



Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations  
Union des associations des professeurs des universités de l'Ontario

## **STATEMENT: Along with tuition freeze, Ontario university faculty and students call for more post-secondary funding**

**TORONTO, March 17, 2023** – Ontario university faculty and students know the math does not add up in the provincial government's latest announcement on post-secondary education.

University tuition fees are unaffordable for many in Ontario, and are among the highest in the country. Tuition fees remain the most significant barrier to accessing post-secondary education in Ontario. The government clearly recognizes this crisis and has taken a step in the right direction by continuing the tuition freeze for some students in the 2023- 2024 academic year. But while this tuition freeze offers some relief for students facing record-high inflation, it does not address the chronic and systemic underfunding of Ontario's post-secondary education system. The government's decision not to provide additional funding to universities, despite record inflation and the skyrocketing cost of living, is irresponsible. Universities and colleges urgently need appropriate funding to ensure their sustainability and provide equitable access to post-secondary education.

Ontario sits last in the country in terms of per-student funding, and only 30 per cent of the operating budgets of universities come from the province. Freezing tuition without an adequate increase in funding forces institutions to rely more heavily on other sources of funding, including international tuition fees. This over-reliance on tuition fees as a source of funding for public universities has put an incredible strain on students and their universities. This dynamic has led to the aggressive and exploitative recruitment of international students, whose tuition fees are unregulated. As a result, domestic and international students in Ontario are graduating with historically high levels of student debt and the provincial government continues to neglect to invest in the student grants programs that so many students need.

This lopsided approach to revenue generation is unsustainable. OCUFA, CFS-Ontario, and their members, are disappointed that the provincial government's tuition freeze announcement did not include any long-term public funding solutions commitments. Only with appropriate funding and in consultation with students and faculty can Ontario have an accessible post-secondary system.

The provincial government must make a different choice that does not put our world-class higher education system on an unstable footing for the future. That includes faculty and students as primary stakeholders. Instead of narrowing universities and colleges' options to fund our vibrant, safe, innovative campuses and offering short-term freezes for some students over others, the government should provide meaningful, ongoing, robust public funding for the institutions in which we teach and learn. A short-term tuition freeze for some students will not solve the affordability crisis for all. Only a robust investment of public funding for Ontario universities will make our education system accessible.

Signatories:

Mitra Yakubi, Chairperson – Canadian Federation of Students–Ontario (CFS-O)

Sue Wurtele, President – Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA)

*The Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario is the oldest and largest student organization in Ontario, representing over 350,000 college and university students in every region of the province.*

*Founded in 1964, OCUFA represents 17,000 faculty, academic librarians, and other academic professionals in 30 member organizations across Ontario. It is committed to enhancing the quality of higher education in Ontario and recognizing the outstanding contributions of its members towards creating a world-class university system. For more information, please visit the OCUFA website at [www.ocufa.on.ca](http://www.ocufa.on.ca).*

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