Student Priorities at the Federal Level
(Presentation to University of Alberta Students’ Union, January 24th 2017)
Agenda

- A Quick Note about CASA
- Student Areas of Interest in the Federal Government
  - Areas of Interest Briefs
- CASA’s Successes
- CASA’s 2016-2017 Efforts
A Quick Note About CASA
What is CASA?

• 21 years old
• A collective of student unions and student associations that represents and defends member’s interests to the federal government
• A registered not-for-profit consisting of 21 student governments representing over 250,000 students
• Represents undergraduate, graduate and college associations
• A democratic, member-driven organization that promotes affordable, accessible, innovative post-secondary education of the highest quality
Federal Government and Post-Secondary
The Federal Role in PSE

Federal government provides over $20 billion per year in support of PSE

Employment and Social Development Canada
- Canada Student Loans Program
- Canada Student Grants
- Canada Social Transfer
- Youth Unemployment

Global Affairs Canada
- International Student Visas
  - Study Abroad

Finance
- Tax policy
- Federal Budgets

Statistics Canada
- Post-Secondary Student Information System

Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada
- NSERC
- SSHRC
- Copyright
  - Intellectual Property
- Post-Secondary Institutions Strategic Investment Fund (SIF)

Health Canada
- Mental Health
  - CIHR

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada
- Post-Secondary Student Support Program
  - On-reserve education

Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- Resident Visas for International Students
  - Permanent residency for grads

Elections Canada
- Voting requirements
- Polling stations
PSE Advocacy

Numerous different groups present to the federal government on PSE issues:
Areas of Interest – Student Aid

The Issue
The Federal Government funds the Canada Student Loans Program (CSLP), which provides approximately 60% of the funding for provincial student assistance programs, like OSAP.

Backgrounder
• Significant invests in the 2015 budget
  • Expanded up front needs based grants by 50%
  • Increased the repayment assistance plans threshold to 25k
  • Eliminated the Educational and Textbook Tax Credits
  • CSLP is in the process of implementing a flat-rate contribution system

Current State of the Issue
The fixed-rate contribution system implemented in November – as a result income will no longer count against aid.
Areas of Interest – Indigenous Education Funding

The Issue
The federal government is the primary source of funding for on-reserve First Nations and Inuit students, much of which is provided directly to bands through the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP). The federal government has also provided some matching funding to other programs.

Backgrounder
- The PSSSP has been underfunded for years
- Liberal platform included a commitment to increase funding for the PSSSP
- None materialized in budget 2016

Current State of the Issue
Students, as well as numerous other groups, are currently advocating for significant expansions to the PSSSP.
Areas of Interest - Copyright

The Issue

The Federal Government sets the rules around intellectual property in Canada. Students are impacted by these rules in numerous ways (reproduction of materials, course packs, digital restrictions and locks, etc...)

Backgrounder

• Copyright bill passed in 2011
• Included exemptions for Educational Fair Use
• Allowed for the in-part reproduction of copyrighted materials for use in the classroom
• Bill being reviewed in 2017

Current State of the Issue

CASA will be looking to collaborate with other stakeholders to ensure that education exemptions and Fair Use exemptions are preserved
Areas of Interest – International Students

The Issue
The Federal Government creates the visa rules for international students. This includes what they can (and cannot) do while studying in Canada and what (if any) impact studying in Canada has on their ability to apply to be a permanent citizen.

Backgrounder
• Express Visa Process updated in 2014
• Made it easier to travel to and from Canada
• Amended work restrictions
• These rules changed again to expand the eligibility of students for permanent residency

Current State of the Issue
Studying in Canada now provides students with additional credit on a application for permanent residency.
Record of Success
Get Out The Vote

- Membership Driven (4 years ago)
- Non-partisan, Non-issue based
- Peer-to-peer driven

CASA Provided:
- Training
  - Voter Mobilization Conference
  - Webinars
- Technical Infrastructure
  - NationBuilder
- Support
Get Out The Vote

- Campaign Roll Out
- Media Attention
- Political Attention
- Key Partnerships
- Successes
- Key Outcomes:
  - 42,000 student engaged directly
  - Research possibilities: Abacus Data Poll
  - Advocacy: Pressing our advantage
  - Political realizations
“Many Students, especially those who live in rural and suburban communities, often require a Vehicle for travel between their residence, classes and their jobs as public transit is not an option for them. The current $5,000 exception limit for vehicles, implemented in 1995, has not been adjusted or revised in nearly two decades”
Budget 2015

**Mental Health**

The Government of Canada renews the mandate of the Mental Health Commission of Canada for another 10 years (2017-2027), ensuring a focus on students and youth.

Approximately 20% of Canadians will experience a mental illness in their lifetime.

**Youth Employment**

1. Labour Protections for Interns
   - The federal government commits to improving data collection and data dissemination.
   - Ensuring a safe and healthy workplace for interns under federal jurisdiction by strengthening Canada Labour Code protections.

2. Labour Market Indicators
   - Helping students make informed choices about their future through a Labour Market Indicator portal.

---

**Successes from the 2015 Federal Budget**

**Key Facts**

- **2015 Budget** saw the largest investment in student financial aid since 2008.
- Between now and 2020, the federal government will spend an additional $419 million on student financial aid.
- An additional $889 million will go directly into the hands of students within the next 5 years.

**Financial Aid**

- **$119 million** will be invested by the federal government to decrease the expected parental contribution under the needs assessment process.
- **81%** of parents support the removal of the parental income level qualification.

**Supporting Students**

- **$184 million** allocated to expand the Canada Student Grants eligibility to students in short-duration programs.
- **$116 million** to eliminate in-study student income from the Canada Student Loans Program needs assessment process.

** Student Loans Program needs assessment process.**

- Students who receive grants are 20% more likely to stay in school and complete their studies.
- Increases in public loan help reduce student dependence on expensive and risky private loans.
Budget 2016

**STUDENT SUCCESSES FROM THE 2016 FEDERAL BUDGET**

**FINANCIAL AID**

1. **Supporting Students with High Levels of Need**
   - **$1.53 billion** allocated to increase the student grant dispersion by 50% for low-income, middle-income, and part-time students.

2. **Managing Student Debt**
   - **$131.4 million** allocated to increase the Repayment Assistance Plan threshold to $25,000.

**YOUTH EMPLOYMENT**

- **$165 million** allocated to expand Canada’s Youth Employment Strategy.
  - This investment will help an estimated **17,000** young people gain valuable work experience.

- **$73 million** to increase co-op placements for students in high-demand fields.

**RESEARCH**

- **$141 million** allocated to Canada’s tri-council granting agencies, the highest amount in annual funding for research in over a decade.
  - Supporting research and innovation ensures students are empowered to conduct top-tier research.

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

- **Up to $2 billion** for a new Post-Secondary Institutions Strategic Investment Fund, enhancing and modernizing post-secondary institutions.

The federal government commits to improving data collection and data dissemination ensuring students can make informed decisions about their future.

---

CASA I ACAE
Canadian Alliance of Student Associations
Alliance canadienne des associations étudiantes
Advocacy Wins – University of Alberta - Impact on Students

CASA achieved a major advocacy success last year when the federal government increased grant funding by 50%.

What does this actually look like on campus?

• 8,398 Student Loan recipients
• 1,764 Student Grant recipients (middle income)
• 4,496 Student Grant recipients (low income)
• $600 more for middle income students
• $1,500 more for low income students

Grand Total: $5.13 million (yearly)
CASA’s 2016 Priorities and Efforts
CASA + Federal Advocacy

• Each year CASA’s membership chooses different thematic areas of focus on
  • For 2016
    • Economic Barriers to PSE
    • Student Employment
    • Student Wellness
    • Research + Innovation
  • Most Recently CASA conducted it’s advocacy week and brought forward a series of recommendations to government
CASA’s Ongoing Advocacy Efforts

Pre-Budget Submission
- Indirect costs of research
- Grant funding for graduates
- Student employment programs
- Increased Funding for Indigenous Education

Innovation Agenda + Fundamental Science Review Submissions
- Reforming the tri-council application process and adding student representation on their boards
- Student IP
- Clearer paths to permanent residency for international students

CASA’s Advocacy Document
- Interest free grace period
- Mental health assessment funding
- Employer training incentive
- OERs
CASA’s Ongoing Advocacy Efforts

Other Projects

• CASA presented to the federal Committee on the Status of Women
• CASA’s New Promotional Material - Wednesday
• CASA’s recommendations were included in the House of Commons Finance Committee (FINA) recommendations
• CASA held the largest advocacy presence in Ottawa in November *(source: Lobby Monitor)*
• CASA is drafting four (4) white papers on topics selected by the membership:
  • Economic barriers to PSE
  • Student wellness
  • Student employment
  • Research and innovation
• Board of Directors Identified an opportunity to develop an International Students white paper
• AGM 2017 – Acadia University
Questions?