



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Students Call for Investment in Post-secondary Education

Budget 2021 delivers post-secondary funding cuts and tuition increases, impacting affordability and accessibility of education. Now is the time to invest in Alberta's post-secondary sector as a proven means of economic recovery, yet this budget increases costs for Albertans at the worst possible time. Students call on the Government of Alberta to restore funding to the Campus Alberta Grant, reduce the three year 22.5% tuition increase, provide additional upfront needs-based grants, and eliminate interest on student loans.

"These additional cuts cause extra financial burdens to fall on students during already difficult times. Post-secondary should not just be for the privileged, post-secondary is for anyone seeking to up-skill or re-skill. Post-secondary needs to remain affordable, but with more cuts it becomes less and less so."

Brittany Lausen, Chair

Alberta Students' Executive Council

Post-secondary education represents a strong return on investment in creating new jobs and growing our economy. This requires our higher education sector to be accessible, affordable, and predictable. Cuts to the Campus Alberta Grant undermine the system by threatening the viability of quality instruction and critical support services at institutions across the province, degrading the student experience. Fundamentally this budget transfers costs to students and their families.

"The Government is increasing tuition by 22.5% over three years, and has cancelled the Tuition and Education Tax Credits. Students and families are not in a position to take on these added costs in the middle of a global pandemic."

Rowan Ley, Chair

Council of Alberta University Students

Student Financial Aid relies heavily on student loans instead of scholarships or grants. As such, the number of students graduating with student loans in excess of \$25,000 is growing, as the average undergraduate student graduates with \$31,000 in loans. Students call on the Government to improve post-secondary affordability by creating upfront needs based grants and eliminating interest on Alberta student loans.

"For students to be active economic participants we need to be willing to invest in them. Increased tuition and cuts to institutional funding make it significantly harder for students to obtain an education, especially at the graduate level. Students call on the Government to invest in Alberta's future by investing in students."

Evan Wong, Chair

Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council

The Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council, the Alberta Students' Executive Council, and the Council of Alberta University Students are 28 students' associations, unions, and graduate students' associations representing approximately 250,000 individual students from every corner of the province.

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