

organizing
GUIDE

the campaign for
higher education

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CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

message from the national chairperson

February 1999

Dear sisters and brothers:

The 1998 federal budget was dubbed the 'Education Budget', yet it, and the 1999 federal budget, have failed to address the funding crisis in our colleges and universities. In fact, in areas such as student financial assistance and transfer payment funding, our federal government has done much to move us towards a more elitist system of higher education.

We all know the signs of the crisis we face: quality of education compromised by funding cuts and corporate intrusion onto our campuses; willing and able students unable to take part in higher education because they can't afford tuition fees or staggering student debt; tuition fee differentiation and deregulation; few secure jobs for young people; little access to unemployment insurance; little planning in the college sector; the proliferation of shoddy, for-profit educational institutions; a student loan program geared more towards bank profits than access - the list goes on.

And yet we know that the majority of Canadians are widely concerned about these very same issues. It is our task, and that of the ACCESS 2000 campaign, to convey to and convince federal and provincial decision makers of the need for swift action to increase funding and strengthen accessibility standards and performance.

Through the ACCESS 2000 campaign, we can heighten pressure on federal and provincial decision-makers to implement crucial measures for higher education:

- \$3.5 billion for a dedicated, enforced, Post-secondary Education Fund;
- a pan-Canadian system of grants - \$500 million in the first year, \$750 million in the second;
- \$350 million for a comprehensive 'youth strategy', including job creation, restored services, and better programs.

In the absence of these measures, Canada will continue to fall behind the many industrialized countries that have no user fees for higher education, and better records on access. And, without strong federal leadership that respects the rights of Quebecois and Aboriginal peoples, disparity of access among provinces within our borders will be further exacerbated. Heading towards the year 2000, Canada needs a vision and a plan for access to higher education, not the rhetoric of governments that are arrogant and that fail to improve access.

The ACCESS 2000 campaign is part of our struggle for higher access to higher education into the new millennium, and its success depends on local and community involvement. I encourage you to employ the framework provided by ACCESS 2000 to shape local activities -- with the goal of building up to Student Strike 2000. Let's be creative, be bold, and most of all be effective in adapting the campaign to our campuses and communities.

LET'S BUILD TOWARDS STUDENT STRIKE 2000 TOGETHER!

In solidarity,


Elizabeth Carlyle
National Chairperson



campaign overview

BACKGROUND

At the November 1998 National General Meeting of the Canadian Federation of Students, delegates adopted a campaign strategy in response to the growing crisis in Canada's post-secondary education system. The campaign has since evolved into Access 2000, the Campaign for Higher Education. Access 2000 materials provides a pan-Canadian framework within which to implement the campaign.

SUMMARY

Access 2000 is a year-long campaign combining membership awareness and mobilization, public awareness, research, government relations, and media relations.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Provincially: Lower user fees for higher education (tuition fee freezes or rollbacks)
- Federally: A comprehensive, pan-Canadian system of grants and increased funding for education
- Both levels: The preservation of education and the restoration of student loans as public programs
- Long term: Full and equal access for all

CAMPAIGN ELEMENTS

The campaign is local in focus, with provincial and national tie-ins. Local, provincial, national, and international efforts will be required to build for STUDENT STRIKE 2000.

LOCAL

Local organising will form the base of the campaign. Member locals will receive support to co-ordinate activities such as:

- postering
- petition drives
- campus rallies, demonstrations, tuition fee watches, etc.
- public forums
- research
- federal budget awareness

PROVINCIAL

Local campaigns will be supported by varying provincial activities

- media strategy
- skills development
- campaign promotion in the community, including transit and other advertising
- research
- materials production

NATIONAL

National support will focus on:

- research
- national media strategy
- government relations, especially Federal Budget 1999 response
- general materials and updates

calendar of events

FEBRUARY - MAY, 1999



This is an overview of scheduled activities for the next four months. Many local, provincial, and national activities will be added.

FEBRUARY 1999

External

- 'Join the Campaign' poster distribution
- Web site splash page in place
- Federal Budget 1999 campaign
- 'Campaign Bulletin' distribution
- Distribution of Student Income Security Survey
- Communication with coalition partners (introduction to campaign)
- Launch of Constitutional Challenge against unfair bankruptcy laws
- Launch of Student Strike 2000
- Delivery of postcards calling for increased funding and grants

Internal

- Further development of Access 2000 campaign strategy
- Web site development
- Development of campaign materials, including federal budget backgrounders
- Development of research elements of campaign, including Student Income Security Survey, Federal Budget 1999

Local

- Organising committees form and begin to develop strategies
- 'Join the Campaign' posters up on campus and in the community
- Distribution of 'Campaign Bulletins' on campus and in the community
- Events to launch Access 2000 campaign (sit-ins, forums, demonstrations, etc.)
- Distribution of Federal Budget 1999 materials on campus and in the community
- Distribute, have signed, and deliver postcards calling for increased funding and grants

(continued on next page)

JOIN.

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join the campaign for higher education.

calendar of events (continuation)

MARCH 1999

External

- Launch of Richard Marquardt's Enter At Your Own Risk (a book about youth & labour)
- Federal Budget 1999 response
- Full web site launch
- Distribution of 'Campaign Bulletins'
- Development of coalition support, including international support

Internal

- Further development of web site
- Continued research - Federal Budget 1999, corporate rule in higher education
- Development of Federal Budget 1999 response materials
- Development of anti-corporate rule kit
- Development of petition

Local

- Further events to launch Access 2000 campaign (sit-ins, forums, demonstrations, tuition fee watch, etc.)
- Further Federal Budget 1999 response
- Petition drive begins

APRIL 1999

External

- Provincial Budget Watch, Tuition Fee Watch

Internal

- Preparation for CFS National Semi-annual General Meeting, including an Access 2000 skills-building workshop series

Local

- Provincial Budget Watch, Tuition Fee Watch

MAY 1999

Canadian Federation of Students' National Semi-annual General Meeting - May 13 - 16, 1999

- Review and refinement of Access 2000 campaign strategy, including development of Student Strike 2000

campaign BACKGROUND

Questions and Answers

Please read this section carefully. It is your guide to answering questions from media, members, coalition partners, government decision-makers, and administrators. You will receive updates as the campaign develops.

The Access 2000 Campaign

- Q. What is Access 2000?
- A. Access 2000 is the campaign of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) for a universally accessible, high quality, public system of higher education in Canada.
- Q. What do you mean by the Campaign for Higher Education?
- A. The campaign for higher education is about higher access, higher quality, higher funding, and higher levels of education in Canada. By higher education, we mean universities, colleges, and institutes.
- Q. Why is this campaign necessary?
- A. Higher education is in crisis - a crisis created by \$7 billion in federal funding cuts to education and training in the last five years. While funding has plummeted, tuition fees and student debt have skyrocketed. Canada's colleges and universities are unable to provide opportunity to all Canadians.
- Q. Are all provinces experiencing this crisis in the same way?
- A. Other provinces have compounded the federal funding cuts: Ontario deregulated fees for some programs and cut funding for students with disabilities; Manitoba removed its cap on tuition fee increases; New Brunswick implemented measures to deny students access to loans; and most provinces have eliminated student grants. Other provinces have bucked the trend: British Columbia, Quebec, and Newfoundland have some form of tuition fee freeze; Saskatchewan, Quebec, Northwest territories, and British Columbia have grants programs; and, Saskatchewan and British Columbia have restored some or all of the federal funds cuts since 1995. But holding the line isn't enough. No province has a clear vision and plan for accessible, quality higher education. If Canada is going to be successful tomorrow, provincial and federal government must help us make our universities and colleges strong today.
- Q. So what specifically is this campaign asking for?
- A. The Canadian Federation of Students is calling on the federal government to increase transfer payments to at least 1994 levels, before the major Liberal funding cuts. But transfer payments were being cut as early as the 1980s by Brian Mulroney and his predecessors. It will take more than just transfer payments to improve access to higher education. We are also asking for a program of national grants. CFS' provincial representatives will be announcing province-specific recommendations as the Access 2000 campaign develops.

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campaign BACKGROUND

questions and answers

- Q. This will probably be expensive. How do you expect these proposals to be paid for?
- A. First, the proposals will not be 'expensive' or unrealistic. These are reasonable goals that governments can meet. Second, there is a significant federal surplus. Third, Canada must begin to treat higher education as an investment in the economic and social future of this country. Canada is one of only two countries in the industrialized world without a program of national grants for students.
- Q. Aren't other sectors just as important as education? Won't education funding come at the expense of health care and social assistance?
- A. As members of the *Alternative Federal Budget* project, students are advocating for increased funding for all social programs. Education, health and social assistance are all equally important. We know that better-educated citizens tend to be healthier and more economically productive. It benefits everyone if Canadians have the opportunity and support to be healthy, well-educated, and economically productive.
- Q. What are the elements of the campaign?
- A. Initially, we are asking people to join the campaign for higher education. We will be involving them in activities which demonstrate the significant support our proposals have with students and with the public. Specifics will include a petition drive, the continuation of Canadian Federation of Students' highly successful postcard campaign, a response to the federal budget, a survey, a questionnaire, a constitutional challenge, a petition, and many local events.
- Q. Will you be holding another big protest this year?
- A. Access 2000 is about more than that - it's a concerted strategy to make changes in the way we approach higher education in this country; but that doesn't exclude protests. Higher education is in crisis and people are understandably angry. Demonstrations are one of the options open to Canadians, to students, who are tired of a funding cuts and declining access to higher education and other social programmes. In fact, we know that governments listen when Canadians stand up to be counted for what they believe in.

Tuition Fees

- Q. Is the campaign calling for the elimination of tuition fees?
- A. Let's be clear. Tuition fees are a primary and fundamental barrier to access. This has been confirmed by study after study. For many students, even a few hundred dollars in tuition fees makes post-secondary education out of reach. Access 2000 is about moving forward, creating opportunities. Right now, user fees are standing in the way of that progress. In fact, average fees in Canada are, along with Japan and the US, the highest tuition fees of any industrialized countries.



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questions and answers

- Q. Tuition fees aren't the biggest cost, housing and food are. Shouldn't you be focusing on those issues and not on tuition fees?
- A. We hear that concern, but try telling students in Ontario who pay fees in lump sums of \$2000 every four months that fees aren't the major issue. Tuition fees are the single largest barrier to access. They prevent Canadians from getting an education - and that is wrong.
- Q. Tuition fees make students understand the value of an education - if there aren't any fees won't students just slack off?
- A. The opposite is true. If there are no fees, then it is willingness to work hard and get the necessary education and training that will determine access to education. Currently, high tuition fees force students to take part or even full time jobs. That, and the anxiety of high debt, has a negative impact on academic performance. Is that how it should be?
- Q. But isn't it the responsibility of individuals and their families to save for their education?
- A. Higher education is a necessity and a right, and there should be no user fees or other barriers to access. Because most Canadians can't afford higher education, the current system of user fees is not only unfair, but it is inefficient. We have a historical precedent to make the point. At the turn of the century, governments finally recognized that high school needed to be fully accessible for employment and social development - high school tuition fees were abolished. Today, governments should recognize that higher education is crucial to Canada's socio-economic development by eliminating tuition fees.
- Q. Didn't the Blair government in England just introduce tuition fees?
- A. Britain's decision to introduce tuition fees was short-sighted and did not have any wide-spread support from students. Britain has joined the race for the bottom. Access 2000 is about turning Canada around and racing for the top. Ireland recently eliminated tuition fees and the government credits investment in education and training as the reason that they now have the fastest growing economy, specifically technology sector, in the world!
- Q. I've heard the Canadian Federation of Students opposes differential fees of all kinds, including international students' tuition fees. How can Canada afford this?
- A. International students pay a variety of taxes in Canada: the GST, provincial sales taxes, alcohol and cigarette taxes, tolls, entertainment taxes, and taxes rolled into rent and utility payments. They should have access to all Canadian social programs. If there's a problem with wealthy visitors taking advantage of Canada's social safety net, perhaps our governments should implement progressive taxation for foreigners. Besides, Canada should take a leading role in making education available to all, regardless of economic background or place of birth. The concept of mobility needs to apply on a global scale if we are to develop a fair global economy. All industrial economies such as Canada's exploit the human and material resources of developing countries, so why shouldn't our assistance to poorer countries include more than shipments of wheat?

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- Q. Isn't reducing tuition fees just asking poor people to subsidize rich students whose parents can afford to pay?
- A. No. Under the current system - in which poor people don't have fair access to higher education - they end up subsidizing the education of the rich through their taxes. Reducing user fees ensures that all Canadians have the same access to our universities and colleges.
- Q. Shouldn't those who are going to make high incomes when they graduate - like doctors, engineers, and lawyers - pay more for their education?
- A. They will pay more - through taxes on their higher income after they graduate. Higher tuition fees don't make the system fair - they prevent talented and eager people from having access to those professions. Also, higher up-front tuition fees for professional programs further discourage graduates from entering important areas where the skills are needed but where the pay is less.

The 1998 Education Budget

- Q. Didn't the 1998 federal budget solve a lot of the problems raised by the Access 2000 campaign?
- A. No. Paul Martin may have labeled it the 'Education Budget', but the 1998 Federal Budget does not begin to solve the access and funding crises in our colleges and universities. Here are some of the problems with last year's budget:
- there was no increase in the federal transfer payments to the provinces;
 - several regressive financial assistance measures were announced to serve the banks, not students - the prohibition on the right to declare bankruptcy on student loans was increased from 2 to 10 years, credit history checks for loan applicants, and a merit component for Millennium Scholarship eligibility;
 - new financial assistance measures are of limited in value or very restrictive - it is very difficult to qualify for debt remission, and extended interest relief is of more benefit to banks than students who can't find decently-waged work;
 - no solution to the problem of student debt load burdens;
 - no commitment to pan-Canadian standards for education funding and access;
 - inadequate funding for the granting councils and increased privatization of research;
 - measures encourage further privatization of higher education - this compromises access and quality.

The 1998 budget didn't even begin to solve the student debt and education funding crises; however, some useful measures were announced:

- grants for students with dependents;
- some increased funding for the research granting councils (but the social sciences are still proportionately underfunded);
- new mechanisms for students to delay or be exempt from loan repayment - but their use is very limited;



BACKGROUND

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campaign **BACKGROUND**

questions and answers

- expanded tax credits - but they disproportionately benefit provinces with high tuition fees.

The Canadian Federation of Students worked hard to achieve these few measures. Overall, however, funding problems are unabated and the federal government has further compromised the principles of the of Canada Student Loans Program.

Q. But the Millennium Scholarship Fund will provide \$2.5 billion directly to students - isn't that enough?

A. Millennium Scholarships do not compensate for the cuts:

- \$300 million a year in the Canadian Millennium Scholarships does not equal the \$7 billion that has already been cut from education and training - it's not even close;
- Millennium Scholarship will help less than 10% of students each year, while an estimated 80% of students require financial assistance;
- The \$2.5 billion will not begin to be distributed until January 2000, and the money is to be distributed over the next ten years;
- There is no guarantee that the scholarships will be given to the students who most need them;
- Students have no guarantees yet that Millennium Scholarships will not be deducted from student loan awards;
- Millennium Scholarships, like so much else in the 1998 budget, is more a public relations exercise than an attempt to solve problems in higher education.

Q. And what about tax relief, and Canada Education Savings Grants - won't they ensure access to higher education?

A. Tax credits are no use to people who can't afford tuition fees in the first place. They're also non-refundable credits, so only those with higher incomes are eligible. Canada Education Savings Grants are incentives for those who can afford to purchase registered retirement savings plans, and it is almost exclusively wealthy Canadians who can afford RESPs.

Q. With expanded interest relief, targeted grants, and debt remission is student debt still a problem?

A. Yes. These measures do nothing to combat rising tuition fees or discernibly reduce student debt loads. To make matters worse, federal and provincial governments are implementing plenty of student loan restrictions like de-designation policies, credit history checks, and a 10-year ban on student loan bankruptcies. Targeted grants are too limited in amount and are inefficient to administer because of narrow criteria for eligibility. Broader grants are more effective in increasing access and more efficient to administer.

(more Q & A on Privatization, Youth and Student Employment to come in April)

student assistance **BACKGROUND**

CREDIT WORTHINESS

The evaluation of a student's credit history in order to determine her eligibility for student financial assistance.

On June 18, 1998, the federal government amended the Canada Student Financial Assistance Act to give the federal government the power to deny student loans on the basis of an applicant's credit history. Currently, federal regulations which come into effect in August 1999 stipulate that a student loan can be denied to an individual who, in the three years preceding application for a student loan, has missed at least three monthly payments on each of three separate loans or debts worth \$ 1000 or more. A stipulation that credit history checks only apply to those at least 22 years of age may or may not be included in the final version of the regulation.

A number of provinces already have credit checks in place. New Brunswick started conducting credit checks on student loan applicants in 1994. Prospective students applying for full-time financial assistance must have a credit check completed if they: are 22 years of age and older; have never been issued a New Brunswick student loan; and have never before had a credit check completed.

For the loan year 1997/98, approximately 8.5% of first-time applicants were denied student loans on the basis of 'poor credit'. The Student Aid Credit Review Board reversed approximately 24% of the rejections on appeal. New Brunswick guaranteed the loans for those students whose appeals were successful. However, approximately 6.5% of applicants were still denied access to student loans on the basis of their credit history.

Alberta and Manitoba also conduct credit checks on student loan applicants. If the bank determines that, according to established criteria, the applicant has a history of credit problems, the lender cannot deny the applicant a student loan. It will however, ask the province to guarantee the loan. Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island have similar credit check systems in place.

Ontario started performing credit checks on all loan applicants this year, 1998-99, and is using the same policy to deny students loans.

Only the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology has publicly opposed the implementation of credit check measures. Other provinces are considering implementing the policy



student assistance **BACKGROUND**

credit worthiness

ISSUES

- The Canada Student Loans Program was originally created as a social program aimed at expanding access to post-secondary education. In the absence of a comprehensive national grants program, public loans are the only form of assistance available for students facing economic barriers to access. Most students would not qualify for private loans which have criteria that include credit history, collateral, and personal income. In fact, a survey conducted by the federal government revealed that 75% of those receiving student loans felt they would be unable to take part in higher education without this assistance.
- Risk sharing agreements between governments and banks have led to banks' playing a greater role in the development of student financial assistance policy. It is clear that banks are attempting to treat public loans for post-secondary education in the same manner as consumer loans. When risk sharing agreements were first introduced the Federation argued that this was a "slippery slope" towards undue private influence over a public program. As profit-motivated institutions, banks have an overwhelming incentive to reduce defaults by refusing loans to higher risk (poorer) students.
- The banks claim that a certain credit pattern exists for people with a history of credit problems and that this history allows them to predict actual default rates based on financial demographics (i.e. class). However, the federal government has no evidence that a history of credit problems is actually linked to higher default rates on student loans. Moreover, it is clear that governments are not receiving accurate data from banks with respect to default rates. Financial institutions even have different definitions of the term 'default'. In some cases a student is considered to be in 'default' after a single late payment, even if payments resume.

KEY MESSAGES

- It should not be left up to the banks to decide who gets a student loan and who doesn't. The banks don't even have data to back up their claims - in fact, available data suggests that credit history is not a significant factor.
- Students with a difficult credit history are those that the Canada Student Loans Program was designed to assist. Credit checks will deny these people the opportunity to improve their lives.
- In New Brunswick, 6.5% of students who applied for loans last year did not receive assistance of any kind and as a result they will be denied the opportunity to go to college or university. That means that last year in New Brunswick, over 500 students were denied an opportunity to take part in higher education.

BACKGROUND

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CUPE 1281

student assistance **BACKGROUND**

DE-DESIGNATION

The process by which institutions can lose their student loan designation status based on certain performance indicators, such as student loan repayment default rates. Student at de-designated institutions are ineligible for student financial assistance.

At the National Stakeholders Conference on Student Financial Assistance, December 9-10, 1998, Human Resources Development Canada proposed that de-designation policies be developed with the following performance measurements: 1) student loan default rates broken down by institution, department, and program; 2) employment rates of graduates; and 3) completion rates.

The federal government, under pressure from the banks involved in the student loan program, has proposed that institutions be held responsible not only for default rates, but also for completion rates of students and unemployment rates of graduates.

De-designation policies have already been implemented in a modified version in Ontario. Institutions whose graduates have a student loan default rate that is 15% higher than the provincial average can be de-designated. Ontario is also pursuing a policy, which would hold institutions financially accountable for default rates.

In Alberta, all of the province's private hairdressing and truck driving schools have been de-designated because of high default rates. Default rates are higher at private institutions. Because the bottom line for private institutions is profit, not quality or accessibility, their goals are to cut administrative costs and to increase revenue by charging high tuition fees, providing cut-rate quality, packing students into crowded classrooms, and even cutting off programs that are not profitable. Student loans help subsidize the for-profit education business.

Public institutions are accountable to provincial governments through legislation, funding formulae, planning and reporting mechanisms. They also have in-house accountability structures such as Boards of Governors and Senates to guard against poor quality programs and short-term decision-making. Because of system-wide planning, public institutions experience lower default rates than private institutions.

However, even all of the planning and protections of the public system cannot, on their own, eliminate regional disparities that have led to higher default rates in the Atlantic and Prairies provinces, downtown and rural institutions, and other economically disadvantaged communities. Public institutions require finding mechanisms, including student loans, that help correct regional and other disparities, not expand them.



student assistance **BACKGROUND**

de-designation

ISSUES

- The primary consideration is assessing designation will be default rates. There are many basic problems with using default rates. These include:
 - banks have not collected accurate data on defaults rates;
 - banks, through their own errors, have forced students who are willing and able to pay into default;
 - default does not measure repayment - a student who misses a single payment may be classified by a bank as being in default (even if that student returns to making payments the following month, she is counted in the default data).
- The problem with high default rates is concentrated at private institutions, where students' default rates are more than double those of public institutions, on average.
- Default rates do not measure the social value of programs or institutions. It is likely that under program by program designation policies based on default rates, fine arts programs would quickly become de- designated - even though, in the long run, fine arts graduates can earn decent incomes, while contributing economically and culturally to society.
- De-designating public institutions will exacerbate regional disparities and compromise program integrity by forcing short-term decisions to cut programs and by potentially shutting whole communities out of the system.

KEY MESSAGES

- Banks and governments are willing to deny loans to students based on meaningless and non-existent data - all because the banks want higher profits.
- Students graduating from private institutions are far more likely not to repay their loans. Rather than dealing the inferior, costly education provided by private institutions, governments are simply going to deny loans on the basis of inaccurate and inappropriate measures.
- Governments should stop providing subsidies to inferior private institutions, and put that money into offering more programs at public institutions.

student assistance **BACKGROUND**

HARMONIZATION

The process by which federal and provincial student financial assistance programs will be integrated into one uniform program.

Across Canada, with the exceptions of Quebec and the Northwest Territories, loans are provided through the provincial student assistance programs and the Canada Student Loans Program. Although a student completes one application form and receives one loan award, 40% of the loan is provided through the provincial program and 60% is provided through the federal program. Therefore, a student debt holder has two separate and distinct loans; a provincial loan and a federal loan.

The federal government has drafted a Memorandum of Understanding to harmonize or make congruent federal and provincial student financial assistance programs. To date, the Memorandum has been signed by New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia - discussions are ongoing with other provinces. The federal government is hoping that by August 2000 all students will be negotiating only one loan.

There are two pressures driving harmonization. One is that the banks will not be willing to re-negotiate risk sharing agreements unless each student is given only one loan. The second is that there are too many administrative problems with two loans that have negative implications. For example, some students are unaware that they have two loans; this can often result in repayment's only being made on one loan.

The core elements of a harmonized student financial assistance program (as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding) are: one single needs assessment process; one lender agreement; a continuation of interest relief during the study period; a post-graduation interest relief period; and, a debt-reduction measure. The same 60/40 cost sharing arrangement would remain in effect for all of the core elements of the program. Province-specific programs (e.g. grants) can be maintained and would continue to be fully funded by the provinces.

The federal government wants harmonization to be achieved by September 1999, prior to the re-negotiation of risk sharing agreements.

student assistance **BACKGROUND**

harmonization

ISSUES

- Harmonization threatens to extend regressive federal student financial assistance policies across the country. For example, the federal government has introduced credit checks and is investigating de-designation policies. Provinces that oppose such measures are under pressure to harmonize towards more regressive policies.
- Harmonization has resulted in some slight improvements in student financial assistance in some provinces (e.g. Manitoba implemented a debt remission program and extended debt relief). However, more populated provinces like Alberta and Ontario are driving the harmonization agenda - they are pushing regressive measures. This pressure makes it difficult for provinces like British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Quebec to maintain grants programs, for example.

KEY MESSAGES

- On the face of it, harmonization sounds sensible. However, in the context of funding cuts and soaring student debt, harmonization threatens to make an already inadequate student aid system worse, as governments and banks look for ways to save money.
- Harmonization should proceed only if its primary effect is to improve service to students and to reduce the cost of debt for students - not to increase bank profits.
- Harmonization must preserve the most useful elements of each program for students. It should be a race for the top, not the bottom.
- Provinces that do not currently have credit check and de-designation policies for public institutions must not implement them.
- We can't let banks dictate public policy on issues as important as higher education. We know they aren't concerned about students - their concern is profit.

student assistance **BACKGROUND**

RISK SHARING

An agreement between governments and financial institutions for the disbursement of student loans, in which the government pays the financial institution a premium on the value of student loans, and other expenses, to cover risk on the student loan.

The Canada Student Loans and provincial loans programs were originally created as social programs aimed at expanding access to post-secondary education. Until 1994, loans were provided through the banks, but it was the responsibility of the government to collect defaulted loans.

In the mid-nineties, governments and banks publicly promoted negative images of students on loans, and graduates not making payments. Governments argued that they were not effective at collecting loans.

In April 1994, the Alberta government entered a landmark agreement with a number of banks, and called it "risk sharing". Risk sharing greatly expanded the role of private banks in this loans program. During the next two years, the federal government and all of the provincial governments jumped on the bandwagon and entered these same risk sharing agreements with the banks.

Under the first round of risk sharing agreements, governments would continue to determine eligibility for student financial assistance. Banks would assume full ownership of the debt and responsibility for collection of the loan. In exchange, government agreed to pay a "risk premium" of 5% of the loan value to the bank.

The Canadian Federation of Students fought vigorously against the implementation of risk sharing. It was argued that these agreements were a slippery slope towards bank interference in student loan policy - on key issues like credit history and institutional and program designation. Unfortunately, governments bent on achieving cost savings and further program privatization proceeded with these risk sharing agreements.

The first set of risk-sharing agreements are currently expiring and early negotiations indicate the Federation's analysis of risk sharing was correct. Designation, credit history, bankruptcy laws, and higher risk premiums are all on the table. In the coming months, these agreements will be finalized in almost all provinces.

student assistance **BACKGROUND**

risk sharing

ISSUES

- The re-negotiation of risk sharing agreements is likely to result in the implementation of regressive student aid measures, such as the de-designation of public institutions and credit checks on needy students.
- Under risk sharing agreements, financial institutions agreed to provide minimum levels of service to students, and to collect a series of data tracking student loan repayment. The banks are failing to meet the majority of their obligation – particularly with respect to data collection.
- Because the banks have not tracked data accurately, and do not share what they have tracked, governments are entering current negotiations without adequate information. This puts the banks at a significant advantage in negotiating for a higher risk premium and restricting access to student loans. Non-governmental organizations have even less access to information.
- Banks have failed to provide adequate service. In fact, banks regularly make mistakes that force students into default.

KEY MESSAGES

- Letting banks run the student loans program has been a disastrous failure. They have not lived up to their obligations. Students are paying the price of this policy disaster through reduced service; governments, therefore taxpayers, are going to pay through higher risk premiums.
- Even worse, the integrity of the Canada Student Loans has already been comprised in order to appease the profit-hungry banks. Already, the federal government and some provincial jurisdictions have implemented credit checks that restrict access to student loans. Governments are also discussing policies to deny loans to students at public institutions because they may be statistically more likely to default.

campaign **BACKGROUND**

FEDERAL BUDGET 1999

Even though the 400,000 members of the Canadian Federation of Students have created a high level of public concern about rising tuition fees and student debt, Paul Martin and the federal Liberals have provided nothing in the 1999 federal budget to reduce the costs and burden of higher education.

BUDGET 1998

The 1998 Federal Budget, dubbed by Finance Minister Paul Martin as the 'Education Budget', centre-pieced education, research, and youth employment. Although students achieved gains in the areas of funding for research, grants for students with dependents, and tax and debt relief, the measures put forward were targeted primarily at middle and upper class students and their parents. These include:

- Millennium Scholarship Foundation - \$2.5 billion endowment fund, to be issued in merit and need based awards, administered by a private foundation over ten years.
- Tax credits - extended to incidental fees, student loan interest payments, and part-time students.
- Canada Education Savings Grant - 20% grant for dollars invested in registered education savings plans.

These measures will do little to reduce student debt, and do not help reduce tuition fees or provide adequate core funding to higher education. Also, several 1998 budget measures make fundamental changes to the Canada Student Loans Program and the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act that will prevent poor and working class students from receiving their education.

BUDGET 1999

Federal Budget '99 focuses on some new funding for the health care sector, increased funding for research and development, and tax relief for the wealthy.

SOME DETAILS:

- \$2 billion in 1999-2000 in transfer payments for health care
- tax cuts totalling \$3.9 billion in 1999:
 - Elimination of the 3% surtax on incomes over \$50,000 giving a tax savings of over a \$1,000 for people earning over \$100,000
 - \$300 million for the child tax benefit for those in the \$30,000 to \$50,000 income range-
 - \$50 million more for the three research granting councils
 - \$65 million for the Canadian Institutes of Health Research
 - \$200 million more for the Foundation for Innovation
 - \$130 million for the commercializing of knowledge.



BACKGROUND

CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

campaign **BACKGROUND**

federal budget 1999

ISSUES

- Federal Budget '99 contains **NOTHING** to reduce tuition fees or student debt. There is **NO** increase in transfer payments for education and training. Some of the funding announced for research and development will have some spin-off effects for higher education, but it doesn't even backfill the cuts made to research and development since 1993.
- While Paul Martin has increased funding for research through the three granting councils, the National Research Council and the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, he still favours dangerous 'public-private' research partnerships. Private sector funding of public research has a corrosive effect on public health and academic freedom. A case in point is Dr. Nancy Olivieri of the University of Toronto who had to sign away her right to publicly release any information on the results of her research in order to receive funding for her work. Researchers need to be able to openly share all results in order to safeguard public health.
- Overall, the federal government is relying on last year's failed Education Budget to solve the problems faced by students and our entire system of higher education.

KEY MESSAGES

- Higher education in Canada is in crisis because of billions of dollars in cuts to transfer payments. In the year following the so-called 'education budget' the crisis has only worsened.
- Boutique programs like the Millennium Scholarship simply do not work. You can't cut nearly \$7 billion from higher education funding and expect that providing \$300 million a year in scholarships will fix the damage.
- Until the federal government restores transfer payments to repair the damage done by the cuts, the crisis in our colleges, institutes, and universities will continue.
- It's not worth talking about small measures in the context of \$7 billion in cuts to education and training. The first and foremost priority must be the restoration of transfer payments and the implementation of a comprehensive system of national grants.
- In survey after survey, Canadians place a high priority on spending, in the form of transfers for health care, education, and employment initiatives. If Prime Minister Jean Chretien and Finance Minister Paul Martin care about what Canadians think, then the 1999 federal budget will focus on these areas, and not on tax cuts.



members' BULLETIN

#1

there is a funding crisis in our colleges and universities
join the campaign for higher education.

WHAT IS ACCESS 2000?

ACCESS 2000 is the Canadian Federation of Students' campaign for a universally accessible, high quality system of higher education in Canada.

We're calling it the 'campaign for higher education' because it's a call for higher funding, higher access, higher quality, and higher levels of education.

There's a crisis in education - and this campaign comes not a moment too soon. After five years and \$7 billion in federal cuts to education and training, our higher education system needs some serious help. Tuition fees and student debt have skyrocketed, and our colleges and universities are unable to do the job of providing opportunity and enrichment to all. Even though the issues differ from province to province, we all know that Canada's system of higher education needs to be more accessible.

february 1999:
the canadian
federation of
students
launches its
ACCESS 2000
campaign for
higher education

ACCESS 2000 CAMPAIGN KICK-OFF

ACCESS 2000 is a broad campaign - its success will depend on student and community involvement at campuses across the country. The campaign will culminate in nation-wide events in the new millennium.

During the month of February, the Canadian Federation of Students will be sending a clear message to the federal government as it prepares to present the 1999 Federal Budget on February 18.

Here is a sample of some of the national kick-off activities:

- ACCESS 2000 campaign announcement
- STUDENT INCOME SECURITY SURVEY launch on campuses
- launch of TEST CASE in constitutional challenge against unfair student loan bankruptcy laws
- BOOK LAUNCH of *Enter At Your Own Risk* (a book about youth and the job market)

Also, check out activities across the country....

Sudbury - Laurentian University, CFS Local 30: The Students' General Association will put the question to students: 'If tuition fees increase again, do you want to hold a STUDENT STRIKE on March 23, 1999?'

Newfoundland - Students province-wide will take it to the streets for a February 4, 1999 DAY of PROTEST, just before provincial elections.

British Columbia - ACCESS 2000 campaign ads are coming soon to a bus near you!

Quebec - Students are organizing DAYS OF ACTION for February 24 and March 31, 1999.

To get involved,
contact your local student union or www.cfs-fcee.ca

CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

1...



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join the campaign for higher education.

BACKGROUND

federal BUDGET '99

All indications are that the federal budget for 1999 - 2000 will not provide anything substantial for higher education, nor is it likely to address any of the major problems in every Liberal budget introduced this decade.

BUDGET 1998

The 1998 Federal Budget, dubbed by Finance Minister Paul Martin as the 'Education Budget', centred on education, research, and youth employment. Although students achieved gains in the areas of funding for research, grants for students with dependents, and tax and debt relief, the measures put forward were targeted primarily at middle and upper class students and their parents. These included:

- Millennium Scholarship Foundation - \$2.5 billion endowment fund, to be issued in merit and need based awards, administered by a private foundation over ten years.
- Tax credits - extended to incidental fees, student loan interest payments, and part-time students.
- Canada Education Savings Grant - 20% grant for dollars invested in registered education savings plans.

These measures will do little to reduce student debt, and do not help reduce tuition fees or provide adequate core funding to higher education. Also, several 1998 budget measures made fundamental changes to the *Canada Student Loans Program* and the *Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act* that will prevent poor and working class students from receiving their education.

BUDGET 1999

By all accounts, it is expected that the upcoming 1999 federal budget will focus on health care. However, continued measures to privatize social programs and provide tax relief that primarily benefits Canada's wealthy are also expected.

To date, the federal finance committee has made these recommendations for the 1999 budget:

- Tax cuts for the wealthy
- Increased health care funding - \$1 billion more in transfer payments
- Increased funding for medical research, in the form of 'public-private partnerships'
- Increased handouts to the high tech sector

KEY MESSAGES

Higher education in Canada is in crisis because of billions of dollars in cuts to transfer payments. In the year following the so-called 'education budget' the crisis has only worsened.

Boutique programs like the Millennium Scholarship simply do not work. You can't cut nearly \$7 billion from higher education funding and expect that providing \$300 million a year in scholarships will fix the damage.

Until the federal government restores transfer payments to repair the damage done by the cuts, the crisis in our colleges, institutes, and universities will continue.

It's not worth talking about small measures in the context of \$7 billion in cuts to education and training. The first and foremost priority must be the restoration of transfer payments and the implementation of a comprehensive system of national grants, with the right of withdrawal with compensation for Quebec.

In survey after survey, Canadians place a high priority on spending, in the form of transfers for health care, education, and employment initiatives. If Prime Minister Jean Chretien and Finance Minister Paul Martin care about what Canadians think, then the 1999 federal budget will focus on these areas, and not on tax cuts.

members' BULLETIN



CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS



there is a funding crisis in our colleges and universities
join the campaign for higher education.

campaign BULLETIN

#2

10/02/99

february 1999:
the canadian
federation of
students
launches its
ACCESS 2000
campaign for
higher education

ACCESS 2000 is the Canadian Federation of Students' campaign for a universally accessible, high quality, publicly funded system of higher education in Canada.

Countdown to Federal Budget 1999

SOCIAL UNION TALKS LEAVE OUT STUDENTS

On Tuesday, February 18, the federal government will unveil its 1999 Federal Budget.

Social union talks closed last week in preparation for the budget.

These federal-provincial negotiations, held behind closed doors, sought a pan-Canadian agreement on such critical issues as interprovincial mobility of, funding for, and equity of social programs. No concrete guarantees that public, higher education will be protected and improved emerged from the talks; only a vaguely-worded framework was endorsed.

Throughout social union talks and in anticipation of the federal budget, the Canadian Federation of Students will maintain pressure on the federal government to restore transfer payments, create a pan-Canadian system of grants, keep a strong national role in education (with recognition of Quebec's right to opt out of programs with funding), and to increase funding for granting councils and other key areas.

ACCESS 2000 CAMPAIGN EVENTS

ACCESS 2000 is a broad campaign - it's about much more than just the federal budget. The success of the campaign depends on student and community involvement. The campaign will culminate in nation-wide events in the new millennium.

Activities across the country target all levels of decision-making and aim to remind Canadians that last year's 1998 Education Budget did not solve the funding crisis in our colleges and universities.

Halifax, NS - Students at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, CFS Local 7, voted 94% in favour of a one-day student strike on campus on Thursday, February 11. Voter turnout was a remarkable 62%. Pro-access picket lines go up Thursday morning at 8 am!

Sudbury, ON - Students at Laurentian University, CFS Local 30, voted 89% in favour of the question 'If tuition fees increase again, do you want to hold a STUDENT STRIKE on March 23, 1999?'

St. John's, NF - Over 200 students participated in a sit-in at a federal HRDC office on February 4, 1999. Students also made education an important issue during the recent provincial election.

Ottawa, ON - Students at Carleton University, CFS Local 1, are protesting tuition fee deregulation on Wednesday, February 10.

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CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

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BACKGROUNDER

the social union & **FEDERAL BUDGET '99**

Federal and provincial governments are at it again - negotiating behind closed doors on the future of our social programs.

WHAT IS THE SOCIAL UNION?

The social union is the latest name for federal-provincial wrangling over decision-making power and funding. Similar talks have taken place over the years, manifesting themselves in the Meech Lake Accord, the Charlottetown Accord, the Calgary Declaration, and now the Social Union Contract.

HOW WILL THE SOCIAL UNION CONTRACT AFFECT THE FEDERAL BUDGET?

On February 4, the provincial Premiers and the Prime Minister met behind closed doors to produce a 'contract' that all parties could agree to. Because the talks are so closely linked to federal-provincial funding arrangements, the outcome had a significant impact on the budget.

WHAT IS IN THE SOCIAL UNION CONTRACT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION?

So far, not much. Only a loosely-worded commitment to avoiding differential tuition fees from province to province was accepted by all provinces except Quebec. However, the promise is tainted by wording that leaves room for differential fees 'if necessary'.

It is becoming more and more clear that the federal government chooses to ignore the view of the vast majority of Canadians that our social programs outside Quebec need strong federal rules and that increased funding is critical. Another big danger of social union negotiations is increasing privatization, spearheaded by regressive provincial governments that threaten the fundamental goals of higher education: quality and access. Under the guise of increased provincial power, both levels of government are using the social union as an excuse to downsize social programs.

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT IN THE 1999 FEDERAL BUDGET AS A RESULT OF SOCIAL UNION TALKS?

Following are some measures at which the federal government has hinted:

- Tax cuts for the wealthy
- Tax cut in the form of increased basic allowable income for tax filings, which will result in an overall funding cut to the provinces
- Increased funding for medical research, mainly in the form of 'public-private partnerships'
- Increased health care funding - up to \$2 billion more in transfer payments

Increased transfer payments for education are unlikely - instead, there will probably be a re-announcement of several existing initiatives that span several years.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Write to or fax your Member of Parliament. Let him/her know that you think increasing transfer payments for all social programs should be a priority of this federal government. Forward a copy of your letter to a local or campus paper.

Sign the Canadian Federation of Students' postcards to Prime Minister Jean Chretien and federal Finance Minister Paul Martin. Make sure to mail them before February 12! You can pick up a copy at your local student union.

campaign **BULLETIN**

#2

10/02/99

CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

After the budget, contact your MP - let her/him know how you feel about the federal budget. Keep in touch with your student union to get an up-to-date analysis of the 1999 Federal Budget.

Drop by your local student union or visit www.cfs-fcee.ca to get involved in the Access 2000 campaign. . . .2



campaign **BULLETIN**

#3

18/02/99

february 1999:
the canadian
federation of
students
launches its
ACCESS 2000
campaign for
higher education

there is a funding crisis in our colleges and universities
join the campaign for higher education.

SPECIAL EDITION: FEDERAL BUDGET '99 ANALYSIS

You might not think that the federal budget has much to do with you - but it does. The decisions our government makes about budget priorities for Canada can cause tuition fee hikes, lead to increasing student debt, or open the way for private sector control over research. And budgets are about a lot more than just money; in fact, they chart direction for higher education, the economy and other sectors.

FEDERAL BUDGET IGNORES STUDENTS - AGAIN!

The 1999 Federal Budget does nothing to solve the student debt and base funding crises facing Canada's system of higher education. In fact, this budget — and the ten years' worth of budget cuts that have come before it — have priced higher education out of reach for a growing number of Canadians.

"Since the last budget tuition fees have continued to rise, and the quality of education continues to erode. Average Canadians are being denied the education they need to participate in today's economy," states Elizabeth Carlyle, National Chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students.

Students are calling on Martin to go back to the basics: they are asking for an increase in transfer payments and a student grant program for those in greatest need. Reinvesting in the field of health is crucial, and students recognize this, but education and social assistance have also suffered from deep budget cuts.

"The bottom line is that last year's so-called Education Budget has done little to help students staggering under mortgage-sized debt burdens," continues Carlyle. "Last year's budget introduced punitive measures into the student loan program. It gave billions of dollars to a private scholarship program that will only help about 7% of students, and won't be available for another year — maybe more. It's no wonder low-income students are turning away from higher education."

Students already in dire straits will see the Martin's continued inaction trickle down to the provinces in the form of spring tuition fee increases. For some, these increases will make the difference between registering for the 1999 - 2000 year or dropping out. "A hemorrhage cannot be mended with a band-aid. Martin and the federal Liberals must propose long-term solutions which will ensure that higher education is accessible both now and for generations to come," concludes Carlyle.

TAKE ACTION!

join the Access 2000 campaign for higher education.

CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

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SPECIAL EDITION

FEDERAL BUDGET '99 a preliminary analysis

By organizing locally, provincially and nationally, the 400,000 members of the Canadian Federation of Students have succeeded in alerting Canadians to the problems in higher education. But, despite a high level of public concern about rising tuition fees and student debt, Paul Martin and the federal Liberals have provided nothing in the 1999 federal budget to reduce the costs and burden of higher education.

Overall Summary

Federal Budget '99 focuses on some new funding for the health care sector, increased funding for Research & development and tax relief for the wealthy.

SOME DETAILS:

- \$2 billion in 1999-200 in transfer payments for health care
- tax cuts totalling \$3.9 billion in 1999:
 - Elimination of the 3% surtax on incomes over \$50,000 giving a tax savings of over a \$1,000 for people earning over \$100,000
 - \$300 million for the child tax benefit for those in the \$30,000 to \$50,000 income range.

Higher Education

Federal Budget '99 contains **NOTHING** to reduce tuition fees or student debt. There is **NO** increase in transfer payments for education and training.

Some of the funding announced for research and development will have some spin-off effects for higher education.

Overall, the federal government is relying on last year's failed Education Budget to solve the problems faced by students and our entire system of higher education.

Research & Development

While Paul Martin has increased funding for research through the three granting councils, the National Research Council and the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, he still favours dangerous 'public-private' research partnerships. Private sector funding of public research has a corrosive effect on public health and academic freedom.

Case in point being the research of Dr. Nancy Olivieri of the University of Toronto which was co-funded by a private for-profit pharmaceutical firm-Apotex Inc. and the Medical Research Council. In order to receive the funding, Dr. Olivieri had to sign away her right to publicly release any information on the results of her research. Researchers need to be able to openly share all results in order to safeguard public health.

SOME DETAILS:

- \$50 million extra for the three research granting councils
- \$65 million for the Canadian Institutes of Health Research
- \$200 million extra for the Foundation for Innovation
- \$130 million for the commercializing of knowledge

To find out more about the 1999 Federal Budget, please contact the Canadian Federation of Students at www.cfs-fcee.ca or 613.232.7394.

campaign
BULLETIN

#3

16/02/99

You can find budget documents on the Finance Canada web site www.fin.gc.ca. You may also call the Toll-free Information Hotline at 1-877-328-3438 or 1-800-465-7735 for hearing impaired.



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join the campaign for higher education.

campaign BULLETIN

#4

don't **BANKRUPT** a **GENERATION!**

Students launch legal challenge against bankruptcy discrimination

OTTAWA - Annick Chénier, a university graduate now living in Ottawa, and the Canadian Federation of Students are initiating a legal challenge against recent changes to the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act. These changes discriminate against college and university students by precluding bankruptcy on student loan debt for ten years following completion of full or part-time studies.

"When I started university in 1988 I paid \$1,350 in tuition fees. By the time I finished my degree tuition fees had increased to \$3,600. My higher education left me with a \$63,000 debt and monthly payments of \$631, roughly 34% of my monthly take home pay," said Annick Chénier, a recent St. Paul University graduate.

"My education was not a luxury: I needed it to get the full-time job that I now enjoy. I am appalled at the government's policies that condemn me and my generation to live in poverty. No one should have to bankrupt themselves in order to receive an education - but the bankruptcy provisions leave young people between a rock and a hard place," continued Chénier.

"The government's own figures show that graduates only declare bankruptcy if they are in difficult financial situations and need help. But instead of helping, the Federal government is punishing students. The problem is not high student loan bankruptcy rates but high tuition fees and high youth unemployment that force students into situations of unmanageable debt," said Elizabeth Carlyle, National Chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students.

The average cost for an eight-month school year, for a full-time student attending a post-secondary institution is estimated at \$16,000. The average student debt load is \$25,000 for a four-year undergraduate degree, and youth unemployment and underemployment are serious problems, even for graduates. Many young Canadians can no longer afford a post-secondary education; when they choose to attend a university or college they are faced with a huge debt and inadequate employment prospects.

"This section of the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act is unconstitutional in that it violates the equality provisions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It discriminates against students as a class of individuals - this class, however, is largely comprised of those who are young (69% are below the age of 25 years) and therefore discriminates against individuals on the basis of their age. Treating young people in such a discriminatory fashion creates classes of debtors in this country. It will be argued that there is no reasonable justification for such discrimination and that student debt should be treated in the same manner as any other form of debt," concluded Todd Burke, legal counsel to the Canadian Federation of Students.

Do you have a student debt story to tell?
sign up on the 'debt wall' www.cfs-fcee.ca or contact your local student union.

CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

March 9, 1999:
the Canadian
Federation of Students
launches its Charter
Challenge and *Enter At
Your Own Risk*, a book
by Richard Marquardt
about youth and the
labour market,
published by Between
the Lines



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BACKGROUNDER

Charter Challenge summary

On June 18, 1998, an amendment to the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act was passed which prohibits student loan debtholders from declaring bankruptcy on their student loans for ten years following graduation or leaving school. The Canadian Federation of Students is launching a charter challenge to these new provisions on the grounds that they are discriminatory.

Unfair Bankruptcy Rules

Recent amendments to section 178 of the *Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act* make students loans non-dischargeable for a period of ten years after the student has ceased full or part-time studies.

These provisions create a distinction between student debtors and consumer debtors in general. Under the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, consumer debtors declaring bankruptcy for the first time may be absolutely discharged of some, if not all, of their debts after a period of nine months.

Historically, the purpose of the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act has been to allow the honest but unfortunate debtor to make a fresh start and integrate him or herself back into the economy free from the crushing burden of past debt.

The Canadian Federation of Students believes that the recent amendments to section 178 of the *Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act* violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms because they prevent former students from enjoying relief from overwhelming debt for a period of 10 years. Higher education is a risky investment which doesn't always translate into high paying jobs after graduation. Some former students end up working in low paying jobs while others are unable to find work at all. The arbitrary distinction between student and other consumer debtors denies these honest, but unfortunate students the opportunity to make a fresh start.

Section 178 violates historic and evolving notions of fairness and justice which are guaranteed by section 7 of the Charter. First, the most recent amendments to section 178 of the bankruptcy and

Insolvency Act did not receive adequate public consultation. Second, these amendments are based on the premise that student debtors tend to default on loans more often than other consumer debtors. Statistics show that this premise is erroneous. There is convincing evidence that student debtors do not default on their debts and file for bankruptcy more often than other consumer debtors.

Statistics reveal that unlike consumer debtors, the majority of students debtors (69%) are under the age of 25. By imposing harsher restrictions on student debtors, section 178 as amended discriminates against students simply because they are young. This is contrary to section 15 of the Charter.

When viewed in their broader social context, it is clear that the amendments to section 178 of the *Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act* violate the equality rights of students and contribute to the perpetuation of the economic hardship of students. In fact, the federal government has acknowledged that high student loan debt may limit former students' access to credit as well as their ability to follow chosen careers, establish a household and have children.

The Challenge

The Canadian Federation of Students has adopted the position that the recent amendments to the *Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act* are unconstitutional and seeks to challenge these provisions. This charter challenge argues, by way of a test case who has been adversely affected by section 178, that the amendments should be repealed.

campaign BULLETIN



09/03/99

CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE
CONSULT WWW.CFS-FCEE.CA.



campaign BULLETIN

#5

28/04/1999

May, 1999:
the Canadian Federation
of Students continues to
build for next February's
STUDENT STRIKE 2000, a
pan-Canadian event
calling for higher
funding for, accessibility
to, and quality of
higher education.



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join the campaign for higher education.

FREEZE FEES NOW!

Students take action on tuition fees

In anticipation of tuition fee announcements for the 1999 - 2000 year, students across the country took action this winter and spring to oppose fee increases. Thanks to these efforts, tuition fee freezes have been maintained in British Columbia and Quebec and announced in Newfoundland-Labrador.

Here is a summary of action across the country to secure tuition fee freezes:

ATLANTIC

- ◆ Newfoundland - On February 4, 1999 students hit the streets - and were successful in securing funding increases and a province-wide tuition fee freeze!
- ◆ Nova Scotia - On February 11, 500 students at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design organized a one-day strike, shutting down campus and presenting the Education Minister with a (larger-than-life, papier mâché) backbone!

QUEBEC

- ◆ On March 24, thousands of student assembled in Montreal and Quebec City to protest federal boutique Millennium Scholarships scheme. On March 31, 1000 students followed up with a protest against funding cuts and corporate-sector influence on student assistance and education funding and curriculum.

ONTARIO

- ◆ Across the province, students organized strikes, sit-ins, awareness-raising events, and days of action: Thunder Bay (January 31), London (February 4), Ottawa (February 10, March 18, & March 22), Toronto (February 25), Sudbury (March 24). Ontario students have also secured promises of tuition freezes and rollbacks from opposition Liberal and New Democratic Parties in the run up to the provincial election.

PRAIRIES

- ◆ On March 22, students at the University of Winnipeg held an alternative Board of Regents meeting and educated university decision-makers about the impact of tuition fee increases and other barriers to access.
- ◆ On March 26, two thousand students at the University of Calgary held a protest and 50 staged a sit-in against tuition fee hikes under consideration by the Board of Governors, achieving some concessions from the University.
- ◆ On March 31, students at the University of Regina protested threats to access to and quality of education posed by funding cuts and dubious corporate-sector influence on campus.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

- ◆ In the face of efforts by university and college administrators to end the tuition fee freeze, British Columbian students and supporters flooded the provincial government with thousands of postcards, achieving a continued tuition fee freeze!

THE FIGHT AGAINST TUITION FEE INCREASES DOES NOT END HERE:
JOIN THE CAMPAIGN TO BUILD FOR STUDENT STRIKE 2000!

want to tell your story of accessibility denied?
sign up on the 'debt wall' www.cfs-fcee.ca or contact your local student union.

CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

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BACKGROUND

PROVINCIAL BUDGET

cross-country review

After years of funding cuts, provincial governments are announcing their first budgets of the 'post-deficit era'. Student activism has won tuition fee freezes in three provinces - let's see how the other provinces fare on some key indicators.

PROVINCE	PUBLIC FUNDING* (INCREASE OVER '98)	TUITION LEVELS** (EXPECTED AVG. FOR '99)	USER FEE REGULATION	EMPLOYMENT	OTHER COMMENTS
BRITISH COLUMBIA	\$7 million for student assistance, \$20 million increase to base amount for operating funds	\$2285	tuition fee freeze for all programs (4th yr.)	\$800,000 decrease in funding for Youth Options program	\$600 million in new funds for health care
ALBERTA	7.7% increase, plan to fund 23,000 new spaces by 2005	\$3800	maximum tuition fee increase is 30% of operating costs	-	-
SASKATCHEWAN	no increase	\$3300	no fee regulation	-	tuition increases of over 10% expected at largest university
MANITOBA	\$12 million increase	\$3150	18% of operating costs must be user fees (draft policy)	-	small increase in min. wage but prov. announced public sector cutbacks
ONTARIO	funding freeze (part of 1998 two-year plan)	\$3900 prof. \$4500 - \$14,000	10% max. increase, but deregulated fees for prof. programs	student/youth employment program cut	recent funding cuts to assistance for students with disabilities
QUEBEC	\$400 million increase for entire education sector, incl. modest increase for higher education	\$1670 out-of-prov. \$3500	tuition fee freeze (6th yr.), ancillary fees not frozen	no new funding	tuition freeze does not apply to out-of-province students
NEW BRUNSWICK	1% cut waived, 1% increase	\$3400	no fee regulation	no new funding for student employment	-
NOVA SCOTIA	\$8 million for univ. (back to 1995 levels by year 2000), unknown for college	\$4100	no regulation, increases of 3.5%-6% expected	no increases expected	new college tech. fee \$1250 fees for public college as high as \$16,000
P.E.I.	no core funding increase	\$3600	no fee regulation	\$100,000 for new youth program	-
NFLD./LAB.	\$4.5 million increase for colleges, \$7 million for universities over 2 years	\$3300	tuition fee freeze - funded but not legislated (1st year)	\$7.5 million for student/youth employment	no new public sector layoffs, small increase in minimum wage

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HOW TO BECOME INVOLVED IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TUITION FEE INCREASES, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL STUDENT UNION OR VISIT WWW.CFS-FCOE.CA.

campaign

BULLETIN



28/04/99

* Figures do not reflect inflation or billions of dollars in funding cuts made by federal and provincial governments in past ten years.

** Approximate average university undergraduate, full-time tuition fees projected for 1999-2000. Complete data not available for colleges. Differential fees for international students exist in all provinces.

CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

Access 2000 – Coalition Work

Motion passed at the 17th Convention of the Canadian Labour Congress on May 7, 1999

At its 17th triennial convention, held May 3 – 7, 1999, the Canadian Labour Congress passed the following motion. Member locals and provincial components are encouraged to contact affiliate labour unions of the CLC to solicit support for local and provincial Access 2000 organizing work and events, including Student Strike 2000. For more information, please contact the national office of the Federation or your provincial component.

Whereas the federal government has decreased significantly transfer payments to provinces for support of education; and

Whereas provincial governments in response to reduced transfer payments from the federal government have downloaded their responsibilities on individual students by allowing increased tuition fees at universities and colleges, therefore discriminating against lower income Canadians and limiting their access to post-secondary education; and

Whereas an increasing number of students are forced to borrow from the banks and go into long-term debt in order to pay for post-secondary education; and

Whereas governments are moving to Income Contingent Loan Repayment Plans which shift most of the cost of education to students; massive, lifelong debts; the withdrawal of public funding from the education system; fee deregulation; and increased privatization and corporate control; and

Whereas the recent federal budget accomplished little towards addressing the needs of currently enrolled post-secondary students; and

Whereas the Canadian Federation of Students is waging a high profile campaign, including pan-Canadian Days of Action against these development, and has focused public attention on the issues involved; and

Whereas the fight being waged by the CFS is a fight against the very same corporate agenda the labour movement is opposed to; and

Therefore be it resolved that the Canadian Labour Congress call on the federal government to restore transfer payments to the provinces for the support of post-secondary education; and

Be it further resolved that the CLC condemn tuition increases and fee deregulation, demanding in the process an immediate tuition freeze leading to the reduction and eventual elimination of tuition fees in Canada; and

Be it further resolved that the CLC call upon its affiliated unions and labour councils to join with the Canadian Federation of Students in each community in waging an ongoing coordinated campaign for fully accessible and affordable post-secondary education.

National Office • Bureau national

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join the campaign for higher education.

GET INVOLVED IN STUDENT STRIKE 2000!

Please complete this form and return to the Canadian Federation of Students

☐ PLEASE PUT ME ON THE ACCESS 2000 EMAIL UPDATE LIST (LOW VOLUME)
☐ NATIONAL ☐ PROVINCIAL ☐ LOCAL

☐ PLEASE SEND ME MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ACCESS 2000 CAMPAIGN

ORGANIZATIONS

☐ YES, I'D LIKE TO MAKE A DONATION:

(CHECK ONE. ENCLOSE CHEQUE TO CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS)

- ☐ \$500
☐ \$1000
☐ \$2000
☐ \$5000
☐ OTHER: _____

☐ YES, I'D LIKE TO MAKE AN IN-KIND DONATION

(SUGGESTIONS: MAILOUTS, STRIKE SUPPORT BUTTONS, PENNANTS, STICKERS)

INDIVIDUALS

☐ YES, I'D LIKE TO BE CONTACTED ABOUT ACCESS 2000 EVENTS IN MY AREA

YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

Your name _____

Your organization _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Email _____

OUR CONTACT INFORMATION:

CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS
500 - 170 Metcalfe Street, Ottawa ON, K2P 1P3
613.232.7394 ♦ facs. 613.232.0276 ♦ www.cfs-fcee.ca ♦ cfs@cfs-fcee.ca
1.800.789.5870



STUDENT STRIKE 2000!



student strike 2000 | february 2
CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

BUILDING THE FIGHTBACK

Dear sisters and brothers:

Students', labour and social justice organizations have a strong history of working together for change. In 1995, we worked in solidarity across the country by creating community resistance to the recommendations of the Green Paper and on events such as the January 25th day of student strike and action. Through this struggle, we succeeded in breaking the federal Liberals' false consensus that social programs needed to be cut back.

Today, we face new versions of the same crisis we fought in 1995: public programs are being undermined and handed over to the private sector, the gap between the rich and the poor is growing, workers' rights are constantly menaced by the threat of global greed, access to health care is deteriorating, decent jobs are hard to find, and education is becoming more and more elitist.


And yet we know that the majority of Canadians are widely concerned about these very same issues. Working together, we can continue to build the fightback in the 'post-deficit era'.

Heading towards the year 2000, Canada needs a vision and a plan for its social safety net and an economy that works for everyone, not the rhetoric of governments that are arrogant and that protect the rich and the greedy.

Student Strike 2000, part of the Access 2000 campaign of the Canadian Federation of Students, can be an important part of the struggle for fairness into the new millennium. Its success depends on local and community involvement - and support from all sectors.

Students invite every labour and social justice activist to get involved:
LET'S BUILD TOWARDS STUDENT STRIKE 2000 TOGETHER!

In solidarity,


Elizabeth Carlyle

National Chairperson
Canadian Federation of Students

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Access 2000 is the campaign of the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) for a universally accessible, high quality, public system of higher education and other social programs. The campaign will culminate in Student Strike 2000, February 2.

access 2000

Q. Is this campaign just about higher education?

A. No. Although the Access 2000 campaign does focus on higher education and training, STRIKE 2000 is an opportunity to make links with other sectors. Moving into the new millennium, in which global greed will be the driving force behind the economy and social policy, we all need to work together to build alternatives. The first step in that process is securing restored and increased core funding for social programs - and that's something we can all work on together!

Q. Why is this campaign necessary?

A. Social programs, including higher education, are in crisis - a crisis created by billions of dollars in federal funding cuts to social programs (health care, education and training, and social assistance) in the last five years. While funding has plummeted, user fees, poverty, and joblessness have grown. Corporate sector influence on funding and policy has become an increasing threat to the quality of and access to social programs. Canada's social safety net is unable to protect and provide opportunity to all Canadians.

Q. How can I/my organization get involved in the campaign?

A. Mark your calendar for 02/02/2000 and participate in events in your community! You can also encourage your members to participate in local organizing, pass a motion supporting the campaign, provide a donation-in-kind, or make a cash donation. Contact CFS or your local student union for more information. (See over for contact information and details about making a donation.)

TOGETHER WE'RE STRONGER!
student strike 2000 - february 2