



## **Eastern Ontario worried about the cost of higher education, according to new poll**

**Kingston** – Voters in Eastern Ontario believe tuition is too high and worry about the cost of attending higher education, according to a new poll released today. In addition, a strong majority of those polled want the McGuinty government to continue its focus on colleges and universities.

The poll, commissioned by the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) and the Canadian Federation of Students – Ontario (CFS-O), found that 81 per cent of residents in Eastern Ontario are concerned about the ability of young Ontarians to attend post-secondary education, while 69 per cent believe tuition fees are too high. At the same time, 78 per cent of respondents want the post-secondary education system to be a priority for the provincial government.

“This message sends a clear message to Premier Dalton McGuinty and his government,” said Dr. André Turcotte, President of Feedback Research and chief investigator for this study. “Voters in Eastern Ontario want tuition fees brought under control, and for the Government of Ontario to continue investing in the quality and affordability of our institutions.”

In Ontario, tuition fees have risen by an average of 28 per cent over the past five years. Ontario now has the highest tuition fees in Canada – an average of \$6,307 per year for an undergraduate student and nearly \$6,917 for a graduate student.

“This poll shows that the people of Eastern Ontario are deeply worried about the cost of college and university education,” said Sandy Hudson, Chairperson of the CFS-O. “The government needs to hear their voices and take action to ensure the accessibility of our post-secondary education system. Ontario needs a tuition fee freeze, and it needs it now.”

Other important findings indicate a strong preference for continued public investment in colleges and universities, even in the face of the provincial deficit. Of those polled, 72 per cent said that the government should not use a post-secondary funding freeze to address Ontario’s budget crunch.

“Voters in Eastern Ontario understand that public funding is an essential part of a quality university education, and that our universities are an important part of our province,” said Professor Mark Langer, President of OCUFA. “To ensure the economic success and social vitality of Ontario, we need to keep investing in our universities, our faculty, and our students.”

The results of this study are based on a poll of 1800 Ontarians over the age of 18 conducted between January 5 and 14, 2011. The Eastern Ontario results are based on a sample of 400 residents over the age of 18. The margin of error for this sample is +/- 4.0 percentage points within a confidence interval of 95%.

This is the sixth and final wave of poll findings released to date. The first findings were released on Friday, January 21, 2011 and examined Ontarians’ attitudes towards the internationalization

of post-secondary education. The other releases looked at the Ottawa region, the 905 belt, Southwestern Ontario, and province-wide findings. For more details and complete results please visit <http://www.ocufa.on.ca>.

The Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations is the voice of 17,000 university professors and academic librarians across Ontario. The Canadian Federation of Students – Ontario unites more than 300,000 college and university undergraduate and graduate students studying at post-secondary institutions across the province

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