



*University of Alberta Students' Union*

# **STUDENTS' COUNCIL**

**Tuesday, March 28, 2017**

**6:00PM**

**Council Chambers, University Hall**

## **LATE ADDITIONS (SC 2016-23)**

**2016-23/1      SPEAKERS BUSINESS**

**2016-23/2      PRESENTATIONS**

**2016-23/2b**      Elections Office Presentation - Presented by Chief Returning Officer Donald Ademaj.

The Elections Office presents a review of the Students' Union elections, and a recap of strengths and weaknesses of this year's election period. The Office also will provide feedback from themselves and recommendations for future years, including bylaw recommendations, and feedback from Council as well.

**2016-23/3      EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**

**2016-23/4      BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORT**

**2016-23/5      OPEN FORUM**

**2016-23/5a      *BASHIR MOHAMED TO PRESIDENT RAHMAN***

The Gateway reported that Students' Union executives are advocating for an increased salary. In the article, it is mentioned that "you're also expected to put in more than just 40 hours per week."

What is the type of work done during the extra hours? (meetings, dinners, etc). Please be specific.

***PRESIDENT RAHMAN'S RESPONSE***

Having served for two years now as an Executive, each portfolio has more than enough in annual responsibilities to students and the SU to fulfill within a 40 hour work week. There are often required meetings

outside normal work hours, including on evenings and weekends that executives must attend. What often pushes executives to serve the extra hours is accomplishing their platform goals in addition to the annual responsibilities. As a result I see executives past usual working hours to respond to emails from constituents, host meetings with other student representatives, Councillors and administrators, or prepare for important upcoming meetings.

**2016-23/5b**

**BASHIR MOHAMED TO PRESIDENT RAHMAN**

As noted in meeting minutes one of the rationale for increasing the wage is. "to help executives cover their costs of living."

Which current executives consider rental costs as an expense?

**PRESIDENT RAHMAN'S RESPONSE**

The SU does not collect information on employees' living conditions. Basing salary on an employee's living condition could border on discrimination, as such that information is not captured. As a result all executives are compensated regardless of their living conditions.

**2016-23/5c**

**BASHIR MOHAMED TO PRESIDENT RAHMAN**

It has been reported that no student consultation has been done for this increase. As a result, do you consider it ethical to be voting for your own salary increase without student consultation?

**PRESIDENT RAHMAN'S RESPONSE**

Council Administration Committee and Finance Committee has recommended the increase, after much deliberation and research. The prospective increase will be a part of the 2017 - 18 Students Union Budget, if approved by Students' Council. Therefore, it will not take effect until the beginning of the SU's next fiscal year. I trust Students' Council to be conducting consultation with their constituents, as this would be a decision of Council and not of the Executive. Consultation is a responsibility of council as a whole and not solely of the executives.

I will not see the benefits of the salary increase, and am not in a conflict of interest accordingly. All members with any conflict of interest will be trusted to abstain from votes, as was the case at CAC. All prospective candidates this year abstained from the vote at CAC.

**2016-23/5d**

**BASHIR MOHAMED TO PRESIDENT RAHMAN**

How will this salary increase make the Students' Union more accessible when the increase only applies when you are elected and enter office?

**PRESIDENT RAHMAN'S RESPONSE**

There are many barriers we need to address to ensure the Students' Union executive positions are more accessible to students. The increase addresses the financial accessibility of the executive positions, ensuring that anyone can take the position, not just those in good personal financial status. Executive annual take home pay, after tax and deductions, is \$30,473. Beyond living expenses, if any executives had a dependent I am doubtful they would be able to fully support a dependent at the current salary. This is only one of many examples improving accessibility.

The budget principles do not preclude Students' Council from taking other steps to improve accessibility, which are being investigated.

**2016-23/5e**

**BASHIR MOHAMED TO PRESIDENT RAHMAN**

What is the salary or hourly wage of the lowest paid employee in the SU?

**PRESIDENT RAHMAN'S RESPONSE**

The minimum hourly wage of hourly paid employees is \$12.42, increasing to \$13.65 on May 1. These positions are eligible for step hourly wage increases for hours worked, which amount to a 4% increase for each step. This is as per the most recent union agreement. These employees also receive 4% vacation pay and 5% statutory holiday pay. Although this hourly rate is near minimum wage, we offer additional benefits above Employment Standards. For example, after 1462 hours worked, staff are paid a 3% allowance for benefits; staff accrue paid sick time based upon hours worked; staff who do not have the UPass are eligible for a subsidized bus pass; all staff have access to an Employee and Family Assistance Plan; staff are eligible for discounts on food from SU establishment. This is not an exhaustive list.

**2016-23/5f**

**BASHIR MOHAMED TO PRESIDENT RAHMAN**

What is the minimum wage in the Students' Union?

**PRESIDENT RAHMAN'S RESPONSE**

The minimum hourly wage of hourly paid employees is \$12.42, increasing to \$13.65 on May 1.

**2016-23/5g**

**BASHIR MOHAMED TO PRESIDENT RAHMAN**

A friend in science mentioned that he only made \$8 a hour (half your wage) over the summer as a student researcher. What have you done as elected members to increase accessibility for students in similar situations?

**PRESIDENT RAHMAN'S RESPONSE**

\$8 per hour is less than the legislated minimum wage of \$11.20. If any student is being paid below minimum wage, the Students' Union will absolutely advise and support them in approaching Employment Standards.

**2016-23/5h**

**BASHIR MOHAMED TO PRESIDENT RAHMAN**

During the 2017 Students' Union Presidential election, a member of CAUS and an executive at Mount Royal University (Shifrah Gadamssetti) wrote the following comment on this Gateway article (  
<https://thegatewayonline.ca/2017/03/election-dissection-2017-president/>)

"As someone who is currently working with the Council of Alberta University Students, and will be doing another term under them and in an executive position from another university, I would ask that not only the authors of this article, but everyone else who has read it, to really evaluate why one candidate's goals are realistic and safe over the others. While it is admirable that Bashir has creative ideas and a passion for timely change, his platform, especially around Tuition, would be working in direct opposition to years of relationship building and ground work by CAUS, the body primarily responsible for advocating broad based change to government. CAUS does not support increases or to maintain loopholes, but we work within the realms of current reality, which include collaboration and researched criticism of the government, when appropriate. It frightens me to think that an overzealous, unprepared candidate can take the vote because his platform seems more "interesting". He's not anti-establishment, he just doesn't understand how this works."

Is it ethical for a current CAUS executive, in her official capacity, to interfere in our local elections?

**PRESIDENT RAHMAN'S RESPONSE**

We currently do not have any Bylaws on election commentary from people outside the U of A student body. We also do not have control over The Gateway's comment section, as they are a third-party independent publication on campus. This question is more appropriate for the SAMRU Board, which is their equivalent to our Council, who oversees the activities of SAMRU executives.

**2016-23/5i**

**BASHIR MOHAMED TO COUNCILLOR DEJONG**

In the previous council meeting the chair of the policy committee was asked the following question and gave the following answer.

"COUNCILLOR SUNDAY TO COUNCILLOR DEJONG:

Why is it taking Policy Committee so long to pull gender language from its standing orders? The Council Administration Committee Standing Committee review report which had the recommendation of removing gendered language was presented to the Council months ago.

**COUNCILLOR DEJONG'S RESPONSE:**

Honestly, it slipped my mind unfortunately, but thank you for bringing that up again."

Despite this 'slipping your mind,' what is the plan to implement these changes before the end of your term.

***COUNCILLOR DEJONG'S RESPONSE***

Thank you for your question. I should have made it more clear in my response at the last meeting, but the committee has already updated standing orders to remove all gendered language before the last meeting of Students' Council. I mentioned that in my report to Council at the last meeting, which unfortunately wasn't recorded in the minutes, but is in the audio recording. I saw that the updated standing orders aren't up on the website yet, so I've emailed Discover Governance and the website will be updated soon.

**2016-23/6**

**QUESTION PERIOD**

**2016-23/7**

**BOARD AND COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

**2016-23/8**

**GENERAL ORDERS**

**2016-23/9**

**INFORMATION ITEMS**

**2016-23/9m**

Policy Committee Updated Standing Orders

Please see SC 16-23.18

**2016-23/9n**

Report from the Vice President External

Please see SC 16-23.19

**2016-23/9o**

CASA Budget 2017 Overview

Please see SC 16-23.20

## 1 Mandate

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1. In accordance with Bylaw 100 of the University of Alberta Students' Union, the Policy Committee:
  - a. Shall make recommendations to Students' Council on Students' Union political policy respecting both business of entities not based and based at the University of Alberta;
  - b. Shall receive reports from the Students' Union Executive Committee on its advocacy activities and evaluate their effectiveness; and
  - c. Can make editorial changes to all political policy under its purview.

## 2 Meetings

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1. Quorum of the Policy Committee shall be five voting members.
2. The Policy Committee shall hold a meeting, coordinated through the Speaker of Students' Council, before the first meeting of its Students' Council in order to:
  - a. elect a chair from within its voting membership,
  - b. set initial standing orders, and
  - c. set a meeting schedule for its first trimester.
3. The Policy Committee shall establish a meeting schedule on a trimester basis, in advance, with the trimesters being:
  - a. May to August,
  - b. September to December, and
  - c. January to April.
4. Additional meetings of the Policy Committee may be called by either the Chair or five voting members of the Committee, provided that:
  - a. every member of the Committee has received at least seventy-two hours' notice of the meeting, or
  - b. every member of the Committee consents to the meeting taking place.
5. Meetings of the Policy Committee may be cancelled by:
  - a. a simple majority vote of the Committee to amend the meeting schedule, or
  - b. the unanimous consent of all voting members to the cancellation.
6. Meetings of the Policy Committee are open to the public, unless the Committee moves in camera.

## 3 Membership

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1. Membership of this committee is nine.
2. Should a vacancy on the Policy Committee occur, then the Committee shall recommend the nomination of additional member(s) to Students' Council at its next meeting

3. Should the Chair of the Policy Committee leave the voting membership of the Committee, the position of chair shall be considered vacant and a new chair shall be elected from within the voting membership of the Committee at the next meeting.
4. Any voting members of the Executive Committee who are not selected to be voting members of the Policy Committee shall be considered non-voting members of the Committee.

## 4 Chair's Responsibilities and Duties

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1. The Chair of the Policy Committee shall not be a member of the Executive Committee.
2. The Chair of the Policy Committee shall:
  - a. arrange for the booking of a meeting room, when necessary, for meetings of the Committee;
  - b. arrange for the preparation and distribution of the Committee agenda;
  - c. moderate debate at meetings of the Committee;
  - d. respond to the questions of members of the Committee in a timely fashion;
  - e. assign duties to members of the Committee, such duties pertaining to the fulfillment of the mandate of the Committee;
  - f. maintain the Standing Orders of the Committee; and
  - g. submit reports to Students' Council, as required.
3. Should the Chair of the Policy Committee be absent from a meeting of the Committee, the Committee shall then elect an interim chair from within its voting membership, excluding the Executives, as per SO (3(4)), for the duration of the meeting.
4. The Chair of the Policy Committee may be removed from the post of chair by a simple majority vote of the Committee, whereupon a new chair shall be elected from within the voting membership of the Committee.
5. The Chair shall work with the Speaker and Administrative Assistant to ensure the logistical needs of Policy Committee are met.

## 5 Member Responsibilities and Duties

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1. Prior to the end of each trimester, the Policy Committee shall review its attendance records for all voting members of the Committee.
2. The Policy Committee may recommend to Students' Council, by a simple majority vote, the removal of any voting member who is not carrying out his/her ~~their~~ duties in contributing to the fulfillment of the mandate of the Committee.
3. Any member of the Executive Committee who is named as a member of the Policy Committee may be reported to Students' Council, by a simple majority vote, if ~~he/she does~~ ~~they~~ not fulfill the reporting requirements as outlined in SO (14(1)) of the standing orders of the Committee.

4. Members are required to attend all meetings of the Policy Committee.
5. Any member shall be considered present should a proxy be appointed and attends as per Bylaw 100, Section 15-5.

## 6 Proxies/Guests

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1. To appoint a proxy to the Policy Committee, the member thereof must provide a notice to that effect to the Chair of the Committee:
  - a. stating the name and e-mail address of the eligible member of Students' Council who will serve as proxy,
  - b. indicating the duration of the appointment, and
  - c. that is signed by the appointing member of the Committee or e-mailed to the Chair of the Committee no later than two hours prior to the Committee meeting.

## 7 Legislative Process for Political Policies

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1. When Students' Council refers a political policy to the Policy Committee:
  - a. the Chair shall, by the time of the next Committee meeting, assign a member of the Committee to draft a political policy based on the principles passed in first reading by Students' Council;
  - b. the assigned member shall submit the draft political policy to the Committee in a timely fashion; and
  - c. the Committee will not recommend to Students' Council any political policy that is outside the scope of the principles approved in first reading by Students' Council.

## 8 Administration

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1. The Administrative Assistant of the Students' Council will:
  - a. Book meeting rooms for meetings of the Committee.
  - b. Book Minute Takers for each meeting of the Committee.
  - c. Structure Agenda's for each meeting based on the Orders of the Day submitted by members of the Committee and any referrals from Students' Council.
  - d. Notify the Committee of Meetings through the Agenda.
  - e. Distribute the Agenda and Minutes to members of the Committee.
  - f. Ensure paper copies of the Agenda are printed for the Chair to bring to each meeting upon request.

## 9 Records

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1. The Chair of the Policy Committee will record attendance at each meeting of the Committee.
2. The Chair of the Policy Committee shall assign the task of recording the minutes at each meeting to one of the members of the Committee or to the recording secretary.

3. Members of the Policy Committee may amend their comments in the minutes when the minutes are being approved by the Committee.
4. The Chair of the Policy Committee shall, after each meeting of the Committee, submit to Students' Council a report including:
  - a. any decisions made by the Committee acting under authority delegated to it by Students' Council;
  - b. any recommendations made by the Committee to Students' Council;
  - c. any standing orders adopted by the Committee; and
  - d. a summary of all motions passed by the Committee at the meeting in question.

## 10 Rules of Order

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1. The Chair of the Policy Committee will use his/her ~~their~~ discretion in administering an informal style of Robert's Rules of Order to conduct the business of the meeting.

## 11 Orders of the Day

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1. Order of Business for the Policy Committee:
  - a. Introduction
    - i. Call to Order
    - ii. Approval of Agenda
    - iii. Approval of Minutes
    - iv. Chair's Business
  - b. Question/Discussion Period
  - c. Committee Business
  - d. Information Items
  - e. Adjournment
  - f. Confirmation of Next Meeting
2. Right of Submission by Committee Members
  - a. Any voting member of the Policy Committee may submit Orders of the Day to be considered by the Committee.
3. Deadline for Submission
  - a. Orders of the Day must be submitted to the Chair of the Policy Committee and the Administrative Assistant to Students' Council 2 business days prior to the Committee meeting.
4. Publishing
  - a. The agenda package for the Policy Committee will be published in the following

manner:

- i. an electronic copy will be e-mailed to the Committee members 2 business days before the meeting; and
- ii. paper copies will be provided at the Committee meeting upon request.

#### 5. Special Orders

- a. The Order of Business notwithstanding, the Chair of the Policy Committee may designate any Order of the Day a Special Order.

## 12 Presentations

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1. Each member of the Executive Committee who is named a member of the Policy Committee shall provide:
  - a. a basic introduction of their goals for the year by June 1, and
  - b. a comprehensive presentation of all goals relevant to the mandate of the Committee by June 30.

## 13 Executive Committee Reports

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1. Each member of the Executive Committee who is named a member of the Policy Committee shall provide a written report at each meeting of the Committee on his/her **their** advocacy activities and those of the entire Executive Committee, and may provide an oral supplement to accompany this report.

## 14 Standing Orders

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1. The Standing Orders of the Policy Committee may be amended by a simple majority vote of the Committee, with such changes being reported to Students' Council.
  - a. The Standing Orders of the Policy Committee do not expire, but shall be reintroduced at the Committee's first meeting.

## 15 Confidentiality

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1. All members shall ensure the security and confidentiality of sensitive information that comes into their possession by virtue of their membership on the Policy Committee.

Mar. 28th, 2017

To: Students' Council  
Re: Report to Students' Council

## **Council Report #22: Big Wins With the Budget**

Hello Council,

I hope you have been well. These past few weeks have incredibly exciting for the Vice-President (External) portfolio, the release of the Provincial and Federal budgets are a culmination of the external advocacy work done throughout the year. I am excited to say that we have seen big wins with both budgets as well as a stage set-up for much bigger wins next year! In this report I will be giving an overview of the wins for post-secondary students as seen in the budget release.

### **Budget Overview:**

#### **Provincial:**

Provincial advocacy is often where we see our biggest and most direct wins to the student population here in Alberta. I am excited to have seen a number of the asks we have been working towards taken seriously, and a few implemented with this budget. Throughout the provincial budget we have seen an extended tuition freeze, an increase in institutional funding, continued mental health funding, investment in Student Financial Aid and student employment, as well as a large investment in deferred maintenance. I am excited to note that many of the asks I have been consistently advocating for throughout the year have come to light with the release of this budget (e.g. extended tuition freeze, sustained mental health funding, student employment and deferred maintenance). Below I will give a quick recap of the wins we have seen with the budget release.

Here are the highlights from this year's budget:

#### Post-Secondary Budget 2017

##### **»Tuition**

- o Tuition Freeze remains. (Tuition freeze is extended through 2017-2018 cycle)

##### **»Institutional funding**

- o A 2% increase to institutional funding, unfortunately no backfill mentioned.
- o Increase to approximately \$5.59 billion from \$5.48 billion – an increase of \$114 million.  
(Province Wide)

»**Mental health funding**

- o Continuity of Post-Secondary Mental Health Funding. (It also appears as if a new model for mental health funding is on the horizon)

»**Student Aid**

- o Scholarships & Rutherford

§ \$96 million to scholarships and awards with an increase of \$4.4 million for the Alexander Rutherford.

- o Grants

§ \$56 million for grants with an increase of \$4.2 million for the Alberta Low Income Grant.

§ This supports about 16,400.

(A recent article found [here](#) notes that the Ministry of Advanced Education has been seriously considering a the Ontario and New Brunswick “**sliding scale” grant model** that offers the equivalent of a degree’s worth of tuition in a grant to low income students - often cited as a “free tuition” model)

- o Increase of about \$12 million overall to Student Aid.

»**Student Loans**

- o Increase of \$51 million to \$630 million overall.

»**STEP**

- o Continuation of program for the upcoming year.

- o Allocation of \$10 million for the program.

»**UofA Infrastructure Projects**

- o \$149 Million over 4 years to University of Alberta Dentistry/Pharmacy Functional Renewal (Found on Page 50 of fiscal plan) - This was a big deferred maintenance as that was consistently pushed by the Vice-President (External) in advocacy meetings throughout the year.

For those interested the budget can be found here:

<http://finance.alberta.ca/.../budget.../fiscal-plan-complete.pdf>

**Federal:**

Shortly after the release of the provincial budget we saw the release of the Federal Budget as well. With this budget we saw a number of huge wins that have been advocated for by students leaders across the country as a part of CASA (Canadian Alliance of Student Association). We increases to programs such as the Canada Student Loans Program, expansions to student employment, Gender Based Violence Prevention and one of our biggest asks increased funding to the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) which provides support for indigenous students pursing post-secondary education. Below I will be listing a few of the highlights from the federal budget.

Budget Overview:

>> **Canada Student Loans Program**

Part-Time Students

- Expanded eligibility for part-time students (in both grants and loans). An investment of \$59.8 million over the first 4 years, and \$17 million annually thereafter.

Students with Dependents

- Expanded eligibility for students with dependent children - increased thresholds means more students with dependents will receive non-repayable grants each year. Investment of \$107.4 million over 4 years, and \$29.3 million thereafter.

Adults returning to school

- Three year pilot project worth \$287.2 million to test measures aimed at helping more adults access PSE.

**>>> Student Employment**

Expanding the Youth Employment Strategy

- New investment in Youth Employment Strategy (YES) of \$395.5 million over three years to help more than 33,000 vulnerable youth develop work skills.

Unpaid Internships

- Budget 2017 proposes the elimination of unpaid internships within federally regulated sectors. This will also work to ensure that unpaid internships in educational programs are entitled to standard labour protections such as max. work hours, weekly days of rest and general holidays.

**>>> National Strategy to Address Gender-Based Violence**

- Investment of \$100.9 million over 5 years, and \$20.7 million annually after to establish a National Strategy to Address Gender-Based Violence

**>>> Indigenous Students**

Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP)

- Increase of funding to PSSSP with \$90 million over two years. This expanded funding is expected to support over 4,600 students over a two-year period. In addition the Government will be initiating a collaborative review with First Nations and Indigenous stakeholders of all active federal programs dedicated to Indigenous youth seeking to access Post-Secondary Education.

Indspire

- Budget 2017 is providing \$5million per year to Indspire, an indigenous led charity that invests in the education of First Nations, Metis and Inuit students (FNMI) with financial support. The projected total of government funding is expected to be \$40 million over 5 years, providing support to more than 12,000 FNMI students.

These are just a few of the highlights for the Federal Budget 2017, which can be found here:  
<http://www.budget.gc.ca/2017/home-accueil-en.html>

CASA

**AGM**

Fahim, Jon (our Director of Research and Political Affairs) and myself all recently returned from our last CASA (Canadian Alliance of Student Associations) meeting of the year. Our

*OFFICE OF THE  
VICE PRESIDENT (EXTERNAL)*

Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held this year in Wolfville, Nova Scotia at Acadia University. During the AGM we spent much of our time preparing for the transition of new student leaders from across the country into the organization. In addition, we held a monumental vote which will likely lead to one of the biggest moments in the history of Student Advocacy organizations. We discussed and voted for membership approval on a partnership with the Union Etudiante du Quebec (FEQ), which is a Quebec based provincial advocacy organization which brings together institutions such as the University of Quebec, University of Montreal and University of Sherbrooke, among others. This marks the first time in 40 years that a federal student advocacy organization has begun talks to partner with a Quebec advocacy organization, making CASA the only truly cross-Canada student advocacy organization. I am excited to see how this partnership plays out.

**CAUS**

**Advo-Week**

The Council of Alberta University Students will be holding our Advocacy Week from April 2nd - 5th at the Alberta Legislature. We have a number of meetings set up that I am excited to tell you about in my next report.

Until then, keep on keeping on. We've seen some pretty big wins on the student advocacy front this year and are expecting to see some massive wins in the coming year! I am excited to watch what happens over the course of the 2017-2018 cycle!

Winners never quit, and quitters never win. (Just remember, advocacy is a lifestyle),  
Mike Sandare

## SC 16-23.20

### Post-Secondary Budget 2017 Overview

- Tuition
  - Freeze remains. (2017-2018 extension)
- Institutional funding
  - No backfill funding with a 2% increase.
  - Increase to approximately \$5.59 billion from \$5.48 billion – an increase of \$114 million.
- Mental health funding
  - \$3.6 million for PSI MH. (Continued Mental Health Funding)
- Student Aid
  - Scholarships & Rutherford
    - \$96 million to scholarships and awards with an increase of \$4.4 million for the Alexander Rutherford.
  - Grants
    - \$56 million for grants with an increase of \$4.2 million for the Alberta Low Income Grant.
    - This supports about 16,400 students.
  - Increase of about \$12 million overall to Student Aid.
- Student Loans
  - Increase of \$51 million to \$630 million overall.
- STEP
  - Continuation of program for the upcoming year.
  - Allocation of \$10 million for the program.



# Backgrounder

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## SUBJECT: BUDGET 2017

Budget 2017 includes significant positive investments in adult and part-time students and Indigenous learners and new funding towards youth employment programming. CASA is optimistic about the positive impacts many of the Budget 2017 announcements should have on improving accessibility and affordability in PSE.

Below is a summary of the key Budget 2017 announcements pertaining to PSE, along with initial reflections on their significance for CASA's advocacy priorities.

### **Canada Student Loans Program (CSLP)**

#### Part Time Students:

- Budget 2017 expands eligibility for Canada Student Grants for part-time students (this builds off Budget 2016, which increased the value of Canada Student Grants for part-time students from \$1,200 to \$1,800), meaning more part-time students will become eligible for Canada Student Grants
- With Budget 2017, the threshold for eligibility for Canada Student Loans for part-time students will also increase, so that more part-time students will become eligible for Canada Student Loans
- The expanded eligibility for Canada Student Grants and Canada Student Loans for part-time students will take effect starting in 2018-19 and represent an investment of \$59.8 million over the first four years (or just under \$15 million per year), and then \$17 million annually thereafter
- **CASA's Notes:** this is a very positive change, which will ensure that more part-time students can receive grants and loans. CASA is very supportive of improving financial aid options for part-time students, especially because this addresses the barriers mature students tend to face when seeking to return to school



Students with Dependents:

- Budget 2017 expands eligibility for Canada Student Grants for students with dependent children
- Increasing the eligibility thresholds for students with dependents means many more students with dependents will receive non-repayable grants each year
- This is estimated to help 13,000 additional students receive grants each year
- This change will come into effect starting in the 2018-19 academic year, and marks an investment of \$107.4 million over four years (or just under \$27 million annually), and then \$29.3 million in the years thereafter
- **CASA's Notes:** this is a very positive change that, combined with the expansion of eligibility to grants and loans for part-time students, will help more non-traditional and mature learners (who have often encountered barriers to pursuing PSE credentials) access PSE

Adults Returning to School:

- Budget 2017 acknowledges that adult students face specific barriers to pursuing PSE, due to its costs as well as other financial pressures (e.g. cost of living, supporting families, etc.)
- Previously, many adults wishing to return to PSE could not access CSLP support because their previous year's incomes made them ineligible (even though, once in school, their incomes would generally be reduced significantly)
- Budget 2017 introduces a three year pilot project worth \$287.2 million, starting in 2018-19, to test out measures aimed at helping more adults access PSE
- Details on the program design are scarce at this point, with the government aiming to finalize program design in advance of its introduction in 2018-19
- **CASA's Notes:** As with the investments in part-time students and students with dependents, this significant investment in a pilot project on adult learners signals that the government is seriously focused on helping mature students access PSE. CASA has drawn attention in the past to the specific barriers mature students encounter to accessing PSE. For example, CASA's [Pathways to Universal Access report](#) details the issue of "foregone income" as a significant barrier to Canadians in the workforce wishing to attend or return to PSE. CASA will seek to be involved in the design of this pilot project as more information on it becomes available.



## **Student Employment**

Expanding the Youth Employment Strategy:

- New investment in Youth Employment Strategy (YES)
- \$395.5 million over three years, starting in 2017–18, to assist more than 33,000 vulnerable youth to develop work skills, create 15,000 new green jobs and 1,600 new employment opportunities within the Heritage sector
- **CASA's Notes:** Very happy to see continuing investments in this important program to support youth employment. CASA's policies on student employment specifically address the need for more programs specifically supporting marginalized youth, so the specific investments here in vulnerable youth are very positive.

Work-Integrated Learning

- Expanded funding for MITACS (a non-profit organization facilitating partnerships between work sector and educational institutions for graduate students)
- MITACS' objective is to provide 10,000 WIL placements for PSE students and graduates
- Projected funding to be \$221 million over five years, starting in 2017–18
- Other stakeholders have indicated that MITACS programs may be expanded to include undergraduate and college students
- **CASA's Notes:** CASA advocated for the great value of experiential learning/work-integrated learning opportunities during [Advocacy Week 2016](#), so pleased to see more investment in this; hope this will mean more work-integrated learning opportunities across all disciplines and program types

Unpaid Internship:

- Budget 2017 proposes elimination of unpaid internships within federally regulated sectors
- Unpaid interns that are part of educational programs would be entitled to standard labour protections such as maximum hours of work, weekly days of rest and, general holidays
- CASA's Notes: CASA emphasizes the need for experiential learning opportunities to be fairly compensated. Budget 2017 text similar to advocacy message within [2016 Advocacy Week lobby document](#):
  - **Budget doc. quote:** "...some internships—in particular those that are unpaid—can be unfair and exploitative" (**p. 64**)
  - **2016 Advocacy doc. quote:** "Furthermore, many unpaid internships are exploitative in nature and add financial stress" (**p. 8**)



## **Indigenous Students**

Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP):

- Increase of funding to PSSSP with \$90 million over two years, beginning in 2017–18
- Funding is expected to support over 4,600 students over a two-year period
- Government to initiate a collaborative review with First Nations and Indigenous stakeholders of all active federal programs dedicated to Indigenous youth seeking to access PSE
- Government proposes to amend *Canada Student Financial Assistance Act* for students registered under the *Indian Act* but do not have Canadian citizenship; Initiative is designed to facilitate access to CSLP
- **CASA's Notes:** Happy to see government follow through on its commitments and recognize that more investment is needed; still believe more investment is required to fully address backlog and demand as per AFN's numbers. AFN asked \$106 million over 3 years - [2016 Advocacy Week lobby doc](#); CASA continues to advocate for full federal financial support of PSSSP (see [2016 CASA pre-budget submission](#))

Indspire:

- Indspire is: "...an Indigenous-led registered charity that invests in the education of Indigenous people for the long term benefit of these individuals, their families and communities, and Canada" (see Inspire [website](#)); provides and assists First Nations, Inuit and Métis students with financial support
- Budget 2017 to provide \$5 million per year for five years, starting in 2017–18; funding is conditional on Inspire raising \$3 million/year from the private sector
- Projected total of government funding and Indspire's efforts to result in \$40 million over 5 years
- Expected funding to provide \$40 million over 5 years in bursaries and scholarships; Could provide support to more than 12,000 First Nations, Inuit and Métis students
- **CASA's Notes:** Encouraged that government is working with sector stakeholders to complement existing funding dollars to better support First Nations, Inuit and Métis students in PSE. Through our consistent commitment to advocate on this file, CASA will monitor these developments and increase current advocacy efforts based on CASA's policies on improving Indigenous access to PSE (e.g. A13, A28)



## **Early Intervention to Support Future Access to PSE**

Investments in Pathways to Education Canada:

- Budget 2017 renews the government's support for Pathways to Education Canada with \$38 million over four years (or \$9.5 million annually) starting in 2018-19
- Pathways to Education Canada is a charitable organization that focuses on supporting vulnerable youth in their education (pre-PSE) with the aim of helping them succeed in school and opening up opportunities (including PSE) when they finish high school
- **CASA's Notes:** CASA has long advocated for improving accessibility to PSE for all Canadians, including those who have traditionally encountered barriers to PSE. CASA policy A19: Improving Access Through Early Intervention specifically advocates for the federal government to invest in programs aimed at supporting underrepresented groups in accessing PSE from a young age. A19 specifically points to Pathways to Education as a program that does this. It is important to note, however, that \$14 million of this \$38 million investment comes in the form of money that will be "reallocated" from existing resources under Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). There is no indication as of yet as to where these resources will be redirected from, but CASA will monitor this closely.

Improving Access to the Canada Learning Bond:

- Budget 2017 recognizes that too few low-income families are benefiting from Registered Education Savings Plans (RESPs), and specifically the Canada Learning Bond (CLB) that falls under the rubric of RESPs
- The CLB is money the federal government deposits directly into the RESPs of children from low-income families; in order to access the CLB, a low-income family must have an RESP; currently, the benefits of RESPs are disproportionately received by higher income Canadians
- Budget 2017 proposes a reallocation of \$12.5 million from existing ESDC resources to launch a pilot project aimed at exploring how to increase awareness and uptake of the CLB
- Budget 2017 also introduces measures to simplify the process of accessing government funding options through RESPs
- **CASA's Notes:** CASA has advocated through a number of different avenues, including the [Pathways to Universal Access report](#), a newly approved policy (CASA membership approved it in November 2016) and a [recent press release](#), on the need to improve RESPs to ensure that low-income families (i.e. those already facing barriers to accessing PSE) see the most benefits. While this part of the budget does not propose a significant change to the



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RESP program to address these concerns, it does promise significant attention to address the issue. CASA will pay close attention to this and continue to advocate for specific improvements to ensure low-income families benefit as much as possible from RESPs and the CLB.

### **National Strategy to Address Gender-Based Violence**

- Budget 2017 invests \$100.9 million over five years starting in 2017-18 and \$20.7 million annually after to establish a National Strategy to Address Gender-Based Violence
- **CASA's Notes:** CASA presented to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women's (FEWO) study on violence against women, with a specific focus on gender-based violence on PSE campuses. The committee's [recently released report](#) drew on a number of CASA recommendations, and CASA will follow the development of this National Strategy in the hopes that it follows the recommendations of FEWO in giving particular attention gender based violence on campuses.

### **Research**

- Investment of \$117.6 million over eight years to support the new Research Chairs initiative from Minister of Science
- Funding will be done with resources from the Canada Excellence Research Chairs [program](#)
- **CASA's Notes:** Budget 2017 does not include new funding specifically to the Tri-Council Agencies; though new research investments were made for the Tri-Councils file in Budget 2016.

### **Extend Eligibility for the Tuition Tax Credit**

- Budget 2017 expands the Tuition Tax Credit to students taking occupational skills courses below the post-secondary level (for example training in a second language, basic literacy/numeracy classes, computer training) that do not lead to a specific PSE credential
- **CASA's Notes:** Alongside the new CSLP measures, this change will also promote access to PSE for mature learners