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# BE BOLD

EDUCATION & CLIMATE JUSTICE FOR ALL

Canadian Federation of Students Lobby Document 2020

## CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

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# CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

The Canadian Federation of Students is Canada's largest and oldest student organization, uniting over 500,000 college, undergraduate and graduate students from coast to coast. The Federation and its predecessor organizations have advocated for the interests of post-secondary students in Canada for more than 90 years. The Federation's ultimate goal is to achieve a universal system of high-quality, public, tuition-free post-secondary education in Canada for domestic and international students. This system would include adult education, apprenticeships for skilled trades and diploma or degree programs in colleges and universities.

## BRITISH COLUMBIA

Kwantlen Student Association

College of the Rockies Students' Union

\*Northern Undergraduate Student Society

## PRAIRIES

Alberta College of Art and Design Students' Association

Graduate Students' Association of the University of Calgary

First Nations University of Canada Students' Association

University of Regina Students' Union

University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association

Brandon University Students' Union

University of Manitoba Students' Union

University of Manitoba Graduate Students' Association

Association étudiante de l'Université de Saint-Boniface

University of Winnipeg Students' Association

## ONTARIO

Algoma University Students' Union

l'Association des étudiantes et étudiants de l'université de Hearst

Association général des étudiantes et étudiants du Collège Boréal

Brock University Graduate Students' Association

Carleton University Students' Association

Carleton University Graduate Students' Association

Student Association of George Brown College

Glendon College Student Union

University of Guelph Central Student Association

University of Guelph Graduate Students' Association

Lakehead University Student Union

Laurentian Association of Mature and Part-Time Students

Laurentian University Graduate Students' Association

Laurentian University Students' General Association

Association des étudiantes et étudiants francophones de l'Université Laurentienne

Laurentian Students' Union

Nipissing University Student Union

Ontario College of Art and Design Student Union

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

Queen's University Society of Graduate and Professional Students

Ryerson Students' Union

Continuing Education Students' Association of Ryerson University

Saint Paul University Students' Association

University of Toronto Scarborough Campus Students' Union

University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union

University of Toronto Students' Union.

University of Toronto Mississauga Students' Union

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

Trent Central Student Association

Society of Graduate Students of the University of Western Ontario

Wilfrid Laurier University Graduate Students' Association

University of Windsor Students' Alliance

University of Windsor Graduate Students' Society

University of Windsor Organization of Part-time University Students

York Federation of Students

York University Graduate Students' Association

## MARITIMES

Cape Breton University Students' Union

Dalhousie Association of Graduate Students

Holland College Student Union

King's Students' Union

Mount Saint Vincent University Students' Union

University of New Brunswick Graduate Students' Association

Student Union of NSCAD

University of Prince Edward Island Student Union

University of Prince Edward Island Graduate Student Association

Association générale des étudiants de l'Université Sainte-Anne

\*Mature and Part-time University Students Association - University of Prince Edward Island

\*Dalhousie Student Union

## NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Grenfell Campus Student Union

Marine Institute Students' Union

Memorial University of Newfoundland Students' Union

Graduate Students' Union of the Memorial University of Newfoundland

College of the North Atlantic Students' Union

\*denotes prospective member



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

## POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IN CANADA

Canadians utilize our post-secondary education system to a high degree but the current system requires that students take on unprecedented and life-altering debt loads to obtain an education that is increasingly a necessity in our modern economy. Bold national leadership is required to transform the current piecemeal funded system into a high-quality, well-resourced system that will benefit not only students, but Canada as a whole.

Today, Canada ranks among the top countries in the world for its proportion of citizens with post-secondary education training. Between 2005 and 2017 participation in Canada's post-secondary education system increased from 46 to 57 percent, the highest rate among OECD countries.<sup>1</sup> In 2013-14, federal expenditures on post-secondary education totaled approximately \$12.8 billion. The Parliamentary Budget Office estimates that, based on commitments in Budget 2016, these investments in post-secondary education will rise to over \$15.7 billion by 2020-21. Federal expenditures on post-secondary education are not insignificant. Canada currently allocates 2.5 percent of its GDP to post-secondary education, which is higher than the OECD average of 1.6 percent.<sup>2</sup>

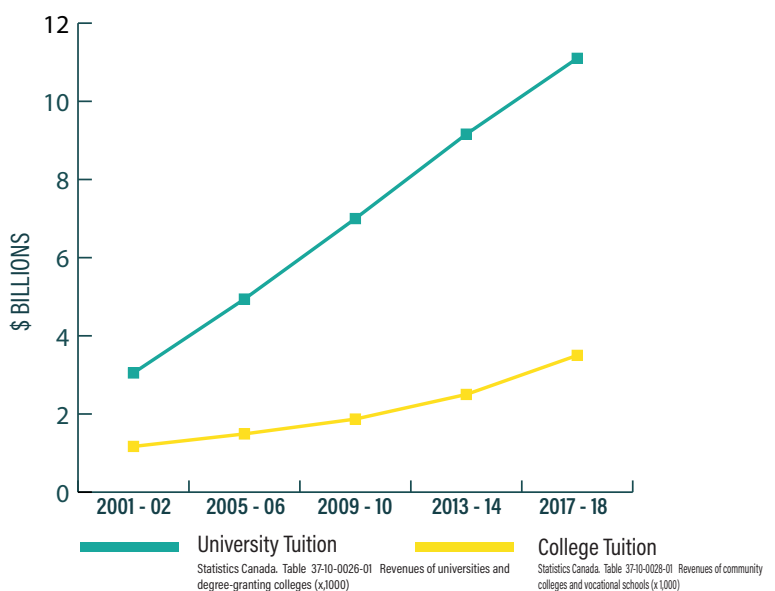
It is these facts that are used to celebrate Canada's post-secondary education system, but it is important to analyze *how* this funding is allocated. In 2015, 60 percent of post-secondary students came from the upper 40 percent of income earners, and for lower-income students, pursuing post-secondary education today comes at a tremendous cost. As Charts 1-3 illustrate, tuition revenue has tripled in the past fifteen years, while total public student debt reached over \$36 billion by 2016,<sup>3</sup> of which over \$18 billion is owed to the federal government.<sup>4</sup> This has quickly risen from \$19 billion in 1999 and from \$29 billion in 2012, and does not capture privately-held student debt.

Post-secondary education is a right of Indigenous people, a promise Canada has committed to through treaties, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The first federal program for First Nations and Inuit post-secondary education support was created with the intention of facilitating Indigenous students' access to post-secondary education

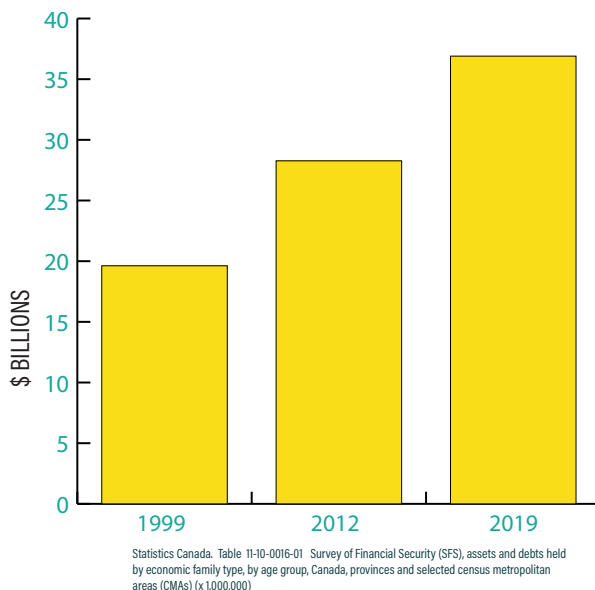
and also to alleviate the financial barriers faced by Indigenous students such as the costs of tuition fees, textbooks, school supplies, travel and living expenses.

To create a system of accessible, high quality post-secondary education, the federal government must move away from piecemeal reforms and a funding model that downloads costs onto individuals. Students are calling on all federal parties to commit to reinvesting in public post-secondary education to end crushing debt associated with pursuing an education.

**Chart 1: Tuition Revenues**



**Chart 2: Public Student Loan Debt**  
(Federal and Provincial)



# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This document outlines the following key recommendations for the federal government to implement and maintain a universal system of post-secondary education that ensures a prosperous and equitable future for generations to come:



## TUITION FEES IN CANADA

- > Eliminate tuition fees for all students and restore core federal funding for post-secondary education.



## FAIRNESS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- > Ensure fairness for international students who contribute to our post-secondary education system and society as a whole



## RECONCILIATION

- > Honour Canada's treaty commitments on post-secondary education for Indigenous peoples.



## CLIMATE JUSTICE

- > Take bold action on climate change to ensure a livable planet for current and future generations.



## GRADUATE STUDENTS

- > Increase funding for graduate students and support fair dealing in the Copyright Act.



## STUDENT HOUSING

- > Address affordable student housing shortages, while addressing affordable housing for low-income Canadians generally.

# TIMELINE:

## THE SHIFT FROM A PUBLIC TO "PUBLICLY- ASSISTED" POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

1946 - 1951

Over 130 000 World War Two Veterans enter the post- secondary education system. Canada's Veterans Charter affords them free tuition, living allowances and other benefits. The post-secondary education system is no longer a finishing school for Canada's elite.

1960 - 1975

Enrolment in post-secondary education surges by 300 percent following the veterans' example, along with a dramatic rise in the proportion of women on campuses. Many of today's post-secondary education institutions are built in this period, all based on strong public funding and a 50/50 cost-sharing model between provincial and federal levels of government.

The federal government announces measures aimed at promoting individual saving schemes and scholarships to address increasing levels of student debt.

The biggest single cut to federal transfers for post-secondary education is made (\$2.29 billion, an 18 percent reduction) as the EPF framework is replaced by the Canada Health and Social Transfer. Tuition fees rise dramatically, particularly for professional programs.

Annual funding increases to the PSSSP are capped at two percent instead of increasing with enrolment

1998

1996

Over 18,500 Indigenous learners, roughly half of those who qualify are denied funding due to inadequate investment in the PSSSP.

The federal government introduces a modest national system of needs-based grants to be delivered by the Canada Student Loans Program (CSLP).

2006 - 2011

2008

The federal government commits to decreases in Canada Student Loans Program (CSLP) interest rates to prime from previous floating rates at prime +2.5%. Further funding commitments are made to programs for First Nations, Métis and Inuit access to post-secondary education. As climate disasters worsen, students engage in a global climate strike, demanding that leaders take action to protect their futures and those of their children.

2019



The first federal program for First Nations and Inuit post-secondary education support was created by Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs & Indigenous Services Canada (formerly Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs) covering the costs of tuition fees, textbooks, school supplies, travel and living expenses.

The number of eligible students and their expenses determined funding for the PSSSP

Canada signs the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which, among other things, commits to the "progressive introduction of free education" at all levels.

1968

1976

The funding model for PSSSP is shifted from per-student funding to limited block funding, to be administered by local Band Councils.

The Established Programs Financing (EPF) fiscal framework replaces the 50/50 cost sharing model for post-secondary education, leading to \$8 billion in cuts to federal transfers by 1995.

1992

1977

The federal government commits to implementing all recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, including provision 11 to, "provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education."

The federal government eliminates several education tax credits, and implements a 50 percent increase to CSLP grants.

2015

2016

The federal government invests \$1.7 billion over five years for fundamental research as well as a \$10 million investment for Métis post-secondary education. Also introduced is funding to establish a National Framework to Address Gender-Based Violence at Post-Secondary Institutions

The federal government announces 90 million in funding over 2 years for the PSSSP.

2018

2017



## RECOMMENDATION 1:

# FEDERAL FUNDING, TUTION FEES, AND STUDENT DEBT

## FEDERAL CUTBACKS LEAD TO RISING TUITION FEES AND STUDENT DEBT

### **\$ 36,000,000,000 NATIONAL PUBLIC STUDENT DEBT**

The deep federal cuts made to post-secondary education in the 1980s and 1990s were never restored. In most provinces, austerity was downloaded onto students in the form of massive tuition fee increases. While all students in Canada have faced dramatic fee increases, tuition fees for international students have become particularly burdensome with all provinces moving to a system of differential tuition fees. This xenophobic policy has ballooned in practice with international students paying, on average, triple that of domestic students for the same education. These students are seen as cash injections for a starved system, instead of students with valuable experiences who enrich our campuses and communities. Average undergraduate international tuition fees rose to \$29,714 per year in 2019<sup>5</sup>, an average 9.4% increase from 2018 alone.

For most students, who are unable to afford these high up-front costs, pursuing an education requires incurring life-impacting levels of debt. Total public student debt in Canada reached \$36 billion by 2016. This number does not cover student debt from private sources. The amount owed to the Canada Student Loan Program (CSLP) is over \$18 billion and is increasing by nearly \$1 million per day. If this system persists, by 2020-21, it is estimated that over 510,000 students will be forced to resort to the CSLP and the amount of federal student loans issued in a single year will exceed \$3

billion.<sup>6</sup>

The financial burden of high tuition fees is exacerbated for graduate students by substantial debt accumulated from earlier degrees. At the time of graduation in 2010, masters students owed an average of \$23,900, while doctoral students owed an average of \$41,100. On top of public debt, more graduate students are relying heavily on private sources for loans. According to the most recent National Graduate Survey, the average amount of private debt for a doctoral graduate more than doubles in ten years, from \$19,300 to \$40,100.

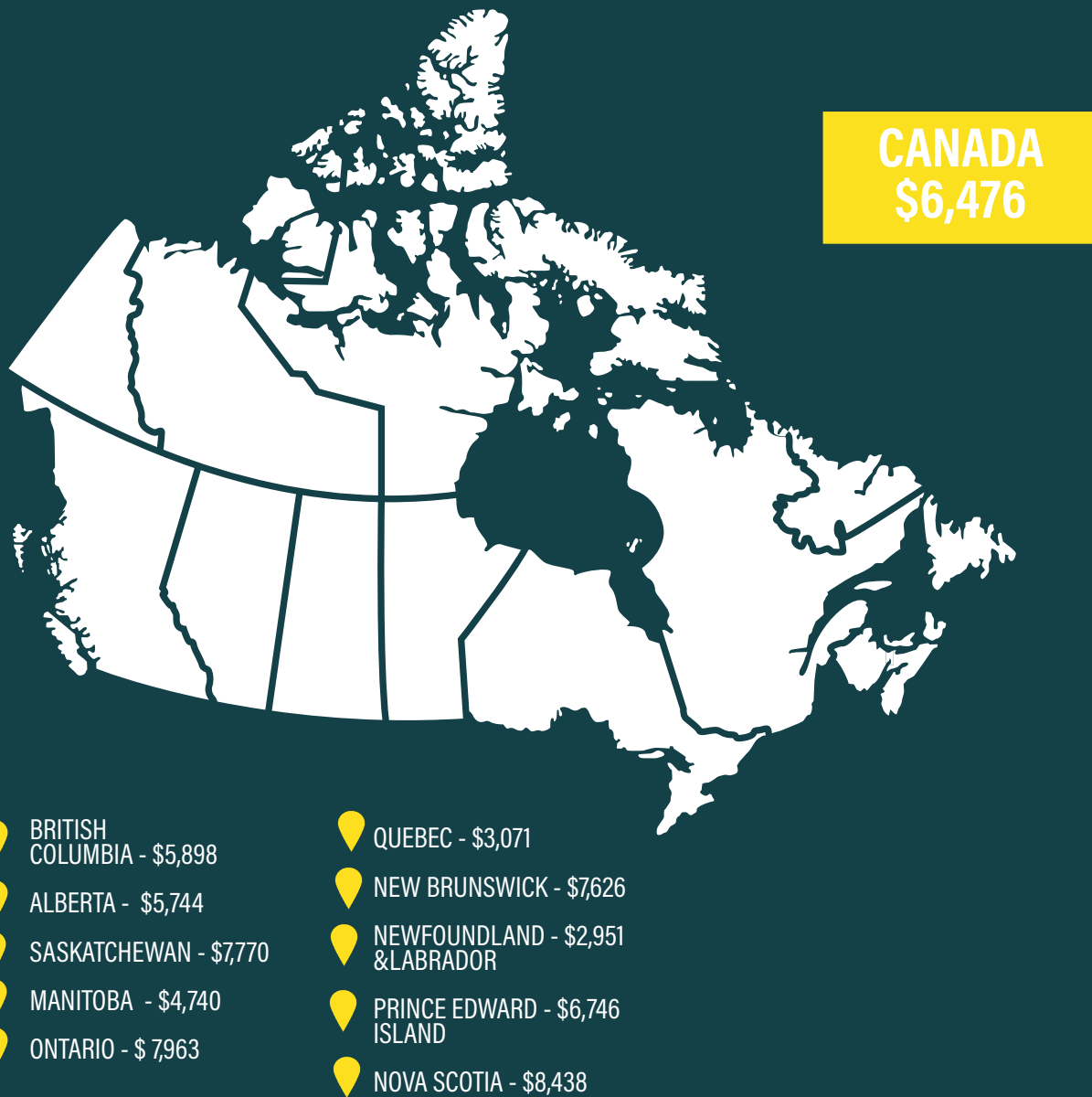
It is of course important to note that this does not tell the whole story. While students in Ontario saw a tuition decrease

of almost 10% from last year, cuts to provincial grants program OSAP more than outweighed the value of the fee cut, resulting in most costly education for the vast majority of students in the province.

Nova Scotia presently has the highest average tuition fees in the country, while New Brunswick has the fastest rising fees of any province in the country, with a 7.3% increase in domestic undergraduate fees from last year. The province of Newfoundland & Labrador continues to see the lowest tuition fees in the country, the result of greater than average public investment by the province.



## AVERAGE DOMESTIC UNGERGRADUATE TUITION FEES IN CANADA, 2019 - 2020 <sup>7</sup>



INSTITUTION	DOMESTIC TUITION	INTERNATIONAL TUITON	PRICE DIFFERENCE
Dalhousie University - Dentistry	\$26,250	\$52,538	200%
McMaster University - Medicine	\$26,115	\$95,985	368%
University of Manitoba - Asper MBA	\$35,240	\$48,211	137%
Univeristy of British Columbia - B.Ed.	\$12,025	\$50,917	423%

# PIECEMEAL REFORMS DO NOT ADDRESS HIGH UP-FRONT COSTS

Since the 1990s, the federal government has shifted expenditures away from universal access towards piecemeal programs which have resulted in the burden being placed on students in the form of increased tuition fees, the result: a system that is less accessible. The 1998 federal budget established the Canada Education Savings Grant, the Canada Study Grant and the Canada Learning Bond, as well as tax credits designed for tuition, textbooks and student loans. These programs encouraged Canadians to save for post-secondary education by providing federal subsidies, and are touted as assisting low and middle-income Canadians with

accessing post-secondary education.

However, research has shown that these programs are not being utilized by families who need them most. In 2015, families from the highest income quintile received \$780.5 million (37.7 percent) of the money spent on the tuition, textbook, education and student loan interest tax credits. Federal government expenditure on RESP contributions, amounting to over \$1.1 billion in 2013-2014, also predominantly benefitted high-income families. In 2013, 49 percent went to families with household incomes exceeding \$90,000, while 32 percent went to families earning more than \$125,000.

*“Engineering is my passion but tuition fees makes it look like a dream.”*

- Student, University of Manitoba

## THE CANADA STUDENT LOAN PROGRAM (CSLP)

Individual saving schemes do not benefit the low and middle-class, in fact, these students are forced to finance their education through debt. These students end up paying more for their education overall than those students who have the resources to pay the full costs upfront. Until recently, the Canada Student Loans Program (CSLP) also charged the highest interest rates for student debt in Canada: prime plus 5 percent for a fixed interest rate, or prime plus 2.5 percent for a floating interest rate. In 2017-2018, the CSLP was projected to generate \$862.6

million in interest on student loans.<sup>8</sup> Progress was made however in Budget 2019, when floating rates were reduced from prime plus 2.5% to prime. While this represents a savings of approximately \$2,000 for a student over the length of their loan, the principle of charging any interest on student loans remains unsettling. The current system ensures that those who can afford the upfront cost of their education pay less than those who can't. Even with the reduction in rates, it is estimated that the total interest paid by a borrower to the Canada Student

Loans Program in financing \$30,000 of student debt over 10 years will be approximately \$8,300.<sup>9</sup>

The federal government has taken some additional steps in the right direction overtime. In 2008, the ineffective Millennium Scholarship Fund was replaced with a system of modest needs-based student grants to be administered by the CSLP. Funding for these grants were increased by 50 percent in the 2016 federal budget, a change that was funded through the elimination of several post-secondary education tax

credits. While these investments are important, such reform will never catch up to demand unless accompanied by sufficient, sustainable public funding to the provincial and territorial governments.

Although Canada has a publicly-assisted system of post-secondary education it is one that continues to burden students with high fees and increased debt.

In 2013, 49 percent of  
RESPs went to families  
with household incomes  
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than \$125,000.

## RECOMMENDATION:

The federal government must make public education accessible to all students and create a universal system of post-secondary education :

- > Restore federal transfers to provinces and territories for post-secondary education to 1992 levels to address a \$2.29 billion cut in 1996, and enrolment/inflation growth since. **Cost: \$6.9 billion per year (includes \$4.3 billion in current funding and \$2.6 billion in new funding)**
- > Establish an ongoing transfer to the provinces and territories to eliminate tuition fees. **Cost: \$2.6 billion per year**
- > Eliminate interest rates on direct loans through the CSLP and provide Stage 2 assistance for all CSLP borrowers five years after graduation (which involves reducing the principal of a loan holder's debt). Part-time students (like full-time students) will not be required to pay back CSLP debt until six months after graduation. Graduate students will also be able to qualify for grants available through the CSLP. **Cost: \$1.15 billion**
- > Invest in skilled trades, apprenticeship training, adult basic education and language learning programs.
- > Introduce a federal *Post-Secondary Education Act*, which will be modeled on the *Canada Health Act*.

**Cost: \$10.7 billion (\$5.2 billion in new funding)**



## RECOMMENDATION 2:

# INDIGENOUS ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Post-secondary education is a right of Indigenous people. This right was guaranteed in several foundational nation-to-nation treaties, first asserted in the Royal Proclamation of 1763, and was reaffirmed as a constitutional right in the Canadian Constitution Act of 1982. Article 14 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, endorsed by Canada in 2010, identifies education as an inherent right of Indigenous people. Most recently, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls for action on Indigenous students' access to postsecondary education, including for the government to "provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education."

Indigenous youth are the fastest growing demographic in Canada, yet funding for their post-secondary education hasn't kept pace with rising cost of living and annual increases to tuition fees far outpacing available funding. While recent investments are significant, the fact remains that for over 20 years, subsequent federal governments have underfunded the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) - a federal initiative that distributes non-repayable financial support to Indigenous students attending post-secondary education.

While the Budget 2017 included \$90 million of funding over two years for

the PSSSP, this additional funding fell short of the government's 2015 election promise of injecting the program with \$50 million annually. With investments of \$327.5 million over five years in Budget 2019, First Nations learners have come closer to a fully funded program, but a significant shortfall still remains. This budget also announced \$125.5 million over ten years for Inuit student access to post-secondary, and \$362 million over ten years for Métis access. These programs also need to be assessed according to demand to ensure they are fully funded for every Indigenous student that wishes to attend post-secondary.

### **Effects of Post-secondary Education Underfunding on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Students**

The failure of successive Canadian governments to uphold the responsibility for Indigenous peoples' access to education has left an ever-widening gap in quality of life between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Educational attainment levels among Indigenous peoples remain significantly lower than the non-Indigenous population. According to the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS), less than 50 percent of Indigenous women over the age of 25 have a post-secondary degree, compared to 73 percent of non-Indigenous women. Only 46 percent of Indigenous men have a post-secondary degree, compared to 65 percent of non-Indigenous men.<sup>10</sup>

Poverty and under-funding on reserves continue to compound the struggle for

educational attainment at the elementary and secondary levels. Given the intergenerational trauma caused by the residential school system in Canada many Indigenous students maintain a distrust of the education system. Supports to ensure a successful transition to post-secondary education are lacking, including access to electronic equipment and related training, and two-spirit recognition and programming. For some, mental health supports are needed to address social shock upon arrival to post-secondary institutions, especially in situations where students are removed from community support systems.

### **Preservation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Culture and Traditions**

The preservation of Indigenous culture, history and languages are fundamental to reconciliation. Today, only 8.4 percent of Indigenous youth know and speak their traditional language, and at public post-secondary institutions across the country, access to Indigenous languages and culture are often not in the syllabus.<sup>11</sup> It is the responsibility of public colleges and universities to teach Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners about the history, culture and languages of the First Peoples of Turtle Island.

In 2010, the Canadian government endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), however the associated implementation bill, passed in the House

of Commons in 2016, has yet to pass the Senate. Students support not only full access to post-secondary for Indigenous learners, but also their right to free, prior and informed consent to projects and actions impacting their communities' territories. Recent violent actions undertaken by the RCMP in Wet'suwet'en territory and the Canadian partnership in the "Thirty Meter Telescope" project through Indigenous territory in Hawaii are only a couple examples of Indigenous rights violations concerning the Canadian student movement and the Circle of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Students.

In 2016, the Assembly of First Nations estimated a backlog of 10,000 Indigenous students waiting for PSSSP funding.

## RECOMMENDATION:

*Ensure that all Indigenous learners are able to pursue post-secondary education without cost, ensure that this education includes their history, cultures and languages, and that all Indigenous peoples' rights are upheld and protected.*

- > Invest additional funds to those allocated in Budget 2019 to fully address the backlog in applicants to the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) Cost: an additional \$228.3 million over three years **Cost: \$228.3 million over three years in new funding**
- > Assess current funding levels to new Métis and Inuit post-secondary funding programs to ensure that these programs are fully funded according to demand.
- > A fifty percent increase to federal funds dedicated to Indigenous language revitalization for fiscal year 2020-21, where funding continues to be dedicated to First Nations, First Nations-led and mandated institutions, and First Nations post-secondary institutions. Cost: \$16.5 million in new funds (\$33 million already dedicated) **Cost: \$16.5 million in new funding (in addition to \$33 million in current funding)**
- > Full implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), including the principle of free, prior and informed consent for any project impacting Indigenous territory.

**Cost: \$92.6 million per year** (in addition to current funding levels)



## RECOMMENDATION 3:



# GRADUATE ACCESS TO EDUCATION

### **Increase Funding for Graduate Students**

In order for Canada to remain economically competitive at a global level, it must secure its status as a centre for research and innovation. Investment in graduate studies provides the foundation for long-term innovation and trains the highly skilled workers and researchers needed to respond to the economic and social challenges that Canada faces now and will face in the future. Graduate students face a variety of challenges in both entering and pursuing their studies. Though the elimination of tuition fees will improve access, it is imperative that the government adequately funds the research pursuits of graduate students and challenge an increasingly commercialized and restrictive research environment.

The commitment to basic research in Budget 2018 went a long way towards ensuring innovation and Canada's competitiveness. It is also important to ensure that historically underrepresented groups have the means and incentives to pursue graduate studies, both as a matter of equality of opportunity and for the purpose of bringing diverse perspectives to the social and technological challenges facing Canadians in an increasingly complex and competitive global system.

By expanding eligibility to needs-based Canada Student Grants, more underrepresented students could

pursue graduate studies and graduate students could focus on completing their research. In turn, a more highly educated and diverse Canadian workforce would fuel research and innovation in both the public and private sectors. In the same vein, the creation of dedicated research fellowships for Indigenous and international students would serve to support the diversity of perspectives, and solutions to problems, that are crucial to ensuring Canada's competitiveness.

### **Fair Dealing Protection in the Copyright Act**

Supporting graduate students and research also requires ensuring that copyright law is fair and effective to the extent that it serves the public interest by fostering the free exchange of knowledge and ideas. In late 2017, the federal parliament began reviewing the Copyright Act.

"Fair dealing" refers to the use of copyright-protected works without permission or payment to rights holders if the material is used for research and education and if it meets certain fairness standards. At present, since the passage of the Copyright Modernization Act in 2012, fair dealing is operating as it should: as a limited right to allow students, teachers, and researchers to access and build upon existing literary and artistic works. It is therefore imperative that any changes to the Act serve to foster innovative thought

and the free exchange of knowledge by upholding the current fair dealing regime. A return to more restrictive copyright policies that favour commercial content owners and predatory prices over the interests of the broader public would run counter to the goal of supporting high quality research and innovation.

Students and their families have paid and continue to pay significant sums for learning materials. According to Statistics Canada, average household spending on textbooks in 2015 was \$656 for university texts and \$437 for college texts.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, a report on the book publishing industry in 2014 finds educational titles to be one of the top two commercial categories in domestic book sales.<sup>13</sup>

Students do struggle to afford textbooks. A 2015 British Columbia study found that 54% of students reported not purchasing at least one required textbook because of cost; 27% took fewer courses to lessen textbook costs; and 26% chose not to register for a course because of an expensive textbook.<sup>14</sup> However, these results are hardly due to a desire to keep profits from content creators and authors but rather due to predatory pricing on the part of publishers. It is therefore driving changes in scholarly communication.

Where the Copyright Act needs to change is in regards to the recognition of the



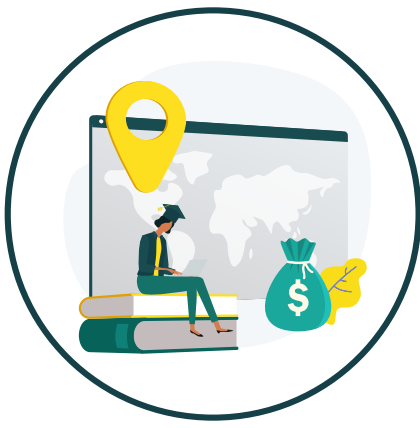
Constitutional rights of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. Recognizing that copyright law has historically and currently been in conflict with Indigenous understandings of knowledge use and sharing, and recognizing the need for the Government of Canada and all settlers to commit to reconciliation with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people, students demand that Indigenous knowledge and heritage be maintained, disseminated, and compensated for according to Indigenous communities' self-determined rules.

## RECOMMENDATION:

Support graduate students and uphold the principles of fair dealing.

- > Increasing the Canada Student Grants Program and expanding the eligibility to include graduate students.  
**Cost: \$25 million**
- > Exploring the creation of dedicated research fellowships for Indigenous and international students.
- > Maintaining the current fair dealing framework in the Copyright Act and introduce provisions whereby Indigenous knowledge and heritage is maintained, disseminated, and compensated for according to Indigenous communities' self-determined rules.

**Cost: \$25 million per year**



#### RECOMMENDATION 4:

# FAIRNESS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN CANADA

International students are an important and growing part of Canadian post-secondary education. Over 352,000 currently study at colleges and universities (about 11 of total enrolment), and their numbers have quadrupled on college and university campuses in the past two decades.<sup>15</sup> In 2012, the federal

government pledged to double its intake of international students by 2022 (to nearly a half million).

Given Canada's history as a nation of immigrants, and the generosity offered by Indigenous peoples to the first waves of European settlers, the increased presence

of international students is in-keeping with the best aspects of our history. It promotes inclusion, diversity and new relationships between Canada and the rest of the world.

## ENDING UNFAIR DIFFERENTIAL FEES

As a result of chronic government underfunding, colleges and universities are relying more on tuition fees to cover costs. While all students in Canada have faced dramatic fee increases, tuition fees for international students have become especially burdensome as all provinces have moved to systems of differential tuition fees — because international student tuition fees are not government-regulated.

International students were not charged differential tuition fees prior to the late 1970s. During the negotiations of federal transfer payments to the provinces in 1976, the federal government suggested that introducing differential tuition fees was an acceptable way for the provinces to generate additional revenue at institu-

tions. Over the next several years many provincial governments responded by cutting or eliminating grants that had previously been provided to post-secondary institutions for the purpose of funding international students.

Consequently, institutions can increase international student fees every year by as much as they like, with some institutions increasing tuition fees for international students by as much as 35% in a single year, and the fees now vary dramatically between institutions and provinces. Even in provinces where Canadian students have been protected by a tuition fee freeze, international students have been excluded from such protection. High tuition fees have already put

post-secondary education in Canada beyond the reach of many international students. Low and middle-income students — particularly students from developing countries — face tremendous obstacles in accessing post-secondary education. In fact, international tuition fees at Canadian universities are usually more than the annual wage of most families in developing countries.

Continued increases to international student tuition fees could ultimately see access to Canadian colleges and universities choked off to all but the wealthiest international students and a limited number of poorer students lucky enough to receive full scholarships.

## PUBLIC HEALTHCARE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

A defining principle of the Canada Health Act is universality.<sup>16</sup> International students continue to be a growing demographic in Canada. The Canadian Bureau for International Education reports that participation of international students in Canadian institutions has increased by 8 per cent between 2008 and 2014.<sup>17</sup> Increased levels

of participation has been critical to the higher education sector in many regions of Canada and post-secondary institutions across the country cite increased international student enrolment as a priority. Maintenance of the criteria in Canada Health Act is a condition of the Canada Health Transfer. However, the fed-

eral government does not require offering the same public health care to international students it provides for domestic residents.

International students receive patchwork access to public healthcare, dependent upon where they are studying in Canada. Some provinces, like Ontario, provide no

provincial health coverage at all, while others, like Nova Scotia, make international students wait over a year after arrival to receive coverage, with complex stipulations about leaving the country. Increasing costs, poor coverage and bureaucratic obstacles have made accessing high quality healthcare cumbersome for

many international students. Given their massive contributions to the province economically, culturally and academically, extending public health insurance coverage to international students is a fair, logical and cost-effective step towards fairness for a demographic Canada seeks to attract and retain as students, residents

and eventually citizens. In fact, a 2009 report commissioned by the Nova Scotia Minister of Education recommends the provision of public health insurance so all international students as an “attractive and inexpensive” incentive for international students to study and stay in the province.<sup>18</sup>

## A CLEAR PATHWAY TO CITIZENSHIP AND PERMANENT RESIDENCY

In addition, changes under the previous federal government eased restrictions that prevented international students from finding work off-campus. While these changes have helped thousands of international students earn money, gain additional work experience and defray the cost of their education, there are other ways the government can help international students find meaningful work during their time in Canada. Currently, the

Canada Summer Jobs program excludes international students from participation, a restriction that can and should be removed. Moreover, international students have faced deportation for working more hours than legally allotted under study permit restrictions in an effort to pay for their increasingly costly programs.<sup>19</sup>

As demographics change and Canada adapts to the reality of an aging popula-

tion, there is greater urgency than ever when it comes to encouraging more international students to study and remain here after graduation. By July 2015, there were more elders (those aged 64 and older) than children aged fifteen or younger, and the growth for elders is four times faster than the general population. By 2030, one in four Canadians will be elders (over age 64), up from one in six today.<sup>20</sup>

## RECOMMENDATION:

**Establishing an ongoing transfer to the provinces and territories to eliminate tuition fees for all students. Tuition for this transfer will be priced at 1995-1996 levels, given this was the year when tuition was nominal, and worthy of public subsidization.**

- > Working with provinces to immediately regulate current international fees to be tied to those of domestic students, while negotiating a tuition-free model under a federal Post-Secondary Education Act.
- > As part of its duties under the Canada Health Act, the federal government must require provinces and territories offer the same public health care to international students it provides for domestic residents. Failure to do so should trigger an investigation under the Canada Health Act, and immediate corrective measures.
- > Counting all time spent by international students in Canada towards citizenship eligibility, up from half-time, and investigating current restrictive off-campus work permits that penalize international students required to work more than weekly hourly limits to pay for basic cost of living.
- > Expanding Canada Summer Jobs program eligibility to include international students





## RECOMMENDATION 5:

# BOLD ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The climate crisis is a serious threat to current and future generations here in Canada and around the world. A 2018 report from the United Nations' scientific panel on climate change predicts widespread food shortages and wildfires among other lethal global consequences as soon as 2040, and many areas globally are already experiencing devastating weather events and effects of climate change. To avoid some of this immediate catastrophic damage, humans will need to transform their economy at "at a speed and scale that has no documented historical precedent."

In its "Unburnable Carbon" report, the Carbon Tracker Initiative found that fossil fuel companies already possess fossil fuel reserves that would release approximately 2,795 gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub> if they are burned, which is five times the amount that can be released without exceeding 2°C of warming.

Students at universities and colleges across Canada have launched campaigns to have their institution divest from fossil fuel companies. Students have also engaged in a global climate strike.

In accordance with the Green Economy Network's (GEN) recommendation to make 1 million climate jobs and to immediately reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 25 to 35%, we must make historic and subsequently greater investments in "public renewable energy developments [i.e. wind, solar, and geothermal power]; energy efficiencies through building retrofits; public transit improvements and expansion; and in higher speed rail between urban cities within urban corridors."<sup>21</sup>



## RECOMMENDATION:

- > A fully funded decarbonization strategy akin to the "Green New Deal" with the aim of limiting some of the most devastating impacts of climate change for our generation and those to come, while putting justice for Indigenous people, workers, and the poor at the centre of the transition to a green economy. This would include federal envelope funding for post-secondary institutions engaging in research and innovation on a renewable energy future, including retraining workers for green jobs.

**Cost: minimum 5% of the annual federal budget (approximately \$16.94 billion per year, with increasing investments every subsequent year)**



## RECOMMENDATION 6:

# AFFORDABLE AND QUALITY STUDENT HOUSING

Through the National Housing Strategy (NHS), the federal government has pledged over \$55 billion over 10 years to address housing issues in Canada.<sup>22</sup> However, despite facing unique housing struggles, students are not mentioned anywhere in the strategy through its various initiatives and priority areas for action.

While data on student housing is lacking as rental market data produced by CMHC does not isolate students and Statistics Canada data is extremely limited in this area, studies collected by l'Unité de travail pour l'implantation de logement étudiant (UTILE) show that student tenants spend more than 30% of their total income on housing.<sup>23</sup> The CMHC itself identifies this degree of spending as on the "threshold of housing precarity", yet does not accept applications for affordable student housing initiatives under funds allocated as part of the NHS.

## RECOMMENDATION:

- > Include the realities of student housing as part of the National Housing Strategy, emphasizing the benefit of expanded non-profit, co-op, and/or subsidized rental housing for all community members, including low-income students.

# COSTING:

## PROPOSALS FOR RENEWAL IN CANADA'S POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Federation offers the following recommendations to expand access to high-quality, publicly-funded post-secondary education without up-front costs.

### RECOMMENDATION 1 : ELIMINATE TUITION FEES FOR ALL STUDENTS AND RESTORE CORE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION.

**1** Establish an ongoing transfer to the provinces and territories to eliminate tuition fees. Tuition for this transfer will be calculated at 1992 levels, prior to significant funding cuts by the government in 1996.

The federal government assumes a 50 percent share of the cost while provincial and territorial authorities must commit to their share of this cost and observing the *Proposed Post-Secondary Education Act*.

**Cost: \$2.6 billion per year.**

**2** Restore federal transfers to provinces and territories for post-secondary education to 1992 levels to address the \$2.29 billion in 1996, and increase this funding based on enrolment/inflation growth since.

Applying inflation and enrolment growth factors to the \$2.9 billion total funding in 1992 suggests an equivalent level of funding for 2018 of \$6.95 billion. With current federal funding at \$4.3 billion, an annual federal funding gap of \$2.6 billion remains.

**Cost: \$6.9 billion per year (includes \$4.3 billion in current funding, plus additional funding of \$2.6 billion).**

**3** Introduce a federal *Post-Secondary Education Act*, which will be modelled on the *Canada Health Act* and ensure that provinces and territories are in compliance with following core principles:

**a. Universality:** Society expects a full range of options for post-secondary learning, none of which should be deemed more important or deserving of funding than any other.

**b. Accessibility:** All components of the post-secondary education system must be available to learners without up-front cost.

**c. Comprehensiveness:** The post-secondary education system must be properly funded to ensure it has the necessary resources to offer high quality learning in all geographic regions and accountable wage standards for all campus workers.

**d. Public Administration:** to receive renewal funding, post-secondary institutions must be operated by a public authority on a not-for-profit, democratic basis.

**e. Freedom of Expression:** all post-secondary learners, researchers and campus workers are entitled to their freedom of expression, subject to reasonable limits established by human rights codes and statutes.

**4** Support those students who have had to incur debt to pursue their degree by immediately eliminating interest rates on direct loans through the CSLP, providing Stage 2 assistance for all CSLP borrowers five years after graduating (including reducing the principal of a loan holder's debt) and not requiring part-time students to pay back CSLP debt until six months after graduation.

**Cost: \$1.15 billion.**

## RECOMMENDATION 2: HONOUR CANADA'S TREATY COMMITMENTS ON POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES.

- 1** Invest additional funds to those allocated in Budget 2019 to fully address the backlog in applicants to the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP)  
**Cost: an additional \$228.3 million over three years**
- 2** Assess current funding levels to new Métis and Inuit post-secondary funding programs to ensure that these programs are fully funded according to demand.
- 3** A fifty percent increase to federal funds dedicated to Indigenous language revitalization for fiscal year 2020-21, where funding continues to be dedicated to First Nations, First Nations-led and mandated institutions, and First Nations post-secondary institutions.  
**Cost: \$16.5 million in new funding (in addition to \$33 million in current funding)**
- 4** Full implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), including the principle of free, prior and informed consent for any project impacting Indigenous territory.

## RECOMMENDATION 3: INCREASE FUNDING FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

- 1** Increasing the Canada Student Grants Program and expanding the eligibility to include graduate students.  
**Cost: \$25 million.**
- 2** Exploring the creation of dedicated research fellowships for Indigenous and international students.
- 3** Maintaining the current fair dealing framework in the Copyright Act and introducing provisions whereby Indigenous knowledge and heritage is maintained, disseminated, and compensated for according to Indigenous communities' self-determined rules.

## RECOMMENDATION 4: FAIRNESS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- 1** Working with provinces to immediately regulate current international fees to be tied to those of domestic students, while negotiating a tuition-free model under a federal Post-Secondary Education Act.
- 2** As part of its duties under the Canada Health Act, the federal government must require provinces and territories offer the same public health care to international students it provides for domestic residents. Failure to do so should trigger an investigation under the Canada Health Act, and immediate corrective measures.
- 3** Counting all time spent by international students in Canada towards citizenship eligibility, up from half-time, and investigating current restrictive off-campus work permits that penalize international students required to work more than weekly hourly limits to pay for basic cost of living.
- 4** Expanding Canada Summer Jobs program eligibility to include international students



## RECOMMENDATION 5: BOLD ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

**1** A fully funded decarbonization strategy akin to the “Green New Deal” with the aim of limiting some of the most devastating impacts of climate change for our generation and those to come, while putting justice for Indigenous people, workers, and the poor at the centre of the transition to a green economy. This would include federal envelope funding for post-secondary institutions engaging in research and innovation on a renewable energy future, including retraining workers for green jobs.

**Cost: minimum 5% of the annual federal budget (approximately \$16.94 billion per year, with increasing investments every subsequent year)**

## RECOMMENDATION 6: AFFORDABLE AND QUALITY STUDENT HOUSING

**1** Include the realities of student housing as part of the National Housing Strategy, emphasizing the benefit of expanded non-profit, co-op, and/or subsidized rental housing for all community members, including low-income students.

## SUMMARY COSTING TABLE (ANNUAL COMMITMENT)

<b>RECOMMENDATION 1:</b> Eliminate tuition fees for all students and restore core federal funding for post-secondary education	\$10.7 billion (\$6.35 billion in new funding)
<b>RECOMMENDATION 2:</b> Honour Canada’s treaty commitments on post-secondary education for indigenous peoples	\$109,1 million (\$92,6 million in new funding)
<b>RECOMMENDATION 3:</b> Increase funding for graduate students	\$25 million
<b>RECOMMENDATION 4:</b> Fairness for International Students	-
<b>RECOMMENDATION 5:</b> Bold action on climate change	\$16.94 billion
<b>RECOMMENDATION 6:</b> Affordable and quality student housing	-
<b>TOTAL FUNDING</b>	\$27.8 billion
<b>TOTAL NEW FUNDING</b>	<b>\$23.4 billion</b>

**We also propose that a parliamentary task force be struck to investigate the following revenue-generating opportunities:**

- Introducing a “decent work” standard that PSE institutions must meet to qualify for funding; the standard will include a \$15 minimum wage and a maximum wage tied to the income of the provincial or territorial premier where the post-secondary institution is based;
- Investigate the existence or extent of “unrestricted” or reserve funds and sizeable investments held by PSE institutions, and assess whether these are in compliance with our proposed PSE Act;
- Investigate the feasibility of an employer training levy based on the Quebec model, in which employers with payrolls in excess of \$1,000,000 are required to invest a minimum of 1% of operating revenue in training for workers or remit the same amount to a third party managed by an entity empowered by the state.



# FUNDING:

## THESE PROPOSALS WILL BE FUNDED BY THE FOLLOWING REVENUE- GENERATING MEASURES

PROPOSAL	AMOUNT
Eliminating the federal tuition tax credit	\$1.660 billion <sup>24</sup>
Cancelling the federal tax credit on registered education savings plans, the Canada Education Savings Grant and Canada Learning Bonds	\$1.1 billion <sup>25</sup>
Eliminating the Student Loan Interest Tax Credit	\$40 million <sup>26</sup>
Ending federal subsidies for the fossil fuel industry	\$1.6 billion <sup>27</sup>
Implementing a 1 percent withholding tax on Canadian assets held in tax havens, and capping interest payments to offshore subsidiaries.	\$2 billion <sup>28</sup>
Limit capital gains deduction	\$10 billion <sup>29</sup>
Eliminating the federal stock option tax deduction	\$740 million <sup>30</sup>
Ending the abuse of the small business corporations federal tax rate	\$500 million <sup>31</sup>
Implementing a \$50,000 lifetime limit for funds held in Tax Free Savings Accounts	\$137 million <sup>32</sup>
Reducing annual RRSP contribution limits to \$20,000 per year.	\$2 billion <sup>33</sup>
Cancelling the corporate meals and entertainment expense deduction.	\$775 million
Reduce the Corporate Dividend Tax Credit to the tax rate actually paid by corporations.	\$1 billion <sup>34</sup>
Collect GST/HST on imports of all digital services, including advertising, as Quebec, Saskatchewan and most other major countries have done	\$800 million
Apply corporate income taxes to the profits of e-commerce companies associated with their business activities in Canada.	\$180 million
Eliminate the deductibility of advertising expenses on foreign internet platforms for businesses.	\$1 billion
Require large e-commerce companies to pay additional taxes as a share of their revenues (calculated at 3% of revenues)	\$600 million <sup>35</sup>
<b>TOTAL PROPOSED OFFSETS</b>	<b>\$24.1 billion</b>

# PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

Students are not alone in supporting a shift from piecemeal reforms to significant investments in affordable and accessible post-secondary education in Canada. A majority of Canadians agree that:

## EDUCATION SHOULD BE FREE

When asked, 71 percent support "having a special new personal income tax on the wealthiest one percent of Canadians that would be used to eliminate university and college tuition fees for students."

85 percent of those polled believe that students take on too much debt today to get post-secondary education.

And 72 percent are comfortable with the statement "like Germany, Chile, Norway and other countries, Canada [should be] eliminating tuition fees for adult education, skilled trades apprenticeships and all programs in colleges and universities."

## EDUCATION IS THE PATH TO A GOOD JOB

We know that the vast majority of new jobs require some form of post-secondary education, and Canadians agree. 79 percent agree that post-secondary education is required to have a good standard of living.

## OUR SCHOOLS MUST RESPECT WORKERS

72 percent are not comfortable and somewhat not comfortable with universities using lower paid part-time employees to replace full time employees to help manage the cost of post-secondary education.

Nanos Research conducted an RDD dual frame (land- and cell- lines) hybrid telephone and online random survey of 1,000 Canadians, 18 years of age or older, between January 13th and 15th, 2017. The margin of error for a random survey of 1,000 Canadians is  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

# END NOTES

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