continue to predicate the receipt of public dollars upon the successful leveraging of private resources to co-finance the research and teaching activities of Ontario's colleges and universities. Such programs have impacted initiatives ranging from student financial aid to research and capital projects. These programs continue to disadvantage northern institutions that do not often have the endowments, program mix or access to financial centres that are required to maximize matched-funding models.

In addition, students and families who reside in northern and rural regions of Ontario also face barriers that are distinct from those faced by students in the southern part of the province and large municipalities. Compared to the rest of the province, Northern Ontario is home to a significant number of Indigenous and francophone communities that face particular educational barriers. In general, students who study in the north have to contend with higher prices for commodities, longer commuting distances, lower vacancy rates, fewer employment opportunities and lower than average wages. As a result, people who are from northern communities are more likely to live in poverty and less likely to have access to college or university education. Furthermore, many students attending northern post-secondary institutions face increased pressures on their mental health with regard to ability to access personal means of support. It is within this context that the impact of the province's current policy of high fees and high debt must be considered.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- Increased funding for Ontario Distance Grants;
- Measures to be taken by the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) to take into account the extra expenses incurred by students who attend a post-secondary education institution in northern Ontario;
- An increase in funding to expand the number of upper-year French and Indigenous language courses offered;
- A specific grant for all Indigenous students who attend college or university;
- Funding to guarantee the availability of public student residence spaces beyond the first year;
- An increase in funding to expand graduate studies in Northern Ontario, with the emphasis on doctoral programs and graduate studies in French and Indigenous languages;
- A credit transfer system that mandates that credits earned in French and Indigenous programs be accepted for equivalent credits at English-language institutions;
- Full passenger rail and bus service in Northern Ontario;
- Investments in research and innovation that contribute to the sustainability of the Northern Ontario economy including the natural resource and mining sectors;
- The continued development of a wider variety of professional programs in Northern Ontario;
- Increased funding and support for Indigenous culture and language programs;
- The construction of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standard buildings, in an effort to reduce the environmental impact of capital projects in Northern Ontario; and
- Increased funding and support for mental health initiatives in Northern Ontario.

The Federation opposes:

- The migration of entire programs from northern institutions to satellite campuses located in

## **Issues Policy – Northern Students’ Issues**

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southern Ontario;

- The continued freeze of Northern and Extraordinary Grants;
- The use of satellite campuses as a mechanism strictly used to meet budgetary and/or enrolment projections;
- The phasing out of face-to-face instruction by other means; and
- Differentiation initiatives in northern post-secondary institutions.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 1988**

**AMENDED: SAGM 1991, SAGM 1993, AGM 1998, AGM 2010, AGM 2015**

# **OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION**

## **College and University Operations**

Universities and colleges that receive public funds either from the Government of Ontario or the Government of Canada through direct grants, student loans, scholarship programs, or other means of direct or indirect transfers have an obligation to use those funds in a responsible way. Universities and colleges must be accountable for their trusteeship of these public monies. Accountability demands openness and transparency. Universities and colleges must be open to public scrutiny, open in their accounts, open in their governance, policies and administration, open in their debates, and open in their decision-making processes. Openness and transparency must be the normal operating procedure for universities and colleges.

## **Decision-Making**

The decision-making structure and the financial operations of universities and colleges, as well as all of their governing boards, constituent bodies and committees, should be open and transparent. Meetings of such bodies may only be closed temporarily to deal with personnel or individual student issues, or the negotiation of contracts. Student representatives involved in closed meetings or closed portions of meetings have a responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of these deliberations. The results of such closed deliberations should normally be reported in a public session as soon as possible.

## **Research**

Openness and transparency is a fundamental principle of research at universities and colleges. This precludes contractual relationships with corporate or other research partnerships that seek to impose secrecy on the research funded through such relationships, except where contracts require a limited waiting time (no more than 60 days) prior to publication in order to secure patent protection. Research results must be open and publishable as quickly as possible. To ensure such openness and transparency all research contracts should be reviewed by an independent committee such as the university or college's Research Ethics Board.

Notwithstanding the above policy, all contracts, protocols and investigator agreements for sponsored research or clinical trials should expressly provide that the investigators shall not be prevented by the sponsor, or anyone, from informing research participants, co-investigators, research ethics boards, regulatory agencies, and the scientific community of risks to participants that the investigators identify during the research study or clinical trials or after the completion of the study or trials.

## **Contractual/Business Relationships**

The principle of openness and transparency must also apply to all contractual/business relationships that are entered into by the university or college. In cases where entering into the contractual relationship is likely to raise ethical concerns or controversy, details of the proposed contractual relationships should be made public prior to their finalization.

## **Students, Staff and Faculty Representation**

Students, staff and faculty elected to institutional decision-making bodies are expected to report to their constituents and should not be prevented from doing so by any rules of secrecy, not described in this policy, which may be enacted by the decision-making body.

## **Government**

The principle that openness and transparency is necessary for accountability also applies to government departments responsible for the direct or indirect funding of post-secondary education. These departments must also operate according to a policy of openness and transparency. This means that these departments should go beyond the minimum standard of openness and transparency set out in freedom of information legislation.

**Privacy Legislation**

Privacy legislation applies in whole or in part to post-secondary educational institutions. Governments, colleges and universities should not use either freedom of information or privacy legislation as a cloak of secrecy with which to shroud government and institutional policies. No restrictions should apply to legislation such that they impede on the ability of colleges, universities and government agencies to adhere to the fundamental principle of openness and transparency.

**Student and Personnel Files**

Information in individual student and personnel files must be labeled confidential and remain as such. Such confidential information should be available only on a 'need to know' basis. This means that such information should be available to all persons or committees charged with making personnel recommendations or decisions, and those making such recommendations or decisions should in turn be obligated to respect the confidentiality of individuals. All confidential information in turn is compellable should such recommendations or decisions become subject to disagreement and subsequently referred to a dispute resolution or a grievance/arbitration process.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 2006**

# **PART-TIME & MATURE STUDENTS' ISSUES**

## **Preamble**

Traditional part-time studies, taught by full-time tenured professors, exist to provide access to quality college or university education for students who cannot or prefer not to take a full course load. Being more flexible, part-time studies have allowed those with family and work obligations and those with special needs to engage in post-secondary education who may have otherwise not been able to do so. In particular, part-time studies have helped to enhance enrolment among women, mature students and students with disabilities. Taking a partial course load is also a lower cost option, which in the face of rising financial barriers associated with increasing tuition fees, has been an increasingly important factor in the growth of high school graduates choosing part-time studies at college or university.

At the same time, as the demand for part-time spaces has increased, the relative number of part-time students is decreasing. In the place of traditional part-time programs, there has been the emergence of cost-recovery programs in continuing education, distance education, and on-line learning. The growth of cost-recovery programs represent a privatization of education through enhanced user fees, reduction of labour standards and quality in post-secondary teaching by typically employing contract and lesser qualified faculty as opposed to full-time and/or tenured faculty.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports part-time studies that:

- Receive adequate public funding;
- Are integrated into Ontario's public system of post-secondary education;
- Are taught by full-time and/or tenured faculty;
- Are flexible and accommodating for all in their application process and delivery of education; and
- Fully meet the demand for part-time spaces without relying on programs delivered on a cost-recovery basis, distance education or online learning programs.

The Federation endorses the concept of quality continuing education.

The Federation encourages close relationships and regular contact with part-time and mature student organizations nationally, provincially and locally.

The Federation supports the election of part-time and mature students and non-degree students to governing bodies of their institutions.

The Federation opposes any action on the part of senates and/or boards of governors and/or governing council of institutions to eliminate existing part-time and mature student seats on those bodies. Furthermore, the Federation supports the creation of additional student seats on those bodies including seats specifically designated for part-time and mature students where such do not exist.

The Federation supports and encourages the formation of part-time and mature students associations where such does not exist or where the needs of part-time and mature students are not being met, and supports the concept of part-time and mature representative student unions.

The Federation supports the extension of all professional and graduate studies to part-time and mature students.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 1976**

**AMENDED: SAGM 1982, AGM 1987, AGM 1995, AGM 1998, AGM 2006**





# **PART-TIME, SESSIONAL AND CONTRACT ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT**

## **Preamble**

College and university administrations have reacted to funding cuts, underfunding, and enrolment increases by relying on contract faculty for teaching purposes. While post-secondary institutions do not widely publicize what proportion of their teaching staff are contract based, it is estimated that in Ontario, as much as 50 per cent of all teaching at many post-secondary educational institutions is performed by contract staff. There are situations where some contract faculty have been teaching for fifteen to twenty years without being offered the benefits of full-time employment. Many contract faculty must travel without reimbursement as they teach different courses in universities and colleges across Ontario. Contract faculty also receive fewer benefits than do full-time faculty. In addition, many long-time serving contract faculty are required to reapply for their jobs each year with little certainty that they will be rehired. Contract faculty are often given little notice when offered courses and have very little time to prepare courses for the full academic year. Labour disputes often arise as a result of contract faculty facing precarious employment conditions such as minimal benefits, low wages and little advance notice to prepare courses.

Graduate students are increasingly facing insecure labour market conditions upon completion of their degrees. This is a direct result of the structural over-reliance of college and university administrations on contract faculty. Many graduates seeking full-time academic employment are often finding that there is only contract teaching available in the labour market. Doctoral graduates who rely on contract teaching for their sole source of income often find themselves unable to publish their research, develop themselves professionally, or begin repaying their student debts for lack of time and money resulting from their insecure employment scenario.

Job insecurity and the lack of benefits that full-time teaching employees enjoy can have a detrimental effect on the educational experience for students. The quality of teaching and research in post-secondary education institutions depends upon teaching employees having secure working conditions.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- The conversion of part-time, sessional and contract employment into full-time permanent employment opportunities; and
- Limited contractual teaching opportunities available to graduate students for the purposes of professional development.

The Federation opposes:

- Job insecurity and the lack of benefits some teaching employees experience that can have a detrimental effect on the educational experience for students;
- Tactics that falsely divide the interests of graduate students and contract faculty, in order to exploit their academic labour;
- Colleges and universities that make use of part-time, sessional and contract faculty as a means to save money and avoid providing benefits that would be offered with full-time employment; and
- The maintenance of a contract faculty pool as a second tier teaching pool in colleges and universities.

Where part-time, sessional and contract faculty exist, the Federation supports their right to:

- Adequate notice of hire to allow for course preparation;
- Paid preparation time;
- Reimbursement of travel and expenses;

## **Issues Policy – Part-Time, Sessional and Contract Academic Employment**

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- Benefits comparable to full-time permanent faculty;
- Equal protection of academic freedom enjoyed by tenured full-time permanent faculty;
- Right to union representation;
- Adequate office space;
- Seniority protections; and
- Preferential consideration for the hiring of permanent, full-time faculty opportunities.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 2009**

## **PEACE AND DISARMAMENT**

The Federation encourages the development of curriculum in peace studies at universities and colleges.

The Federation supports the idea of multilateral disarmament.

The Federation supports the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

The Federation opposes military conscription.

The Federation affirms the principles of the United Nations Charter as the basis for the peaceful settlement of conflicts between and among nations.

The Federation condemns the use of landmines and supports their complete elimination.

The Federation opposes military research and research on behalf of military organizations at post-secondary institutions.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 1984**

**AMENDED: SAGM 1990, SAGM 1991, SAGM 1993, AGM 2005**



## **PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

The Federation accepts as its classification of disability that which is in use by the World Health Organization, namely that the relationship between an individual's physiological an/or psychological conditions and societal or environmental factors, will determine the level of functional disability.

The Federation recognizes that many types of disability modalities are accepted to exist, including but not limited to physical and sensory disabilities, chronic and psychological conditions, and learning disabilities.

The Federation opposes discrimination against students with disabilities due to the existence of all barriers to education, including but not limited to, attitudinal, communication, financial, informational, physical, social and technological barriers.

The Federation supports accessibility policies in post-secondary education that:

- Are inclusive of and promote equal rights for students with disabilities in all programs of study;
- Promote the participation of students with disabilities in all aspects of student life;
- Provide for reasonable accommodation, confidentiality, disclosure and documentation; and
- Provide full access to an appeals and adjudication process that is sensitive to the specific needs of persons with disabilities.

The Federation encourages the creation of accessibility policies meeting the above criteria by colleges and universities that do not already have similar policies.

The Federation supports the development and implementation of accessibility plans at post-secondary institutions that:

- Are inclusive of all aspects of the campus community, including students, staff and faculty;
- Are inclusive of all disability modalities, and take into account more than solely physical accessibility;
- Involve in the planning process all aspects of the campus community;
- Contain a comprehensive analysis of the institution's progress on removal of barriers, while at the same time clearly identify remaining problem areas;
- Are intended to improve the post-secondary education environment in a universal manner; and
- Recognize unique cultures within some disabled communities.

The Federation opposes any accessibility plan based around the segregation of persons with disabilities into a separate class based on their accommodations needs.

The Federation recognizes the right of accessibility to post-secondary education, including physical access as well as access to services and programs, for persons with disabilities, as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The Federation calls on the Federal and Provincial governments to fulfil their obligations under the Charter of Rights and the Ontario Human Rights Code to ensure equal benefit and freedom of discrimination for persons with disabilities.

The Federation calls on the government to accept all persons with disabilities as applicants with independent status for the purposes of the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP).

The Federation supports alternative methods of evaluation that remove systemic barriers to the completion of programs in post-secondary institutions for persons with disabilities.

The Federation supports changes to OSAP and the Canada Student Loan Program to ensure that every student with a disability can receive a post-secondary education.

## **Issues Policy – Persons with Disabilities**

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The Federation opposes the government's policy of cutting off Family Benefits, Vocational Rehabilitation Services assistance and other types of income financial support for students with special needs who marry or are in equivalent to married relationships.

The Federation demands that post-secondary institutions produce promotional and outreach materials that address the needs and concerns of persons with disabilities.

The Federation demands literacy and upgrading programs be adequately funded, expanded and adapted to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

The Federation makes its events accessible to persons with disabilities by endeavouring to provide proper advertisement, transportation during events and any other arrangements.

The Federation, in collaboration with campaigns to support persons with disabilities, supports member local actions to establish persons with disabilities groups on their campuses.

**ADOPTED: AGM 1991**

**AMENDED: SAGM 1994, AGM 1996, AGM 1997, AGM 1998, AGM 2003**

# POST-RESIDENCY FEES

## Preamble

Post-residency fees exist as an intermediary measure to support tuition practices for graduate students that are fair and commensurate to their use of university resources and their contribution to institutions and the public good of university-level teaching and research.

High tuition fees coupled with residual student debt from previous degrees can discourage students from applying to graduate programs in the first place and/or contribute to attrition, that is to say, leaving graduate school due to a lack of funding. The Federation recognizes that this burden is even greater for international students, who face double or triple the fees of their domestic colleagues. Previous to the early 1990's, graduate schools in Ontario applied a fee structure that charged reduced fees for students in the post-residency period of their degrees. This is the period of a graduate student's studies during which the course requirements of their program have been completed and they have entered the independent research and writing stages of their degrees.

This practice recognizes the reduced resources used by students in the post-residency period, the financial barriers faced by students pursuing a graduate education and the important contributions that graduate students make towards the university's teaching and research mission. Universities today could not function without the work graduate students complete on a day-to-day basis as researchers and academic workers, including, but not limited to, research and teaching assistants, graduate assistants and lecturers. The fees graduate students pay should be commensurate to not only their use of institutional resources but also their considerable and crucial contributions to the University and the larger community.

Reduced fees in the post-residency period also recognize the fact that financial pressures should be relieved while graduate students attempt to produce high-quality research in a timely fashion. There exists an inexorable relationship between what a graduate student pays in tuition fees and the amount that the same student has to pay for their daily expenses and furthering their research. Furthermore, it is impossible to expect a graduate student who may be struggling to meet their basic financial expenses (food, rent and transportation) to engage in the work required (conference travel) to attain academic and scholarly excellence. Graduate students are forced to take additional employment to finance their studies, which is to the detriment of their ability to complete their studies in a timely fashion, if at all.

## Policy

The Federation supports:

- The implementation of reduced post-residency fees for graduate students who have completed the course requirements of their programmes and have entered the independent research and writing stages of their degrees;
- Post-residency fees that do not exceed 50% of residency tuition fees;
- A fee structure in which students pay the equivalent to post-residency fees terms of the residency period in which they are not enrolled in courses;
- A post-residency fee structure that is equally applicable to domestic and international students;
- Funding packages for graduate students which provide an income year-round that is, at a minimum, at the poverty line, after tuition fees are paid for, and which keeps up with increases to inflation;
- Providing the financial support students need, through post-residency fees, that allow graduate student to fulfill their complete potential; and
- Research that objectively explores the relationship between adequate funding and completion rates.

## **Issues Policy – Post-Residency Fees**

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The Federation opposes:

- Discriminatory post-residency fees that do not include all graduate students - i.e. reductions only for some departments, or that do not include international students;
- Imposed deadlines on post-residency fees (the fee reduction expires after a certain period of time or the student is forced to withdraw);
- Reduced tuition fees which result in a claw back from funding packages; and
- The double standard that forces graduate students to fund the University through tuition fees during and after their funding periods despite their significant contribution to the university's mission.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 2005**

**AMENDED: SAGM 2014**



# **PRE-PAID TUITION FEE PROGRAMS**

## **Preamble**

Pre-paid tuition fee programs were first implemented in the United States in 1988 through the Michigan Education Trust. Such programs allow families to pay for one or more years of university tuition fees at the prices in force at the time of the purchase. The cost of future tuition fees is guaranteed by the state in which the trust is developed. Most states now have some form of pre-paid tuition fee programs.

Pre-paid tuition fee programs typically benefit only the children of middle and upper-income families, since it is an incentive program to encourage further savings. This means that low-income families who do not have the income necessary to purchase pre-paid tuition fee plans are by definition, destined to pay full price for tuition fees. This amounts to a regressive transfer of public dollars to the wealthiest members of society while those families without the disposable income for savings do not have access to the plan. Therefore, rather than making higher education more accessible, pre-paid tuition fee programs exacerbate the economic divide.

Such programs provide further alibi to governments to continue allowing tuition fees to increase and may, in such cases, result in the near bankrupting of the program, as governments struggle to cover the difference.

## **Policy**

The Federation opposes pre-paid tuition fee programs.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 2003**



# **PRIDE FESTIVALS**

## **Preamble**

Homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism are barriers faced by queer and trans students and members of the communities. Organizations and services are crucial to challenge these forms of oppression. Among these services are community agencies, coalitions and not-for-profit organizations, including Pride festivities. Pride festivals are community-based events that celebrate queer and trans people, provide spaces to take action on social issues faced by such communities and challenge the hegemonic and heteronormative views of love and sexuality. They take on many forms: a march, events and actions spread across multiple days. Pride is a time for community organizations that serve the queer and trans communities to outreach and queer and trans people and allies to take up public space and demand access and equity for all.

Pride festivals and other services serving queer and trans communities exist in many Canadian cities, but for many rural, northern, and smaller towns and regions, lack of resources have restricted their visibility and influence. Unfortunately, most Pride festivals and queer and trans service organizations (HIV/AIDS Prevention, youth shelters, suicide prevention and health promotion organizations) are urban-centric and usually only receive support and funding in major urban centres, leaving queer and trans students in smaller communities without adequate community and public support.

The cities and communities that do have Pride festivities and queer and trans services oftentimes face unpredictable public funding, censorship of political or sexual messaging, diminished support from elected officials, and threats from homophobic and transphobic members of the community.

Pride and services for the queer and trans communities provide crucial spaces for celebration, political action and safe spaces for queer and trans people, specifically students. As homophobia and transphobia manifests in our campuses and communities, it is important for students to take the lead in demanding public, accessible and adequately funded services for queer and trans communities and Pride festivals.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- Pride festivals that are publically supported and funded;
- Pride festivals that are community-focused, not-for-profit and political;
- Pride festivals that include meaningful participation and spaces for all members of the queer community, including women, trans, racialized, Status and Non-Status First Nations, Metis, and Inuit and people with disabilities;
- Pride festivals that include alternative programming: actions, awareness events and activities to include the diverse voices of the queer and trans communities; and
- Pride festivals and queer and trans services publicly funded and supported to serve rural, northern, and smaller regions in Ontario.

The Federation opposes:

- Censorship of community organizations that explore political, social and global issues;
- Pride festivals that prioritize the needs of corporate sponsors over community; and
- Government bodies that cut funding for Pride festivals, and for queer and trans services and community organizations.

**ADOPTED: AGM 2011**



# PROFILING AND CARDING

## Preamble

Racial profiling and the current carding protocols used by law enforcement have significant and negative impacts on specific members of the Canadian population including black and brown youth, and racialized immigrants from marginalized communities. These members are disproportionately targeted and criminalized by law enforcement as they are subjected to random carding and searches. Racial profiling is based on stereotypical assumptions because of one's race, colour, ethnicity, etc.

Carding and racial profiling from law enforcement continues to have severe negative impacts on racialized individuals, ranging from mental health issues, trauma, and police brutality in many cases throughout Ontario. The police carding tactics continue to send especially more black and brown youth into jails and penitentiaries, which continues to work in line with Canada's prison-industrial complex. Criminal profiling, on the other hand, relies on actual behaviour or on information about suspected activity by someone who meets the description of a specific individual, rather than relying on stereotypes, according to the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC).

Law enforcement, specifically like that of the Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy (TAVIS), a branch of the Toronto Police Services (TPS), Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (CSIS) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) play a crucial role in on going institutionalized racial discrimination in certain communities. Many carding interactions are not about gathering intelligence, rather about amassing personal details of innocent civilians. Black people and to a lesser extent brown people are disproportionately subjected to unethical police practices. For example, the ratios of young black males documented and carded in Zone 523 in Toronto is 252:1. For young brown males, the ratio is 65:1, and for young white males the ratio is 23:1.

Institutionalized racism and xenophobic actions of the Canadian state have to be seen in a holistic scope as they are occurring across Ontario and Canada. The Anti-Terrorism Act of 2015 amends over a dozen Canadian laws, including the Criminal Code, to permit Canadian government agencies to share information about individuals easily. The Anti-Terrorism Act of 2015 also gives more broad powers and widens the mandate of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) and many other law enforcement agencies in Canada. The Anti-Terrorism Act of 2015 makes it easier for government agencies to share information about carded individuals and violates human rights and freedoms and privacy of all peoples by creating a context for the implementation of racial profiling.

Many students, specifically racialized students attending post-secondary education, have experienced racial profiling in the form of international students being denied access to college or university based on their country of origin, interrogation by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) on campus, interrogation in their organizing circles or differential treatment based on membership in a particular campus club or organization, and restrictions on travel based on race, ethnicity or country of origin.

## Policy

The Federation supports:

- The right to live without harassment from law enforcement and from other state agents;
- Accessible education for all students regardless of race, colour, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, country of origin or citizenship;
- The right to security of the person and to personal privacy for all peoples;
- Freedom from discrimination, and
- That all carding data and information in the province of Ontario be eliminated from police records

## **Issues Policy – Profiling And Carding**

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and made available to relevant community groups to analyze its impact on racialized communities.

The Federation opposes:

- The ongoing state-mandated carding and racial profiling practises of law enforcement;
- Marginalized students being denied entrance to Canadian universities and colleges based on their race, colour, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, country of origin or citizenship;
- The presence of law enforcement and security intelligence on university and college campuses to interrogate students based on their race, colour, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, country of origin or citizenship;
- University and college administrations granting law enforcement access to student records such as library loan records and research interests;
- Black and Brown youth facing more stringent security measures than those who are not racialized;
- The imposition of stricter regulations on the activities of certain campus clubs and student organizations based on their race, colour, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, country of origin or citizenship;
- The focus of campus police on particular students based on race, colour, ethnicity, ancestry, religion, country of origin or citizenship; and
- The presence of municipal, provincial, and federal police on campus that results in the carding, racial profiling, and criminalization of racialized students and civilians; and
- The ongoing racist practise of carding and the collection of carding data by law enforcement.

**ADOPTED: AGM 2016**

# **PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION**

## **Preamble**

Electoral systems vary across countries and regions. Voting systems such as Single Non-Transferable Vote or Single Member Plurality, require voters to select one candidate. Those electors whose votes succeed in electing a candidate win political representation. Those who did not vote for the winning candidate receive no representation. These non-proportional or semi-proportional electoral systems tend to give majority rule to parties supported by a minority of voters.

Proportional representation is an electoral formula that attempts to match the per centage of votes that candidates or groups of candidates obtain in elections to the per centage of seats the candidates' political parties receive in the legislative assembly. Most proportional systems in use are based on party-list proportional representation, in which electors can vote for a party. An example is a Mixed Member Proportional system, where voters vote for parties in addition to individual candidates. Proportional voting systems have the advantage of offering voters more choice, more fairness, and more representation of the diversity of the electorate.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports electoral systems that:

- Achieve proportional representation;
- Encourage representation of the diversity of the population;
- Represent fairness and choice for voters; and
- Are designed to ensure every vote is reflected in the composition of the legislative assembly.

The Federation opposes electoral systems that result in:

- Under-representation of the will of the population.

**ADOPTED: AGM 2007**





## **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

The Federation believes that municipalities, the Province of Ontario, and the Government of Canada should fund public transportation through a system of progressive taxation. To ensure universal access to mobility within a community, public transportation should be provided to all at no cost to users, as it helps people live full and satisfying lives through being able to access services and community activities.

The Federation believes that transit services should operate from no later than 7:00 a.m. to no earlier than 2:00 am on campuses where demand warrants such service, and that students' unions, post-secondary institutions and transit authorities should work together to ensure that transit stops are well-lit, accessible and safe.

The Federation believes that students should be recognized as a transit stakeholder and that students' unions should hold voting seats on any public transit committee. Student advisory groups should be established by students' unions to work with transit authorities where possible.

The Federation believes that until a fully-funded system of public transportation exists, students' unions, post-secondary education institutions and transit authorities should work together to create affordable Universal Transit Passes (U-Pass) which are made available to all post-secondary education students in Ontario regardless of age or study status or the age of the rider.

The Federation believes that U-Pass prices should be reached through a system of collective bargaining through students' unions, on behalf of their members. The Federation believes that U-Passes delivered by the same transit authority should be of the same price, and that programs in the same region should not discriminate in price or service based upon institution.

The Federation believes that U-Passes should be used as discount pass programs and not as a means of subsidising under-funded transit systems.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 1998**

**AMENDED: SAGM 2000, AGM 2010**



# QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

## Preamble

A quality learning experience for students is rooted in the maintenance of an accessible and publicly funded post-secondary education system within which individual institutions are governed autonomously, through local and intensely democratic structures. By establishing and maintaining the availability of the resources necessary to procure both the academic and physical infrastructure vital to the achievement of excellence, and by ensuring that such resources are allocated on the basis of peer review and democratic decision-making, students, faculty, and academic staff can best collaborate to meet the academic, educational, and research mission of our public post-secondary institutions. The foundation of our public institutions is their universality. It is, therefore, not possible to obtain quality in post-secondary education at the expense of affordability, as both factors affect the learning experience. Also, universality cannot be guaranteed in a system within which there is pressure for publicly funded research to be commercially oriented and privately subsidized and owned.

The quality of education must, therefore, be judged in light of:

- Accessibility and affordability;
- The degree to which decision-making, with respect to all aspects of a post-secondary institution's operation, is conducted in transparent, accountable, representative and democratic bodies; and
- The extent to which research performed through a public institution is conducted free from private, corporate and commercial interest and ownership.

Therefore, the achievement of educational quality is dependent upon the availability of adequate public resources.

Many attempts to measure quality in post-secondary education have been initiated by governments as part of an effort to introduce accountability and transparency in relation to public subsidies of colleges and universities. Such attempts often focus on evaluating the government's "return" on its investment and rely on very simple output indicators, including graduation and employment rates, and post-graduation earnings. In some instances, as is the case with Ontario's Key Performance Indicators, governments have punitively tied public institutional funding to such output measurements.

Just as quality cannot be determined simply by quantifying outputs so too can it not be determined by considering financial indicators, including tuition fees, endowment income and research commercialization, as positive indicators of institutional educational quality and "reputation." Such measures, which are often used in education "consumer guides," like the annual Maclean's rankings, ignore the fact that high tuition fees, corporate activity, and reliance on endowment revenue, like poor quality, are symptoms of insufficient government funding. In such a privatized environment, accessibility, diversity and academic integrity inevitably suffer. Quality assessments that evaluate endowment levels and institutional "reputations" tend to exacerbate institutional inequalities by privileging older institutions, and those situated in major urban and financial centres.

The assessment of quality based on the evaluation of output measures, like those identified above, leads policy makers to disregard the importance of input factors, such as professor/student ratios, academic contact time, faculty workload, lab and technology resources and the actual process of learning that takes place in colleges and universities.

## Policy

The Federation supports a definition of educational quality, assessment tools, and funding initiatives that:

- Emphasize universal accessibility and affordability;

## **Issues Policy – Quality in Higher Education**

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- Emphasize the importance of public funding;
- Are determined by the needs of the specific learning environment;
- Consider academic resource indicators that include, but are not limited to: class size, faculty-to-student ratios, number of full-time to part-time lecturers, faculty job security (e.g. tenure), level of faculty education, faculty workload, frequency of student contact with faculty and/or other advisors, the diversity of faculty and faculty publication rates and/or professional experience;
- Consider institutional resource indicators that include, but are not limited to: the number of library holdings, the availability and breadth of student support services, the creation of teaching and learning centres, information technology services, research infrastructure and institutional facilities and physical plant;
- Consider educational outcomes that emphasise accessibility and student success, including, but not limited to: diversity of enrolment, persistence, retention and graduation rates, educational satisfaction and continued education;
- Consider educational outcomes that emphasise graduate skill sets, including, but not limited to: critical thinking, problem solving, analytic reasoning, interpersonal understanding, written communication, technical knowledge, creativity, innovation and creative thinking, and applied skills;
- Consider educational outcomes that emphasize social value, including, but not limited to: civic engagement, literacy and workforce preparedness;
- Consider technological enhancements to the educational process that make long distance education and/or correspondence courses more accessible to students who otherwise would not be able to receive such education;
- Are based on consideration of specific institutional structures and levels of democratic involvement, facilities of peer review and levels of student consultation;
- Consider, only as a final measure, educational outcomes that emphasise individual value, including, but not limited to: graduation rates, employment rates, post-graduation earnings and and job-satisfaction;
- Use the standardized instructor course evaluations to assess the quality of teaching at post-secondary institutions.

The Federation supports government policy that:

- Ensures adequate public funding for the promotion of high levels of quality throughout and within the system of public post-secondary education;
- Allows public post-secondary education institutions to realize their potential for excellence without compromising access; and
- Establishes public standards in educational quality, while remaining sensitive to differences between and among institutions; and
- Aims to provide comprehensive post-secondary education programming in all regions of the province, including rural and northern communities; and
- Recognizes the importance of bilingual and francophone education.

The Federation opposes definitions of educational quality, assessment tools, and funding initiatives that:

- Equate increases in tuition fees with increases in quality;
- Ignore the financial, physical and general accessibility of the program and institution;

- Effectively ignore the educational process;
- Fail to look at public post-secondary education institutions as part of an interconnected system;
- Fail to consider the correlation between academic resources and the organization of those resources in constituting the overall learning environment;
- Fail to consider the correlation between academic freedom, meaningful pluralism and democratic decision-making structures;
- Do not incorporate both rigorous empirical exercises and qualitatively-oriented evaluation procedures;
- Fail to look at public post-secondary education institutions as part of an interconnected public education system;
- Consider the “value-added” of the educational experience in strictly financial and/or individual terms; and
- Consider institutional quality in terms of financial resources, fundraising performance, “reputation” or other factors not directly related to the educational experience.

The Federation opposes government policy that:

- Ties public funding for public post-secondary education institutions, in any way, to output measurements;
- Emphasizes “competitiveness” amongst and within public institutions;
- Undermines the consistency of quality between and among public institutions; and
- Encourages or forces institutions to eliminate or merge programs based solely on a program’s financial sustainability;
- Aims to tailor post-secondary education programs to short-term labour trends.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 2006**

**AMENDED: SAGM 2012, SAGM 2014**



# QUEER AND TRANS STUDENT ISSUES

## Preamble

Sexuality and gender are experienced in diverse ways and expressed in multiple forms that can include, but are not limited to: lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender, transsexual, two-spirited and/or those who are questioning their sexuality and gender identity. The term “queer” has come to encompass a broad range of possible gender and sexual expressions and identifications but does not adequately address the unique issues affecting transgender, two-spirited and transsexual people.

In shared and distinct ways, queer and trans people face discrimination and marginalization on the basis of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Despite winning important legal victories towards equality, such as the right to marry same-sex partners, queer and trans people continue to face social stigma and discrimination that can be individual, institutional or systemic. As a result of their oppression, queer and trans youth, in particular, are disproportionately represented among homeless youth and experience higher rates of depression and mental illness.

For queer and trans students, a homophobic and transphobic climate on campus can undermine their right to a safe learning environment in which to pursue their studies. Discrimination against sexual and gender diversity and the experience of intolerance pose additional barriers to accessing and finishing post-secondary education for queer and trans people. From the persistence of heteronormative language to violence against queer and trans people, homophobia and transphobia remain pervasive on college and university campuses and in society at large. Creating a safe learning environment and challenging homophobia and transphobia are integral to the promotion of human rights and a fully accessible post-secondary education system.

## Policy

The Federation supports:

- The right of all people to self-define their sexual and gender identity or orientation and to freely express it;
- Definitions of family that are inclusive of, but not limited to: opposite-sex couples, same-sex couples, single parents, couples without children and extended self-defined families;
- The right of queer and trans people to full and equitable access to post-secondary education;
- The right of queer and trans people to be represented and included in the classroom curriculum. This includes the right to do research, presentations, lectures and projects on queer and trans issues;
- Education and academic materials that are free from homophobia and transphobia, recognizing that some literature and materials must be viewed relative to their historical or social context;
- An educational environment free of advertisements, entertainment programming and/or materials which promote homophobia and transphobia or violence against queer and trans people;
- The creation and maintenance of queer and trans studies programs comprised of credit courses;
- The establishment of anti-oppression programs on queer and trans issues for the students, staff and faculty of post-secondary institutions;
- The explicit inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity as a prohibited ground of discrimination in the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms;
- The right of queer and trans students to self-organize on campus, to have access to students' union resources and places where they can develop organizational and political skills, and foster a sense of unity and cooperation;
- The recognition, promotion, funding and collaboration between students' unions and queer and trans organizations on and off campus to promote equity and the rights of queer and trans people;

## **Issues Policy – Queer and Trans Student Issues**

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- The active involvement of queer and trans people in all of the affairs of their students' unions and in all aspects of the student movement;
- The active and ongoing work of students' unions and all student groups or organizations to create positive space on campus that is inclusive and safe for queer and trans people; and
- The active and ongoing work of students' unions and all student groups or organizations to challenge heterosexist, transphobic and homophobic policies, practices and attitudes.

The Federation opposes:

- Homophobia, heterosexism, transphobia and discrimination against queer and trans people, including structural, institutional and individual manifestations;
- Violence against queer and trans people in all its forms including, but not limited to, physical, verbal and economic violence, and violent representations of queer and trans people in media; and
- Any governmental legislation, act or designation that implies or suggests, directly or indirectly, that queer and trans people in Canada have achieved equality and no longer need to advocate for the improvement of the equality of queer and trans people.

**ADOPTED: AGM 1990**

**AMENDED: SAGM 1992, AGM 1992, SAGM 1994, AGM 1996, AGM 1997, AGM 1998, SAGM 2010**



# **RACISM**

## **Preamble**

Racism is a form of oppression based on the social, political, economic and historical construction of race and power that affects the lived experiences of all people, including students. Racism works to disadvantage racialized people and further advantage members of the dominant group. It is historically implemented through verbal, psychological, and physical discrimination or harm. Today, racism is also systemically manifested in institutions like governments, educational institutions, the criminal justice system and other large organizations that have the power to detrimentally influence the lives of many.

Although the Federation's findings in the Racialized Impact of Tuition Fees identify economic barriers as the most significant hindrance to equal access to post-secondary education, the report indicates "discriminatory practices serve to prevent equitable access to universities and colleges." The report confirms that racialized people "find themselves as lower income earners on average, and census data demonstrates that average undergraduate tuition fees are a high percentage of the average income earnings of visible minorities than non-visible minorities." Furthermore, the Federation's findings from the Task Force on Campus Racism conclude that "instances of racism and racial discrimination are not isolated; discrimination toward racialized students, faculty and staff is a systemic feature of Ontario's post-secondary education system."

Racism in the criminal justice system also detrimentally impacts the lives of our members. High profile reports such as the 2005 Kingston Data Collection Project, The 2015 Region of Peel and United Way Report on the Consultations into the Well-Being of Black Youth in Peel Region, The Special Report in human rights and racial profiling in the 2013/14 Ontario Human Rights Commission Annual Report, the 2002 Toronto Star analysis of Toronto Police statistics have reported that residents of racialized identities receive harsher treatment than white residents and are overrepresented in police statistics of charges and arrests. Students attending post-secondary institutions experience racism in the following forms: harassment and interrogation by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), police brutality and killings, discriminatory treatment based on association or membership in a particular student club or organization, and restrictions on travel based on race, ethnicity or country of origin. Many of our members who are immigrants and refugees arriving in Canada are increasingly from racialized communities. They must have the confidence that they will not face discrimination from police or other security and government services both on and off campus.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- Access to education free from overt, covert and systemic forms of racism;
- Advocacy and support resources on campuses dedicated to combatting systemic forms of racism as well as creating safer and accessible spaces for racialized students;
- Diverse student representation on governing bodies of post-secondary institutions;
- Diverse representation of racialized communities in front-line student support services and resources;
- The work of all member locals and community groups that seek to eliminate racism, particularly anti-black racism, in post-secondary education, the criminal justice system, and all other institutions; and
- All equity-based institutional initiatives that seek to correct the historical injustices and create equitable conditions for racialized students.

## **Issues Policy – Racism**

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The Federation opposes:

- Overt, covert and systemic racism in campus life;
- Institutional racism in hiring practices and curriculum; including but not limited to: racist micro-aggressions, differential pay based on race and the censorship of issues related to racism from class curricula and publishings;
- Systemic racism in institutional policy and governance;
- Systemic racism in the broader society and global community;
- Discrimination and harassment from police or other security and government services both on and off campus;
- The ongoing criminalization of racialized communities through increased surveillance and disproportionate incarceration rates of racialized community members; and
- The increased surveillance and criminalization of campus groups representing racialized communities.

**ADOPTED: AGM 2010**

**AMENDED: SAGM 2015, AGM 2015**

# RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

## Preamble

Publicly funded research is carried out at post-secondary institutions across the province.

This research has traditionally been predominantly curiosity-driven research across all disciplines. However, the current underfunding of post-secondary institutions coupled with the increasing influence of commercial interests in publicly funded research has resulted in institutions prioritizing some research disciplines over others based solely on perceived commercial viability.

Innovation is widely seen as the introduction of new ideas or methods, or the re-creation of current practices in a novel way. Unfortunately, research and innovation policies have often left out social innovation, resulting in an incomplete and asymmetric assessment of research needs at public institutions.

Changes in government policies and directives have led to the amalgamation of both the research and innovation agenda ultimately further devaluing ideas of social innovation. The current research and innovation agenda both from the federal and provincial governments currently focuses largely on what is seen as commercially viable initiatives more often than not from the sciences, health sciences and engineering fields.

The allocation of resources based on this limited view of research and innovation has resulted in chronic underfunding of the Social Sciences and Humanities disciplines at public institutions. In order to be successful and to respond to societal needs, any research and innovation strategy needs to include social innovation alongside innovation in the fields of engineering, sciences and health sciences.

## Policy

The Federation supports:

- Research and innovation strategies that support basic research across all disciplines;
- Research and innovation funding that is not conditioned on commercial viability;
- Research and innovation funding that is distributed by peer review and not tied to specific field of study;
- Research and innovation strategies that include social innovation alongside innovation in the fields of engineering, sciences and health sciences; and
- Research and innovation funding that supports public interests.

The Federation opposes:

- Research and innovation funding that is conditioned solely on commercial viability;
- Research and innovation strategies that ignore social innovation and the contribution of the social sciences and humanities to the advancement of new knowledge; and
- Research and innovation funding that supports private interests at the expense of public interests.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 2011**



# RIGHTS OF RESEARCHERS

## Preamble

Students are often employed at post-secondary institutions in a variety of ways, including those who work as researchers. All workers should be treated fairly and equitably and researchers' rights as workers need to be protected in order to ensure academic freedom and an accessible, high quality post-secondary education system.

Unionization and collective bargaining are fundamental rights for workers and the unionisation of researchers will help to ensure the dignity, safety and equity of workers.

The increased influence of private industry over publicly funded research at post-secondary institutions pose a set of challenges for researchers, academic freedom and the public interest. In many cases, private interests in public research have resulted in conflicts of interest, where researchers are left unprotected as students and workers. There have been several reported cases of students who have witnessed inappropriate research activities or research misconduct have been prevented to speak out against such activities. Such researchers can be in danger of retaliation from corporate sponsors or their institutional administration, including threats to compromise these students' ability to graduate and their future career opportunities.

Post-graduate studies and research in Ontario must be premised upon the protection of the intellectual property rights for all researchers, whistleblower protection, copyright laws that promote the sharing of information and knowledge and public funding that is free of commercial interest. The integrity of public research must be maintained through the protection of the rights of researchers as workers and students in the pursuit of knowledge.

## Policy

The Federation supports:

- The right of researchers to work in physically safe working conditions;
- The right of researchers to refuse to work in an unsafe work environment;
- The right of researchers to work in an environment free of harassment or discrimination;
- The right of researchers to unionize in a workplace;
- Employment conditions that do not compromise academic standing, but instead enable academic freedom, intellectual stimulation and innovation;
- Researchers having adequate access to materials, libraries and other resources that facilitate the development of academic knowledge and innovation;
- Whistleblower protection for researchers who expose research misconduct while working on a research project associated with a public post-secondary institution;
- The right of researchers to be recognized for their contributions to the pursuit, development and/or application of knowledge and information; and
- Researchers conducting their research within recognized ethical principles and practices.

The Federation opposes:

- The increased reliance on corporate sponsorship for research at post-secondary institutions;
- Any influence of corporate sponsors on the research data or outcomes of the researcher's work;
- Any forms of intimidation or threat to researchers – such as delays in graduation, loss of funding and other forms of retribution – if their research data or outcomes do not align with the sponsor's interests;
- Plagiarism or alteration of a researcher's work by a supervisor or funder; and
- Intellectual property rights that impede a researcher's ability to access knowledge for the purposes

**Issues Policy – Rights of Researchers**

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of research or learning in order to complete their studies in a successful and meaningful way.

**ADOPTED: AGM 2010**

# RIGHT TO ORGANIZE

## Preamble

Students' unions' ability to provide representation and high-quality services for their members depends, in large part, on their ability to receive membership fees and to conduct their work autonomously.

In Ontario, legislation which recognizes students' unions' rights is very limited. For students' unions at colleges, the only reference made is in the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002, which guarantees only an elected "student governing body" the right to conduct "normal activities." For students' unions at universities, there exists no reference in law that recognizes their existence. In both cases, legal rights to fee collection exist only in common law. In the absence of such legal rights, students' unions in Ontario secure rights and powers from their administration by entering into individual contracts or agreements. In contrast, students' unions in British Columbia have strong legislation that not only recognizes their existence, but guarantees their rights to organize alongside their financial and democratic autonomy.

The very nature of a students' union means that, at times, it must be in a position that allows its members to be critical of the campus administration without fear of reprisals in the form of the withholding of funds or the eviction from space.

## Policy

The Federation supports the introduction of legislation that:

- Defines students' unions;
- Mandates the collection and remission of membership fees to students' unions by university and college governing bodies and guarantees this right of remission without interference from institutional administrative bodies;
- Enshrines students' unions' full financial and operational autonomy, including the ability to hire and manage staff, set fees, prepare financial statements, arrange for audits and enter into arrangements with external service providers;
- Enshrines students' unions' full democratic autonomy, such as the ability to set referendum and election rules, define membership and maintain policies and bylaws; and
- Guarantees access to relevant, accurate membership lists and associated contact information.

The Federation opposes:

- Any legislation that undermines students' unions' ability to operate autonomously or to organize into broader coalitions with other organizations;
- Interference by university or college administrations in students' union finances, elections, referenda, or other internal affairs;
- Interference of a university or college administration or any other third party organizations that would attempt to undermine students' union autonomy;
- Interference in students' union finances or internal affairs that would prevent student unions from serving their membership effectively; and
- Interference in the elections, referenda or other democratic processes that the students' union employs in order to ensure accountability and transparency to its members.

**ADOPTED: AGM 2004**

**AMENDED: SAGM 2009, AGM 2016**





# **SATELLITE CAMPUSES**

## **Preamble**

In Ontario, college and university programs have been offered at satellite campuses for decades in order to meet student demand in particular areas and to provide greater access for students who would otherwise have to commute long distances or move from their home. Traveling long distances or moving is often difficult for students because of the cost and/or personal life circumstances. Satellite campuses also provide an alternative to building a new university or college campus where demand exceeds available government funding.

Governments have often regarded the creation of satellite campuses in a positive light, as they are seen as a model to increase student access to degree programs, provide more opportunities for students living in rural or more remote regions of the province, address growth pressures in more densely-populated regions of the province and encourage economic development in municipalities that host such campuses.

However, unless they are carefully and thoughtfully planned and implemented, satellite campuses run the risk of offering a lower quality of education to students and providing worse conditions in which to work for faculty.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- Government policy frameworks on building new satellite campuses and policy frameworks governing partnership agreements with clauses that encompass the start, maintenance, and exit of said partnership;
- Government policy that provides greater access to post-secondary education where distance or income is a factor in a students' ability to attend a college or university;
- Research on the establishment, operation, maintenance, closure, and quality of academic programs at satellite campuses; and
- Proper oversight, accountability and consultation with students, faculty and the greater community whenever the government wants to establish any new satellite college or university campus in the province.

The Federation opposes:

- Institutions that operate outside of the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities' policy framework;
- Post-secondary institutions, or partnerships between post-secondary institutions, that operate under an expired governing policy agreements;
- The creation or rapid expansion of satellite campuses to drive college or university enrolment at the expense of educational quality for students;
- Satellite campuses that do not have adequate curriculum and program choices and limit students' ability to complete an entire degree at the campus;
- Satellite campuses that do not provide the full range of library, research and staff resources typical of a post-secondary institution;
- Satellite campuses that do not have adequate physical resources such as equipment or infrastructure to support programming for students including, but not limited to, academic, athletic, support and social services;
- Satellite campuses that do not have a full range of student services, including student-run services that support marginalized and equity-seeking groups;
- The creation of satellite campuses that rely financially on partnerships between municipalities and private sector interests;

## **Issues Policy – Satellite Campuses**

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- Satellite campuses that rely largely on part-time and contract faculty who have less job security and diminished ability to engage in course development or research;
- The practices of universities and colleges that provide inadequate or no compensation to teaching assistants for time and expense for travel required between campuses;
- Ancillary fees for services not offered and not made adequately available on satellite campuses;
- Inadequate and unclear notice given to students and workers when placed at satellite campuses of colleges and universities;
- The use of satellite campuses to separate and segregate courses, departments, programs and educational level; and
- The use of satellite campuses by government or post-secondary institutions to promote and facilitate online or distance learning programs.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 2012**

**AMENDED: SAGM 2014**

## **SERVICES**

The Federation is committed to the implementation of an Ontario-wide post-secondary education student health insurance program.

The Federation urges its members to lobby entertainment agencies and directors to discourage the practice of deeming classism, racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism and ageism as entertainment.

The Federation supports responsible drinking practices and alcohol awareness campaigns.

The Federation opposes any budget cuts to VIA rail that would reduce the number of trains during peak travel periods.

The Federation supports a student majority on the boards that govern students' unions buildings.

The Federation opposes general transaction and loan user fees imposed by financial institutions on students and other economically disadvantaged groups.

**ADOPTED: AGM 1985**

**AMENDED: AGM 1987, SAGM 1990, AGM 1996, AGM 1997, SAGM 1999**



# SEXUAL ASSAULT AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ON CAMPUS

## Preamble

When sexual assault and violence against women occur at a post-secondary educational institution, it is the responsibility of the campus community to provide a safe and inclusive environment by responding in support of the survivor(s) and working towards eradicating the causes of sexual assault and violence against all women. Too often, post-secondary institutions have publicly downplayed incidences of sexual violence on their campuses in order to protect the institution's reputation. Such efforts hinder the ability for campus communities to engage in meaningful and open dialogue to address matters related to sexual violence on their campuses.

Institutional policies and practices that prioritize knowledge and education and acknowledge a full range of experiences are critical to ending discrimination and violence. Such policies and practices should be rooted in the recognition of sexism and misogyny as mechanisms of oppression. Sexism and misogyny are intensified by racism, classism, homophobia, transphobia and ableism, as well as a range of other experiences that affect all women's responses to the trauma of sexual violence.

In some institutional and police responses to sexual violence, visual representations of alleged perpetrators have focused on racialized characteristics. Such responses serve to target racialized groups rather than provide meaningful information such as age, height and behaviour to aid in identifying the perpetrator.

In addressing sexual violence on campuses, it is also important for institutions to acknowledge that most perpetrators of sexual violence are known to the survivors rather than "strangers" who are not members of the campus community. Certain institutional and police notifications of sexual violence also emphasize personal precautions as preventative measures against violence. It is important to recognize that prioritizing personal precautionary measures can promote a culture of victim blaming, as the responsibility is placed on women to keep themselves safe.

Furthermore, it is important that institutions inform the campus community of ongoing developments in investigations in a timely manner to ensure that students are not left in a state of fear.

## Policy

The Federation Supports:

- Regular safety audits. These audits should be undertaken annually, must be community-driven and must examine safety holistically. Safety audits should address safety areas that include but may not be limited to the social environment, security services and the physical environment;
- On-campus safety committees mandated to improve safety and fulfill safety audit recommendations. These committees should be composed of representatives of the institution, students' unions, student group representatives, representatives from marginalized groups, faculty associations and staff unions;
- Incident reporting mechanisms that respect the rights and decisions of survivors, promote campus safety and inform the campus community of immediate risks;
- Increased funding and other resources for campus health and counseling services, including sexual assault crisis and trauma services, and public education on ending sexism and gendered violence;
- The inclusion in staff training and faculty professional development sessions of diversity and gender equality awareness education, especially for those staff and faculty working in security and frontline service provision;
- The provision of adequately funded campus safewalk services;
- On-campus sexual violence reporting systems established through the collaboration of university and college administrative bodies, students' unions, faculty associations, staff unions, and local

## **Issues Policy – Sexual Assault and Violence Against Women on Campus**

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sexual assault support centres and rape crisis centres;

- Institutional policies and practices that recognize the importance of campus safety measures while at the same time promoting education, awareness and accountability with the goal of eradicating sexism, gendered violence and systemic forms of oppression that exist within post-secondary institutions;
- Institutional safety policies and practices that recognize the fact that a majority of sexual assaults occur between acquaintances;
- Student-run sexual assault support services including, but not limited to emotional support, outreach activities and awareness-building campaigns;
- Campus and community groups that challenge various forms of oppression, including but not limited to, homophobia, transphobia, racism, sexism and ableism;
- Public memorials to commemorate victims and survivors of gender based violence including missing and murdered Indigenous women, trans women and racialized women;
- Student controlled initiatives that promote consent and healthy relationships;
- Initiatives to promote pro-social bystander behaviour; and
- The establishment of a social environment and policies within the institution that provide a safer space for survivors to come forward to seek support or report incidents of sexual violence.

The Federation opposes:

- Reporting systems that use visual representations of the alleged perpetrators that reinforce racial profiling;
- Technology-driven safety initiatives that prioritize monitoring over collective education and responsibility;
- Security measures that include an off-campus police presence;
- The perpetuation of the ‘stranger danger’ mentality;
- Campaigns that place responsibility on women to prevent sexual violence;
- The promotion of rape culture through language or actions that trivialize, condone or tolerate any form of sexual violence;
- Groups that attack principles of gender equity and women’s bodily autonomy, and which denounce, misrepresent and/or agitate against the work of feminism and the women’s movement. Often these groups operate under the guise of “men’s awareness” and/or “men’s rights” groups;
- The cooptation of initiatives that are intended to promote consent and healthy relationships in ways that are against students’ interest; and
- Campaigns, forums, groups, meetings or events whose purpose is to frighten, intimidate and/or target women on campus.

**ADOPTED: AGM 2008**

**AMENDED: SAGM 2013**

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Social justice is a dynamic goal of democratic societies that includes respect for the democratic rights and civil liberties of every individual, as well as the inherent right of every person, without discrimination, to equitable access to nutritious food, adequate shelter, clean air and water, meaningful work, health care, education and public services.

Education is inextricably linked with social justice. All education grows out of respect for the common good of society, that is, out of recognition that individuals and groups have an obligation to pursue, not only their own interests, but the good of all. Education's most basic purpose is to enhance life and the dignity of the human person – an objective that is difficult to achieve in the absence of fundamental human rights.

A climate of repression, violence, poverty or denial of social justice undermines the ability of public university and college students to learn and of staff and faculty to effectively fulfill their public obligation to search for, and disseminate, knowledge and truth.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 2006**





# **SPLIT TUITION FEES**

## **Preamble**

Ontario's tuition fees are the third highest in Canada and have more than tripled since the 1990-91 school year. After the tuition fee freeze was lifted in 2006, tuition fees in Ontario have increased from 4 to 8 per cent every year. In 2008 the average student debt for a four-year undergraduate degree in Ontario was approaching \$28,000 - a 350 per cent increase from 1991 levels.

Given massive tuition fee increases, it is no longer plausible for a student to pay off a year's worth of tuition fees by simply working full-time over the summer. In 1970, when tuition fees were \$610, it would have been conceivable for a student earning minimum wage to cover the cost their tuition fees by working for six and a half weeks. However, in the contemporary context, a student working full-time at minimum wage would have to work for 16.6 weeks in order to finance a year of undergraduate tuition fees. Consequently, students attending post-secondary institutions in Ontario are forced to rely on the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP), private loans and lines of credit to access post-secondary education.

Many large institutions across Ontario charge students for their fall and winter semester courses in the fall term despite the fact that students receive OSAP in two instalments, 60 per cent in the fall semester and 40 per cent in the winter semester. The practice of charging the entire fee upfront disproportionately targets students who rely on OSAP, and penalizes those students by charging additional fees and interest.

Due to the lack of government funding, some universities have become reliant on this form of additional revenue and have used it as an excuse not to divide payment of tuition fees by semester.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- The elimination of all additional fees that aim to penalize low-income students;
- The division of tuition fee payments by semester;
- The elimination of tuition fee late fees and the subsequent interest charged;
- Accessible public post-secondary education that is paid for through a progressive income tax system and not on the backs of students and their families;
- The division of tuition fee payments by semester with fee deadlines not before the commencement of a given semester; and
- The elimination of all additional fees that penalize students unable to pay up front.

The Federation opposes:

- Winter term tuition fees being collected in the fall term;
- Interest and or penalties charged on late tuition fees;
- Deferral charges;
- Tuition fee collection policies that force students to take on additional debt;
- University and college funding models and budgeting plans that are predicated upon the advance collection of tuition fees with the intention of earning investment income from students' money; and
- The retention of student scholarships by post-secondary institutions to be applied against tuition fees.

**ADOPTED: AGM 2008**



# STUDENT ASSISTANCE

## 1. General Policy

### Preamble

In the context of affordable post-secondary education, student financial assistance is an important mechanism for reducing social and economic inequalities in access to post-secondary education. In Canada, 80 per cent of students require some financial assistance. Three-quarters of those receiving student aid believe they would be unable to participate in higher education without this assistance.

### Policy

The Federation supports:

- Student financial assistance programs being universally and equitably accessible to full- and part-time students;
- Student financial assistance programs that are adequate to the needs of all students, including provision for the extra expenses incurred by some students with dependents, and by students with disabilities and/or special needs;
- The integration and harmonization of student financial assistance programs so that students do not suffer from unnecessary confusion, delays, errors, superfluous requests for information and duplication of administration;
- The public provision of accessible and thorough information on all aspects of student financial assistance programs; and
- An equitable calculation of child care and other dependent expenses, current non-school debt, housing costs, travel expenses and education-related technological expenses in determining the costs of attending post-secondary institutions for the purpose of determining financial need.

The Federation opposes:

- The use of student financial assistance programs as a means of justifying higher user fees for post-secondary education;
- Student-funded student financial assistance;
- All user fees for students applying for or benefiting from student financial assistance. This includes, but is not limited to, application fees and service charges;
- Any delay in disbursement of student financial assistance, as any delay in receipt of these funds has a detrimental effect on needy students;
- Penalizing students due to delays in the disbursement of student financial assistance. This includes, but is not limited to, course cancellation and the imposition of late fees;
- The treatment of student financial assistance as income in the calculation of eligibility for government assistance programs;
- Public-private partnership requirements in government funding for student financial assistance and other student financial assistance distribution mechanisms that rely on an institution's fundraising capacity over the characteristics of individual students; and
- Work study programs as a replacement for needs-based student financial assistance.

## **2. Student Loans**

### **Preamble**

Student loans programs are not student-aid plans, but rather are a funding model for post-secondary education. They are based on the belief that the individual is the primary beneficiary of a post-secondary education and should bear the financial burden of the cost of that education. Furthermore, student loans programs typically provide an alibi to government and college and university administrators to justify further tuition fee increases.

Insofar as the federal and provincial governments have chosen to provide student financial assistance in the form of loans rather than needs-based student grants, the Federation supports the following policies on student loans.

### **Policy**

The Federation believes that any student loan program should be:

- Publicly administered; and
- Publicly financed and guaranteed.

The Federation supports:

- An interest relief program for those with insufficient financial means, that is available at any time up to the retirement of their debt;
- A debt remission program for student loans that is based on the total amount of debt incurred federally and provincially;
- A debt remission program for student loans that does not include any penalties based on academic performances or time restrictions;
- Designation of all publicly funded institutions as eligible to participate in student loan programs, regardless of factors such as loan default rates of graduates; and
- Zero interest on student loans.

The Federation opposes:

- Any generation of profits from the administration of student loan programs;
- Administrative fees on student loans;
- Any measures that penalize student debt holders, due to disruption of classes and / or services administered by the institution, resulting from, but not limited to, labour disputes;
- Publicly funded student loans being made available to students at private institutions; and
- The Federation opposes debt management measures that tie debt reduction or “forgiveness” to:
  - Starting a family or family size;
  - The requirement to relocate to isolated, rural or under-serviced communities;
  - Post-graduation professional practice in particular professions or specialties; and
  - Any other lifestyle choices.

### 3. Needs-based Student Grants

#### Preamble

Canada is one of only three industrialized countries that does not have a national system of student grants. Furthermore, the up-front grants system was eliminated in Ontario in the early 1990s. A provincial system of up-front needs-based grants would immediately reduce the daunting debt level that students face and remove barriers that prevent students from low-income backgrounds from participating in post-secondary education.

Up-front needs-based grants systems typically cost less to administer than student loans programs. In addition, for every dollar allocated in grants, savings will also be realized in reduced administrative costs, education tax credit claims and payments to service providers.

#### Policy

The Federation supports:

- The provision of student aid through a full and adequate system of up-front needs-based student grants.

The Federation opposes:

- Merit-based scholarships as a substitute for a needs-based student grants program;
- Joint merit and needs-based scholarships as a substitute for a needs-based student grants program; and
- Individually-driven savings plans for post-secondary education, such as registered education savings plans, as a substitute for a needs-based student grants program.

### 4. Eligibility

#### Preamble

Because of a series of changes to the eligibility criteria for Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) during the 1990s, Ontario experienced a 40 per cent decline in the number of students receiving financial aid, during a period where tuition fees increased by an average of 140 per cent.

In order for student financial assistance to be effective in its goal of expanding access to higher education to students from low income backgrounds and those experiencing financial need, eligibility requirements for financial assistance need to be flexible and non-restrictive.

For example, while some students participating in a reduced course-load are able to increase their ability to work, earn money and, therefore, independently finance their education, many students are forced to study part-time because of their inability to meet their financial needs. Studies show that close to 40 per cent of these students receive financial aid from private sources and, therefore, demonstrate a high level of financial need that is not being addressed by the OSAP system.

In addition, parental contribution tables set out minimum expected parental financial support for students defined as “dependants” but offer no means of accurately assessing the amount of support actually received. By ignoring actual family support, and with little regard for any extenuating circumstances faced by students or their families, parental contribution tables actively discriminate against a large number of students experiencing financial need.

Overly restrictive eligibility criteria, inaccurate needs-assessment policies and the disqualification of entire groups of students make it impossible for financial assistance to reach enough students

and provide appropriate levels of support. As a result, many students are rendered ineligible for adequate government financial assistance and are either excluded from post-secondary education or forced to seek out private loans or lines of credit in order to finance their education.

### **Policy**

The Federation supports eligibility requirements for student financial assistance that:

- Are based on the demonstrated financial need of the student;
- Allow for levels of in-study student income that, combined with financial assistance, enable the student to remain above the poverty line.
- Accommodate students who choose not to, or cannot afford to, attend their program on a full-time basis;
- Allow students to determine their own status as independent or dependent, and that this status overrides a parent or guardian's claim of their dependency for the purpose of taxation;
- Evaluate students based solely on actual and not presumed income when assessing the amount of assistance they will receive; and
- Include an easily accessible appeals process that allows students to challenge their assessment in a transparent and expedient manner.

The Federation opposes eligibility requirements for student financial assistance that:

- Include a definition of "independent student" status which includes a minimum age, which requires the student to maintain a minimum income level and which includes a waiting period after a student's parent or guardian stops claiming the student as a dependant for the purpose of taxation;
- Disqualify students studying in the public education system, based on program or institution of choice;
- Disqualify or restrict access for part-time or working students who otherwise demonstrate financial need;
- Include performance assessments that compound academic and personal problems with financial ones, such as policy to withdraw financial support from students who fail to complete a minimum 60 per cent course load;
- Disqualify students based on financial or credit history or other such factors that may be indicators of financial need;
- Discriminate against students based on non-resident status, such as for refugees and other protected persons; and
- Impose any other measures that serve to restrict access to, or eligibility for, student assistance programs, on any basis other than financial need.

## **5. Student Loan Borrowing Limits**

### **Preamble**

Between 1992 and 2002, tuition fees in Ontario increased by 140 per cent, or six times the rate of inflation. During that period, average student debt for a 4-year program increased by 300 per cent, from \$8,000 to \$25,000. Today, a greater percentage of students are experiencing financial need and are turning to public and private loans programs as a desperate recourse. On average,

students receiving government student loans are doing so at levels close to the maximum annual borrowing limit and, as tuition increases outstrip borrowing limits, students are increasingly identifying “unmet need” as a key concern.

With the steady increase of educational user fees, and in the absence of any meaningful public needs-based grants, many governments are offering increased borrowing limits on student loans as a reprieve to desperate students.

In actual fact, public, private or institutional student loans programs are not student-aid plans but funding models for post-secondary education. They are based on the belief that the individual is the prime beneficiary of a post-secondary education and should bear the full cost. Therefore, student loans programs, and the continual increase of borrowing limits, provide justification for further tuition fee increases because they purport to help students manage that cost.

In effect, increased borrowing limits on student loans do not increase accessibility, they merely increase student debt and, through correlated tuition fee increases, serve to further privatize the cost of post-secondary education.

Furthermore, student loans, as an alternative to needs-based grants, result in massive accumulations of debt that has social and economic impacts on society. For example, student loans disproportionately hurt women because it takes women, on average, considerably longer to pay back their interest-bearing loans. Because women often leave the workforce due to pregnancy and still earn less than men, repayment rate difficulties are more pronounced and, through compound interest, women often end up paying more for their education than their male counterparts.

Finally, the prospect of student debt disproportionately deters students from economically depressed circumstances from achieving a post-secondary education and negatively impacts the social and economic choices of college and university graduates.

The Federation supports the establishment of up-front grants and reduced tuition fees as a solution to the crisis of student debt and unmet need.

### **Policy**

The Federation opposes increasing student debt, through increased student loan borrowing limits or any other mechanism, as a means of funding post-secondary education.

## **6. Miscellaneous**

The Federation calls on the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to make funds available for short-term, interest free, emergency loans, administered locally on the basis of proven need.

The Federation calls on the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to guarantee that interest-free interim funds will be available to those students waiting for Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) applications delayed in processing.

The Federation calls for the inclusion of actual dependency and the continued inclusion of child-care costs as allowable expenses under OSAP, effective immediately.

The Federation will advise the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to do OSAP appeal procedures on-campus with the appellant or their representative present in all cases.

The Federation calls on the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to ensure that extensive information and counselling on OSAP and other financial assistance are introduced at the secondary school levels.

## **Issues Policy – Student Assistance**

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The Federation supports, in principle, that repayment of student assistance commence six months after finding employment, except where the employment is a co-operative program work-term.

The Federation supports a more realistic assessment process, taking into consideration: regional disparity, dependent/independent status, arbitrary recall of loans upon their mistake, interest rates on loans and portability.

The Federation supports assessments for OSAP based on earned income, and for grants to be awarded to those who cannot make the required contribution due to unemployment.

The Federation supports the removal of parental contributions, as a requirement for OSAP.

The Federation advocates that OSAP should take into account the extra expenses incurred by francophone students.

The Federation advocates an adequate reform of in order to accommodate the special cost of studying in French in Ontario.

The Federation supports the implementation of a universal system of grants.

The Federation opposes any student assistance program that links a payback scheme with income after graduation and condemns the use of Income Contingent Loan Repayment to justify massive tuition increases.

**ADOPTED: AGM 1977**

**AMENDED: AGM 1978, AGM 1979, AGM 1986, SAGM 1987, AGM 1988, AGM 1991, SAGM 1992, AGM 1993, SAGM 1994, AGM 1995, AGM 1996, AGM 1997, SAGM 2003, SAGM 2004, SAGM 2005**



## **STUDENT SPACE**

### **Policy**

The Federation supports preserving adequate student spaces on campus that:

- Are student owned and operated by campus students' unions;
- Meet the diverse cultural, physical and social needs of their members in the form of dedicated spaces for constituency groups;
- Do not participate in corporate sponsorship or exclusivity agreements whenever possible;
- Promote the visibility and profile of campus students' unions;
- Are adequately made available to their members for both planned events and as social gathering spaces;
- Are built or operated with adequate input from democratically elected student representatives; and
- Do not restrict students' rights to organize.

**ADOPTED: AGM 2005**



# **STUDENT-WORKER SOLIDARITY**

## **Preamble**

Colleges and universities function because of the vast work of both academic workers and support staff to advance the mandate of the institution. Support staff include library workers and child care workers to administrative staff, food service workers, custodial and include maintenance staff, and technicians. Academic workers include faculty, sessional instructors, research and teaching assistants and markers and graders. Students are able to enjoy high quality post-secondary education when their institution provides quality working conditions for its workers. Job security, liveable wages, and fair and equitable treatment in the workplace provide assurances that workers are able to contribute meaningfully in public post-secondary education. The protection of high quality services and dignity and respect for workers are integral to high quality post-secondary education.

Students and workers alike face the detrimental effects of privatization of public post-secondary institutions through eroding employee wages, job insecurity and contracting out while also burdening students with higher user fees and declining quality of education. Privatization also lends a business model approach to institutional governance which compromises the democratic participation of students and campus workers in shaping the strategic direction of their institutions. Business governance models lend preference to major donors and profit-oriented interests, rather than the interests of students, workers and the common good.

The major inflation of salaries for institutional administrators is a symptom of encroaching privatization and results in an ever-widening gap between the employer and employees of post-secondary institutions. The same university and college presidents who are benefiting from significant salary increases have a tendency of making arguments during bargaining that the only way to fund the wages of faculty and staff is to increase tuition fees. Such a tactic is a deliberate attempt to position students against workers in an effort to weaken support during labour negotiations.

Students are well-positioned to collaborate with university and college workers to expose the income gap between institutional administrators and the students and workers; to reveal the dangers of privatization of public institutions; to support fair working conditions for all campus workers; and to call for accessible, democratic and high quality post-secondary education. When united, students and workers can support their collective goals to ensure high quality, accessible public post-secondary education, living wages and democratic university governance. By respecting picket lines during a labour dispute on campus and educating members of the common goals of students and workers, students can reinforce the struggle of labour unions to keep education a public good and post-secondary institutions as equitable and principled employers. Such coalition work with labour unions has enabled faculty, graduate student employees and support staff to make significant advances in collective bargaining thereby contributing to the efforts to protect accessible, public post-secondary education.

## **Policy**

The Federation supports:

- The rights of all workers employed at post-secondary institutions to organize in a labour union;
- Campus workers in their fight against cutbacks, outsourcing and privatisation at post-secondary institutions;
- Students' unions working in coalition with provincial and local faculty associations; local, provincial, and national workers' unions; and other groups calling for improved conditions for workers at post-secondary institutions;
- Campus workers coordinating bargaining with other unions on campus in order to ensure fair and adequate working conditions for faculty, graduate student employees, researchers and support

## **Issues Policy – Student-Worker Solidarity**

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staff;

- Meaningful representation of students and workers on all levels of university governance;
- Student efforts to publicly support campus worker unions in their collective bargaining efforts;
- Efforts by students' unions to relocate services and operations off-campus for the duration of a campus labour dispute in order to respect picket lines;
- Academic amnesty for students who respect picket lines during a labour dispute at their post-secondary institution;
- Students' unions working in coalition with labour unions to lobby governments for increased funding for post-secondary education; and
- Good faith bargaining.

The Federation opposes:

- Arguments made by administrators that increasing workers salaries will inevitably result in increasing tuition fees;
- The contracting-out of institutional services;
- The use of replacement workers during a campus labour dispute; and
- External government influences that seek to negatively impact the ability of workers to bargain collectively.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 1978**

**AMENDED: SAGM 1983, SAGM 1990, AGM 2000, AGM 2008**

# TUITION AND USER FEES

## Preamble

Education is a fundamental right of every person without distinction of income, race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, political belief or economic or social condition. Tuition fees, user fees and ancillary fees constitute a barrier to accessing post-secondary education.

In 1948, the Government of Canada signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that states, "Everyone has the right to education". In 1976, Canada signed the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights that states, "Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education".

The cost of post-secondary education and increasing debt levels are significant factors in the decision students make about whether or not to continue their studies beyond high school. It should be recognized that students from low-income backgrounds are much more likely to be affected by financial issues when deciding whether to pursue post-secondary education. It should also be recognized that these financial barriers disproportionately affect traditionally marginalized communities.

Students participating in post-secondary education may face considerable financial barriers, including housing, transportation and living expenses, in addition to tuition, ancillary and user fees. Many students may also forgo job earnings to attend a post-secondary institution. Of these, user fees account for the greatest up-front, universal barrier to obtaining a post-secondary education in Canada.

It is the responsibility of governments to fully fund post-secondary education. In the absence of adequate funding, post-secondary institutions often rely on private sources, such as tuition, user and ancillary fees. In cases when governments have regulated tuition fees, faculty- or program-based student votes on tuition, user and ancillary fee increases initiated by administrations of post-secondary education institutions have been used to circumvent provincial government policies on fees and undermine the work of the student movement by dividing students among themselves.

The Federation believes that a universally accessible post-secondary education system will only be achieved once financial barriers to obtaining that education are eliminated. In particular, this requires that post-secondary education be entirely publicly funded, tuition, user and ancillary fees are non-existent, and students have access to student financial assistance for living expenses in the form of non-repayable grants.

## Policy

The Federation supports:

- Universally accessible, publicly funded post-secondary education, including the elimination of all fees, including tuition, user and ancillary fees;
- A robust up-front, needs-based grants system for both full- and part-time students to cover living expenses while attending post-secondary education;
- The elimination of existing fees beginning with progressive reductions; and
- That if tuition fees are charged, they be applied on a per-term, per-credit basis.

The Federation opposes:

- The differentiation of fees on the basis of program, country or province of origin, student status, language or medium of study or for any other reason;
- The use of differential government funding schemes that force post-secondary institutions to increase fees;

## **Issues Policy – Tuition and User Fees**

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- All efforts, including budget votes, undertaken by administrations, governments or any third party corporation or organization to increase fees at post-secondary institutions;
- Increases in fees other than those democratically and legitimately initiated by student societies for the benefit of students;
- The justification that increased student financial assistance can offset the effects of higher tuition fees, including income-contingent loan repayment schemes, as they are designed to facilitate a system of individual fees in which students pay the full cost of post-secondary education, and invariably result in massive tuition fee increases;
- The use of tax credits and saving schemes as replacement for tuition fee reductions and non-repayable grants; and
- Any type of flat fees charged to students based on full- or part-time status, type of student (e.g. graduate, college, professional) or program of study.

**ADOPTED: AGM 1976**

**AMENDED: SAGM 1987, AGM 1988, SAGM 1994, SAGM 1995, AGM 1997, SAGM 1998, AGM 2014, SAGM 2015**

# UNIVERSAL TRANSIT PASS (U-PASS) PROGRAMS

## Preamble

Transit systems should be designed to provide affordable and accessible public transit that is equally available to everyone. As a means of working toward this, bulk purchasing programs known as Universal Transit Passes (U-Pass) have been developed by transit authorities and universities and colleges across Canada. Depending on service and funding levels, U-Pass programs can either be progressive instruments that increase transit access to students, or regressive tax shifts that use students to subsidize under-funded transit systems.

## Policy

The Federation supports U-Pass programs as a means of providing increased accessibility to public transit to members at a reduced cost, with the following guiding principles:

### a. Democratic Decision-Making

The terms and conditions, including price, should be determined through negotiations between governments/transit authorities and students' unions, subject to ratification by union membership.

U-Pass contracts with governments/transit authorities should include a clause stipulating that all proposed increases to the U-Pass fee shall require membership approval via a referendum conducted by the students' union, notwithstanding the right of faculty, staff, and administrators to conduct their own democratic vote to participate in and raise fees for the U-Pass program.

### b. System Input

U-Pass agreements should include mechanisms for students, through their students' unions, to have input into transit system operations, funding, design and planning as they relate to campus-specific transit services.

### c. Institutional Support

In constructing U-Pass agreements, students' unions should endeavour to include their respective university or college as sponsors of the U-Pass such that any savings realized by institutions from reduced parking facilities and increased parking fees are passed on to students in the form of a subsidy to the U-Pass program.

### d. Access

U-Pass agreements should prioritize affordable access to transit services and should identify free public transit in all of Ontario as a long-term goal of U-Pass programs.

U-Pass agreements may have opt-out clauses for, but not limited to, those members who live and work outside the transit service region and who have a minimal on-campus course load.

### e. Universality

U-Pass programs should be campus-wide and include agreements with all students, faculty, staff and administrators. U-Pass programs should be available to all registered students, regardless of age or status. Additionally, programs in the same region/area should not discriminate in price, service, or contractual obligations of the program based upon which institution one attends.

### f. Collective Bargaining

Students' unions should be entitled to work together to collectively bargain universal U-Pass agreements for their members in a given region/area. Solidarity in collective bargaining is the only way to support the needs of all students.

**g. Portability**

Transit systems hosting a U-Pass program should provide free access to U-Pass holders of other transit systems in Ontario to create a network of access to public transit for all U-Pass holders in the province.

**h. Long-Term Goal**

Notwithstanding the existence of U-Pass agreements, a fully funded, public, province-wide system of transit provided to everyone at no cost is the long-term objective. Funding for transit should be provided through a progressive taxation system as opposed to user fees or private advertising, which are regressive forms of funding for a public service. U-Pass programs are not systems of taxation. As funding through taxation increases for public transit, U-Pass fees should be reduced along with all other forms of user fees.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 2009**



# UNPAID INTERNSHIPS

## Preamble

In Ontario, tens of thousands of students and young workers perform unpaid work, often while being misclassified as interns, trainees, and non-employees. The *Employment Standards Act, 2000* states that all employees must be paid at least the Ontario minimum wage. However, it excludes persons receiving training if several conditions are met, including that no employees are displaced as a result and that training is for the benefit of the individual and of little to no benefit to the person providing training. The *Employment Standards Act* also does not apply to students who perform work under programs approved by their secondary or post-secondary institutions.

The Federation affirms the right of all individuals to be compensated for their work. The Federation recognizes that students and young workers disproportionately take on unpaid internships and training programs. Unpaid work is also gendered - the majority of unpaid internships are held by women, and students in engineering, computer science, technology and business management programs receive paid remuneration more often than students in design, communications, the humanities, the arts or marketing.

The *Employment Standards Act* creates unfair and arbitrary distinctions between paid and unpaid work and allows employers to exploit students and young workers, who already face higher tuition fees and graduate with more debt than any generation before them. Furthermore, the Ministry of Labour has not proactively enforced the *Employment Standards Act* or conduct inspections targeting employers using unpaid interns or unpaid trainees, relying on a complaints driven enforcement model of the *Act*. This ignores the fact that substantial power imbalances exist between interns, trainees, and employers, and allows the practice of illegal unpaid internships to continue.

Unpaid internships and unpaid training programs have a destabilizing effect on Ontario's labour market and economy. These programs drive down wages, lead to the replacement of paid employees with unpaid ones, increase the youth unemployment rate and heighten the amount of debt students incur. They also reduce overall economic growth and contribute to a growing level of labour market precariousness targeting students, trainees and young workers.

## Policy

The Federation supports:

- The prohibition of unpaid internships, articleships, training programs and other forms of labour benefiting for-profit employers;
- The inclusion of interns, co-op students, and others in similar forms of work under the *Employment Standards Act*, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and other statutes that guarantee and protect the rights of employees;
- Proactive enforcement strategies to ensure that existing restrictions on unpaid work are enforced, including inspection blitzes targeting high-risk employers who may be non-compliant with the *Employment Standards Act*;
- Programs that create more paid entry-level positions for students and young workers, particularly in fields where opportunities are limited and often unpaid; and
- Government funding for internships, articleships, and training programs at non-profit organizations in order to allow for the remuneration of such workers.

The Federation opposes:

- Arbitrary and unfair distinctions between paid and unpaid work; and

## **Issues Policy – Unpaid Internships**

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- The institutionalization of the practice of students providing unpaid labour as part of requirements for graduation.

**ADOPTED: SAGM 2014**

# WOMEN'S ISSUES

## Preamble

Despite having achieved formal legal equality in Canada, women continue to experience socio-economic inequity relative to men. Structural, institutional and individual forms of sexism persist and continue to play a role in determining the lives of women. This inequity is evidenced by a number of socio-economic indicators that include, but are not limited to: the lower wages of women relative to men, the higher representation of women in employment that is temporary, part-time, and/or does not provide benefits, pensions or access to Employment Insurance, the high rates of gender-based violence experienced by women, the disproportionately high rates of poverty among women and the underrepresentation of women in all levels of government.

The effects and manifestation of various forms of sexism can be compounded by other forms of discrimination. Therefore, women can experience sexism differently based on their race, ability, age, citizenship status, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or spoken language. In this context of this marginalization, the promotion of women's rights must be central importance to the creation of a just and equitable society.

Structural, institutional and individual forms of discrimination on the basis of gender affect women's access to post-secondary education and impact their experience as students. Despite some advancement in the participation of women in post-secondary education, women remain underrepresented in areas of study such as science, engineering and business. In the absence of affordable public child care, women, who are the vast majority of sole-support parents, face additional barriers to participation in post-secondary education. In addition, academic programs that investigate and address gender inequity often face chronic under-funding and have been marginalized in institutional and governmental funding priorities.

For women who do attend college or university, statistics show they face high rates of violence, particularly in the form of sexual assault. Despite this reality, the vast majority of incidents of sexual assault on campus go unreported and many institutions lack response protocols and support services to adequately address the issue. Creating a safe learning environment and challenging sexism and gender oppression are integral to the promotion of human rights and a fully accessible post-secondary education system.

## Policy

The Federation supports:

- Women's right to choice of lifestyle, employment, and education as full and equal participants in society;
- Women's right to control their own bodies, including but not limited to:
  - Freedom of expression of sexual orientation;
  - Freedom of reproductive choice, including access to publicly-funded reproductive health services;
  - Freedom from sexual harassment, sexual assault and all other forms of violence; and
  - The right to study in a safe educational environment;
- Women's full and equitable access to post-secondary education;
- Women's right to employment and equal pay for work of equal value;
- Equal gender representation in all levels of government;
- Access to full, government funded, high quality public child care, provided by adequately paid and trained child care workers;
- Adequate government funding for women's advocacy, support and research organizations;

## **Issues Policy – Women’s Issues**

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- Financial student assistance programs that meet the needs of full-time and part-time students, including single parents, and which treat women as independent individuals;
- Concrete programs for the re-entry of women into post-secondary education, to aid women in overcoming the barriers related to the interruption of studies;
- Academic counselling that informs women of all educational and employment opportunities available, in order to actively combat the streaming of women into traditional professions and fields of study;
- The right of women to self-organize on campus, to have access to students’ union resources and places where women can develop organizational and political skills, and foster a sense of unity and cooperation;
- The recognition, promotion, funding and collaboration between students’ unions and women’s organizations on and off campus to promote equity and the rights of women;
- Education and academic materials that are free from sexism and gender discrimination, recognizing that some literature and materials must be viewed relative to their historical or social context;
- An educational environment free of advertisements, entertainment programming and/or materials which promote violence against women, gender stereotyping and/or discrimination;
- Government funded women’s studies courses and programs in post-secondary educational institutions;
- Government and institutionally funded grants, scholarships and bursaries that are dedicated to the support of women students and faculty and the investigation of gender and women’s issues, as well as the recognition of these priorities in existing student and research funding programs;
- Institutional financial support for sexual assault crisis centres and other resources to challenge discrimination, harassment and violence on college and university campuses;
- The active involvement of women in all of the affairs of their students’ unions and in all aspects of the student movement;
- Academic amnesty and the cancellation of classes and exams at post-secondary institutions during events marking the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women and memorializing the events of December 6, 1989; and
- The right of all people to define their own gender and therefore considers the Issues Policy on “Women’s Issues” to apply to all who identify along the gender spectrum of womanhood.

The Federation opposes:

- Sexism and discrimination against women, including structural, cultural, institutional and individual manifestations;
- Violence against women in all its forms including, but not limited to, physical, verbal and economic violence, and violent representations of women in media;
- Cuts to government funding allocated for women’s advocacy, support and research organizations;
- Cuts to women’s and gender studies courses and programs and academic programs that seek to investigate, research and address gender inequity;
- Privatization of public services including child care, health care and social services;
- Differential wages for women and the segregation, stereotyping and undervaluing of work traditionally performed by women;
- Cuts to grants, scholarships or bursaries dedicated to the support of women students and faculty

and the investigation of gender and women’s issues; and

- Any governmental legislation, act or designation that implies or suggests, directly or indirectly, that women in Canada have achieved equality and no longer need to advocate for the improvement of women’s equality.

**ADOPTED: AGM 1973**

**AMENDED: AGM 1976, SAGM 1980, AGM 1983, AGM 1985, SAGM 1989, AGM 1991, SAGM 1992, SAGM 1993, AGM 1995, AGM1998, SAGM 2000, AGM 2000, SAGM 2003, SAGM 2010**