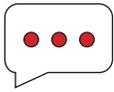




CASA | ACAE

Inclusivity and Innovation

A Student Vision for Post-Secondary Education



Executive Summary

Post-secondary education continues to be the great equalizer in Canada, providing knowledge, training and economic opportunity to all types of people across all fields of interest. Knowing this, government must continue to build on its commitments for equitable growth by making post-secondary education accessible, affordable, innovative, and high quality. Doing so will open doors for all Canadians to achieve their personal and professional goals and contribute to society in a meaningful way.

While there is no single mechanism for securing long-term economic growth within a country, ensuring Canada has a highly trained and educated population is a strong step in the right direction. In addition, an educated population is also proven to promote higher levels of engagement among citizens, resulting in greater social benefits for communities throughout the country.

The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) is calling on the federal government to lead Canada by investing in an inclusive and innovative economy.

CASA recommends:

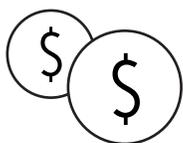
- » **That the federal government invest \$27 million per year to establish a six-month, interest-free grace period for CSLP loans;**
- » **That the federal government invest \$50.1 million per year into the CSGP and allow master's and doctoral students to access the program;**
- » **That the federal government establish a funding mechanism to support the up-front costs of accessing a mental health disability assessment through the Canada Student Loans Program at a cost of \$9 million per year;**
- » **An investment of \$106 million per year over the next three years to fully fund the Post-Secondary Student Support Program and address the program's backlog;**
- » **That the federal government create a "Reconciliation through Post-Secondary Education" Program to support reconciliation programming at institutions throughout the country at a cost of \$26 million;**
- » **That the government expand experiential learning opportunities by investing an additional \$73 million over 4 years into the Post-Secondary Industry Partnership and Co-operative Placement Initiative;**
- » **That the federal government adopt the model used in Quebec to create a Canada Training Incentive;**
- » **That the federal government support complete research costs, at a cost of \$286.5 million per year; and**
- » **That government invest \$7 million per year as a pilot project for supporting OERs, as they increase access to learning for all of society and are capable of reaching non-traditional student groups.**



CASA | ACAE

Canadian Alliance of Student Associations
Alliance canadienne des associations étudiantes

Addressing Gaps in the Canada Student Loans Program



Interest-Free Grace Period for Student Loans

Upon graduation, provincial student aid offices notify borrowers that they have a six-month repayment grace period before they need to begin repaying their loans. However, unbeknownst to most students, the federal portion of these loans begins to accrue interest immediately. This disparity between programs causes stress and confusion among new graduates, who often end up with more debt than expected.

Additionally, the immediate accrual of

interest on CSLP loans fails to acknowledge the current economic realities of recent graduates. In 2012, the average duration of unemployment for job seekers was 20.2 weeks, or roughly five months.¹ By implementing a Canada-wide interest-free grace period on student loans, new graduates would have sufficient time to find paying work before accumulating additional debt.

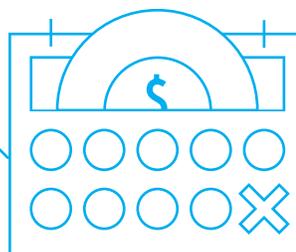
This would better reflect the challenges of the current job market and help new grad-

uates transition more smoothly into the next stage of their lives.

CASA recommends that the federal government invest \$27 million per year to establish a six-month, interest-free grace period for CSLP loans.

**20.2
WEEKS**

"In 2012, the average duration of unemployment for job seekers was 20.2 weeks, or roughly five months."



¹ Employment and Social Development Canada, *Work-Unemployment Duration*, Indicators of Well-being in Canada, July 2015, <http://well-being.esdc.gc.ca/misme-iowb/.3ndic.1t.4r@-eng.jsp?id=15>



Grants for Master's and Doctoral Students

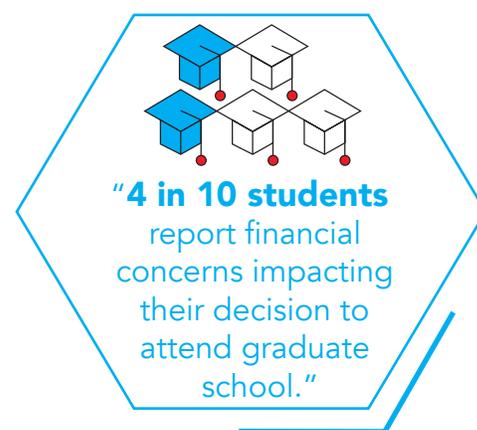
CASA and students across the country celebrated the investments made in student financial aid in Budget 2016. While these investments in the Canada Student Grant Program have helped ease debt burdens for many undergraduate and college students, graduate students continue to be ineligible for the program.

Due to their ineligibility, debt levels have been steadily increasing for graduate students in Canada. Between 2009 and 2014, average debt levels increased by \$1,800 for doctoral students, and by \$870 for master's students.² This trend is worrisome, as 4 in 10 students report financial concerns impacting their decision

to attend graduate school.³

Canada is falling behind in producing master's and PhD graduates, and has been rated second-last among peer competitor countries for its PhD graduation rate.⁴ One reason for this is that existing research funding programs do not reach a wide enough cross-section of students. For example, only 2,500 students, or approximately 2% of all master's students, received a Canada Graduate Scholarships-Master's in 2012.⁵ In order to compete in the global marketplace, government should ensure that all Canadians have access to master's and doctoral programs.

CASA recommends that the federal government invest \$50.1 million per year into the CSGP and allow master's and doctoral students to access the program.



Supporting Students with Mental Health Disabilities

Mental health disabilities are an increasingly prominent issue on post-secondary campuses across Canada. It is common for mental illness to first manifest itself during one's post-secondary studies, often while away from friends, family and other support networks for the first time.

Students suffering from mental health disabilities often require academic accommodations to successfully complete their studies. Similar

to accommodations for physical disabilities, mental health disability accommodations provide struggling individuals with supports to address their unique needs.

In order to access these vital accommodations, an individual must first obtain a formal evaluation of their psychological condition. These psychological assessments are costly, with most priced around \$3,000. However, unlike students with learning disabilities, students suffering

from a mental health disability are not eligible to receive financial support for their assessments from the Canada Student Loans Program.⁶

CASA recommends that the federal government establish a funding mechanism to support the up-front costs of accessing a mental health disability assessment through the Canada Student Loans Program at a cost of \$9 million per year.

² Employment and Social Development Canada, CSLP Statistical Review 2013-2014, Ottawa ON, April 2016, Accessed online: http://www.esdc.gc.ca/en/reports/student_loans/statistical_review_2014.page?#TOC5-3
³ Canadian University Survey Consortium, Survey of Graduating Students 2015, Ottawa ON, July 2015, p. iv, http://www.cusc-ccreu.ca/CUSC_2015_Graduating_Master%20Report_English.pdf
⁴ Conference Board of Canada, International Rankings: PhD Graduates, March 2013, Ottawa, Canada, Accessed online: <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/hep/details/education/phd-graduates.aspx>
⁵ National Science and Engineering Research Council, Canada Graduate Scholarships-Master's Program, August 2016, Accessed online: <http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Students-Etudiants/PG-CS/CGSM-BESCM-eng.asp>
⁶ M. Condra, M. Dineen, S. Gauthier, H. Gills, A. Jack-Davies, & E. Condra, *Academic Accommodations for postsecondary students with mental health disabilities in Ontario, Canada: A review of the literature and reflections on emerging issues*. Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability, 28(3), 2015.

Innovation in the Classroom

Open-Educational Resources (OERs)

One of the cornerstones of an effective educational system is that it must offer a wide range of learning opportunities and resources for students. That is why the federal government should invest in open-educational resources (OERs). OERs are teaching, learning, and research materials that are part of the public domain under an intellectual property license that allows them to be used and repurposed freely.⁷ Examples of OERs include textbooks that can be accessed by students for free, as well as lesson plans, videos, quizzes, lecture notes and other teaching material for instructors.

For various reasons, some members of the public are unable to complete their studies through the formal education system, and therefore have limited access to quality educational materials. OERs can be used to support this group, who we refer to as 'non-traditional students,' by providing them with free, accessible, and

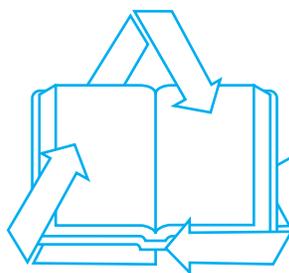
quality information. OERs can also be adapted to accommodate different learning styles, which can benefit students with different learning needs. The open and collaborative nature of OERs encourages innovation in education, and makes use of emerging technologies to improve the accessibility of educational materials.⁸

OERs provide a unique opportunity to develop a more affordable education system for all students. Textbooks and other materials cost each student an average of \$800-\$1,000 annually.⁹ In BC, which has integrated OERs into 146 courses in 14 institutions, savings are \$475,000-\$700,000 province-wide as of April 2015.¹⁰ Government should support OER projects because they increase access to learning materials among both traditional and non-traditional students, which, in turn, allows more citizens to obtain higher levels of education.

CASA recommends that government invest \$7 million per year as a pilot project for supporting OERs, as they increase access to learning for all of society and are capable of reaching non-traditional student groups. The Tri-Agencies can be leveraged as a mechanism for administering this funding, acting as both a distributor and a repository, and promoting the recognition of participants in textbook development.

**\$800-\$1,000
ANNUALLY**

"Textbooks and other materials cost each student an average of \$800-\$1,000 annually."



⁷ EDWeek Market Brief, Software Association Weighs Growth of Open-Education Resources, March 2013, http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/marketplace12/2013/03/software_association_weighs_growth_of_open-education_resources.html

⁸ OECD, Giving Knowledge For Free, 2007, <http://www.oecd.org/edu/eri/38654317.pdf>

⁹ Financial Consumer Agency of Canada, Budget for Student Life, April 2014, <http://www.fcac-acfc.gc.ca/Eng/forConsumers/LifeEvents/payingPostSecEd/Pages/Budgetfo-Unbudget.aspx>

¹⁰ BC Campus, BC Open Textbooks Status as of 2015, April 2015, <http://open.bccampus.ca/2015/04/08/bc-open-textbooks-stats-as-of-april-2015/>

Meeting **Canada's Obligation** to Indigenous Peoples



Effective Funding for Indigenous Students

Canada needs to take steps to address the institutional inequalities faced by many of Canada's Indigenous peoples. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report (TRC) asserts that improving educational outcomes for Indigenous learners is beneficial for the students themselves, as well as for their families, their communities, and for Canadian society as a whole. We, as a nation, have both a legal and moral obligation to address these issues. The removal of financial barriers for Indigenous persons seeking post-secondary education is overdue, and this measure will support the success of this population.

The program currently supporting First Nations and Inuit learners is the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP). This program was implemented with the intention

of improving access to post-secondary education, and has significantly helped those students lucky enough to receive funding. Regrettably, following almost 20 years of a 2% growth cap, the program is now starving for funds.

This funding shortage has contributed to a persistent post-secondary attainment gap of nearly 20% between Indigenous persons and non-Indigenous persons 15 years of age or older.¹¹ Canada's First Nations population is young and growing, with a median age of 28, compared to 41 for the Canadian population as a whole.¹² The population of registered First Nations youth between the ages of 15-30 increased by 30% from 2004 to 2014, while funding for the PSSSP increased only by 13% over the same time period.¹³

Removing the 2% cap on funding and expanding the program to meet growing demand will greatly benefit Canada's Indigenous population and our country as a whole. CASA further recommends that the federal government fund the backlog of students who are eligible for the program but do not currently receive funding.

CASA recommends an investment of \$106 million per year over the next three years to fully fund the Post-Secondary Student Support Program and address the program's backlog.¹⁴

¹¹ Assembly of First Nations. Chiefs Assembly on Education - A Portrait of First Nations and Education. Gatineau, Qc. Oct 2012. Accessed online: http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/events/fact_sheet-ccoe-3.pdf

¹² Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Metis, and Inuit, Ottawa ON, September 2016, Accessed online: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-nm/2011/as-sa/99-011-x/99-011-x2011001-eng.cfm#a6>

¹³ Parliamentary Budget Officer, Federal Spending on Post-Secondary Education - Data, Ottawa ON, May 2016, Accessed online: http://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/web/default/files/Documents/Reports/2016/PSE/PSE%20Public%20Data_20160503.xls

¹⁴ Assembly of First Nations, 2017 Pre-Budget Submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance, Accessed online: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/HOC/Committee/421/FINA/Brief/BR8397900/br-external/AssemblyofFirstNations-e.pdf>

“WE, AS A NATION,
have both a legal and moral obligation to address these issues.”

Reconciliation Through Post-Secondary Education Programming

Though helpful, investments in the PSSSP are not enough to fully enhance the educational outcomes of Indigenous students. Canada must also do more to ensure Indigenous students have the resources they need to be successful during their studies. The federal government can support Indigenous students by ensuring that post-secondary institutions embrace the TRC and all of its recommendations. That is why CASA is calling on the government to invest \$26 million in a “Reconciliation through Post-Secondary Education” Program.

These programs would support reconciliation programming at institutions throughout the country,

through measures such as integrating Indigenous experiences, knowledge and teaching methods into the curriculum.

CASA recommends that the federal government create a “Reconciliation through Post-Secondary Education” Program to support reconciliation programming at institutions throughout the country at a cost of \$26 million.

20% Gap

“This funding shortage has contributed to a persistent post-secondary attainment gap of nearly 20% between Indigenous persons and non-Indigenous persons 15 years of age or older.”

Student Employment

The federal government plays a critical role in developing and supporting Canada's workforce. Part of that responsibility is ensuring that Canadians have access to opportunities for skill development, both while pursuing formal education, and also upon entering the workforce. CASA considers workforce development to be extremely important, and has worked to create a comprehensive strategy that addresses these ends.



Supporting Paid Employment Opportunities for Students

As of December 2015, the youth unemployment rate stood at nearly 13%; double that of the general population.¹⁵ Compounding this issue is the proportion of youth employed in precarious, non-permanent jobs, which increased from 6.9% in 1997, to 11.6% in 2012.¹⁶ Thankfully, there are successful programs for assisting youth in the transition towards gainful, permanent employment.

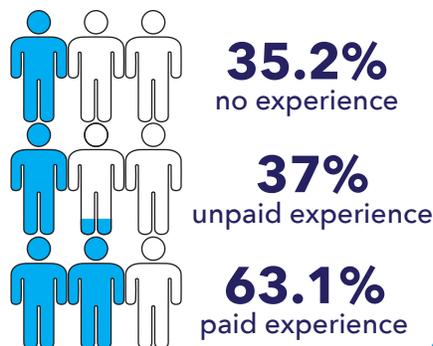
Paid internships, apprenticeships, and co-ops continue to be linked to strong employment outcomes. Data collected by the National Association of Colleges and Employers revealed little

difference in employment outcomes between unpaid interns and those with no placement experience. Just 37% of unpaid interns received a job offer out of their bachelor's degree, compared to 35.2% of those who didn't participate in an internship

at all. Furthermore, many unpaid internships are exploitative in nature and add financial stress to an already low-income group. Conversely, paid interns were found to have much better employment outcomes post-graduation. Over 63.1% of those who participated in paid internships received a job offer post-graduation.¹⁷

Previous government interventions have focused on targeted training in certain subjects or areas of the economy. Rather than shifting priorities in an attempt to predict economic trends, the federal government can better support students through stable and

Students Who Managed to Get a Job Post-Graduation



¹⁵ Statistics Canada. Labour Force Survey – December 2015. Ottawa. Accessed online: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160108/dq160108a-eng.htm>.

¹⁶ Karen Foster, Youth Employment and Un(der)Employment in Canada, October 2012.

¹⁷ National Association of Colleges and Employers. Class of 2013 Student Survey. May 2013. Accessed online: <http://www.naceweb.org/s05292013/paid-unpaid-interns-job-offer.aspx>

broad-based programs that are widely accessible. Compensated co-op and internship opportunities are necessary in order to ensure that students get the experience they need to transition to the workforce.

The government can do more to ensure that all students have the opportunity to gain paid workplace experience, regardless of their program

of study. These experiences provide students with the opportunity to gain the skills required to be successful in the workforce.

CASA recommends that the government expand experiential learning opportunities by investing an additional \$73 million over 4 years into

the Post-Secondary Industry Partnership and Co-operative Placement Initiative. This money should go towards co-ops, internships, and apprenticeship placements for all fields of study.



Promoting Workforce Skills Development

For many jobs, there will always be a gap between what is taught in a formal educational program and the full suite of skills that are required in that specific position in a specific workplace. The gaps can only be filled through time and investment from the employer. The private sector must partner with government and students by actively supporting recent graduates in their transition to the workforce. They have a responsibility to invest in the ongoing skills development for individuals in the workforce.

Unfortunately, Canada's private sector is falling behind in its investment in employees, a phenomenon that can be described as Canada's "employer training gap". Canada spends significantly less than the United States on learning and development

for employees, roughly 64 cents for every dollar spent in the US. According to Conference Board of Canada statistics, spending on employee development (in constant dollars) has declined by about 40%, peaking in 1993 at \$1,207 per employee and dropping to \$705 in 2013.¹⁸ This lack of investment has contributed to the perceived skills shortage that many industries are facing across the country.

In order to reverse this downward trend, we must incentivize the private sector to invest in training and employee development. One example of legislation meant to address this challenge is the Quebec law to Promote Workforce Skills Development, whereby employers are mandated to spend 1% of total payroll on training

40% Decline

"According to Conference Board of Canada statistics, spending on employee development (in constant dollars) has declined by about 40%, peaking in 1993 at \$1,207 per employee and dropping to \$705 in 2013."

initiatives, such as formal courses, apprenticeships, salaries to interns, and other workforce development programs. Those that do not meet those obligations are required to pay a contribution equal to the difference between 1% of its total payroll and the amount spent on training to the Workforce Skills Development and Recognition Fund.¹⁹

¹⁸ Daniel Munro, Conference Board of Canada, Developing Skills: Where are Canada's Employers? March 20 2014, Ottawa, Accessed online: http://www.conferenceboard.ca/topics/education/commentaries/14-03-20/developing_skills_where_are_canada_s_employers.aspx

¹⁹ Editeur Officiel du Quebec, An Act to Promote Workforce Skills Development and Recognition, updated Dec 2015, Quebec, retrieved from: http://www2.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/dynamicSearch/telecharge.php?type=2&file=/D_8_3/D8_3_A.html

The policy does not put a financial burden on small businesses, since employers with a payroll of less than \$1 million are exempt. Furthermore, employers can get a certificate recognizing the quality of their own internal training initiatives. Research on the effect of this policy, carried out by Benoit Dostie and Marie-Pierre Pelletier (SRI-2005), found that Quebec now has more formal training than all other provinces (with the exception of Saskatchewan), and that formal training has a greater positive impact on productivity than informal training.²⁰

Transitioning recent graduates into the workforce is a responsibility shared by government, students and employers alike. Even after successful transitions into the workforce, employee skills development is an ongoing process that must continue after formal education has ended. This requires investment from government, post-secondary institutions, and the private sector.

CASA believes that the private sector must play a larger role in attracting, developing and retaining talent. That is why CASA recommends that the federal government adopt the model used in Quebec to create a Canada Training Incentive. This would provide young people exiting post-secondary studies with the necessary support to successfully transition into the workforce.

Adequately Funding the Indirect Costs of Research

In order to support Canadian-led research initiatives, grant funding that supports the full spectrum of research-related costs must be introduced. Researchers rely on an array of supports to bring their innovations to the world. Whether it be by securing the latest equipment, by gaining access to the most cutting-edge research, or by ensuring that Canadian research can be brought to market, the Canadian government plays a

critical role in supporting the complete costs of research.

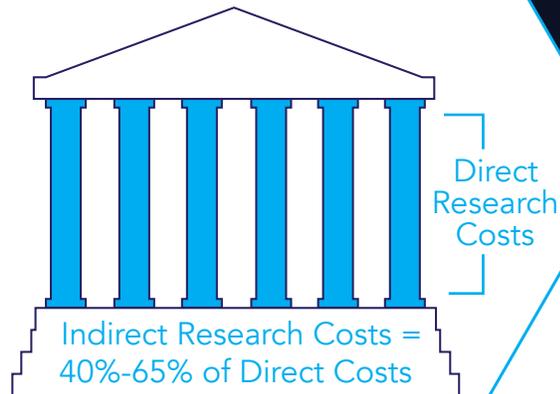
The full cost of research includes expenses that cannot be directly attributed to a specific research project, but that are required to conduct research. **These “hidden” expenses include activities such as the cost of administering and managing research, of powering the library computer network, of renovating laboratories, and of conducting basic maintenance.**

In 2007-2008, the federal government invested \$332 million into research and innovation, representing approximately 21.5% of the direct costs of the research supported by Canada’s three research agencies.²¹ However, estimates have continued to show that indirect expenses are generally between 50% and 65% of the direct costs of research, depending on the field of study.²² This means that Canadian post-secondary insti-

²⁰ Industry Canada, Adjustments in Markets for Skilled Workers in Canada: A Synthesis of Key Findings and Policy Implications, 2011, Ottawa, Accessed online: <https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/eas-aes.nsf/eng/ra02069.html>

²¹ Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec, 2013. Study on the Indirect Costs Program

Complete Research Costs



tutions must continuously pull from other already-strained budget lines to make effective use of the research funds that they have been granted. More often than not, it's student-centered projects that suffer.

In the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union and Australia, indirect costs are reimbursed at far higher levels than in Canada. The United States has been funding indirect research costs since 1947, and that funding currently covers an average of 52.3% of direct research costs. In the European Union, the funding covers between 40% and 60% of direct costs, and in the United Kingdom it is over 50%.²³

CASA believes that the federal government should adequately fund the indirect costs of research. Such fund-

ing should be both sustainable and independent of other funding mechanisms. Considering that the indirect costs of research are estimated to be at least 40% of the direct cost, universities should receive an increase in funding for indirect research costs at the rate shown in the following table:

Table 1: Proposed formula of funding for the indirect costs of research

Level	Rate
1st bracket of \$100,000	80%
2nd bracket of \$900,000	50%
3rd bracket of \$6,000,000	50%
Balance	37.5%

This yields an average funding of 40% across universities in Canada and would cost \$286.5 million per year.

CASA recommends that the federal government support complete research costs, at a cost of \$286.5 million per year.

²² Conférence des recteurs et des principaux des universités du Québec, 2011. Élections fédérales. Intervention de la CREPUQ : Le gouvernement fédéral doit poursuivre ses efforts pour le développement de la recherche universitaire

²³ Christian Sylvain, Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, Indirect Costs Reimbursement in the USA: Facts and Fiction; rate quoted is from 1997 but rates were very consistent throughout the 1990's.

⁴ Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 2009. Funding of the Institutional Costs of Research : An International Perspective., Accessed online: <http://www.aucc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/institutional-costs-international-2009-05-e.pdf>

Our Members



About CASA

Established in 1995, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) is a non-partisan, not-for-profit national student organization composed of 21 student associations representing 250,000 post-secondary students from coast to coast. CASA advocates for a Canadian post-secondary education system that is **accessible, affordable, innovative, and of the highest quality.**



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