



**INVESTING IN  
THE FUTURE:**  
**OPENING THE DOORS TO  
POST-SECONDARY  
EDUCATION**

**CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS-NOVA SCOTIA  
DALHOUSIE STUDENT UNION**

**FEBRUARY 2017**



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# INTRODUCTION

**NOVA SCOTIA'S POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM IS VITAL** to the social and economic wellbeing of our province. The ten universities and one community college that make up this system are key to ensuring individuals can access the skills and training they need to participate in a rapidly changing economy. Our educational institutions also serve as centres for research and development, advance discourses on social responsibility, and provide hundreds of good paying jobs across the province.

Despite its importance, this system has faced consecutive years of public funding cuts, which have been offset with skyrocketing user fees, with tuition fees increasing at the most alarming rate. Funding cuts have occurred despite higher education's growing importance to economic growth. By 2020, 70% of jobs in the Canadian economy will require some form of post-secondary education.<sup>1</sup> Post-secondary education is no longer a luxury, but a necessity to live a decent quality of life. It is increasingly the case that family income is the deciding factor on who pursues a post-secondary education. Barriers to access (which disproportionately impact prospective students from low income and marginalised backgrounds) are reinforcing income inequality in our province.

But it doesn't need to be this way. The investments students are calling for in this budget will get Nova Scotia back on track to provide universally accessible post-secondary education. As this document will demonstrate, Nova Scotia can make these investments while still reducing its debt burden.

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<sup>1</sup> Darcy Hango and Sébastien Larochelle-Côté. Overqualification, Skills, and Job Satisfaction. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2016.

# PUBLIC OPINION ON POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

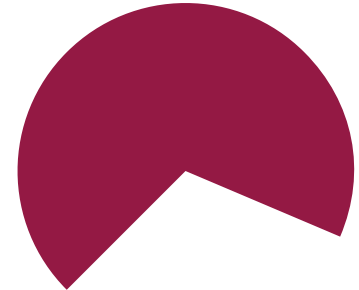
IN 2015, COMMUNICATIONS NOVA SCOTIA POLLED NOVA SCOTIAN'S ON THEIR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IN NOVA SCOTIA. HERE ARE THE RESULTS:



**89%** of Nova Scotians oppose increasing tuition fees



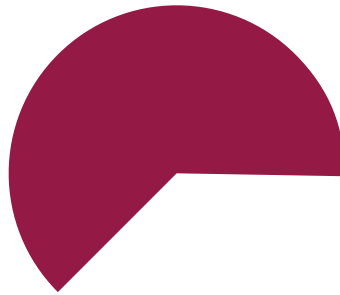
**87%** of Nova Scotians believe that the government should set tuition fee amounts



**69%** of Nova Scotians oppose cutting labour costs at universities



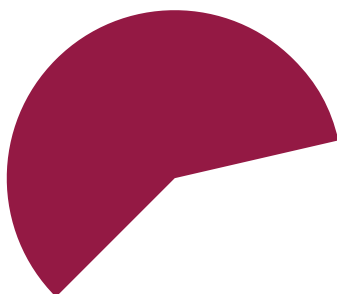
**66%** of Nova Scotians believe that student debt is too high in Nova Scotia



**63%** of Nova Scotians believe the primary role of post-secondary education is to provide a strong education over preparing students for jobs



**60%** of Nova Scotians would be willing to pay higher taxes if it meant reducing tuition fees



**59%** of Nova Scotians believe the most effective way to reduce student debt is to reduce tuition fees

# SECTION 1: FEES AND FUNDING

## TUITION FEES

**TUITION FEES IN NOVA SCOTIA ARE THE SECOND HIGHEST IN CANADA**, at \$7,218 for the 2016-17 academic year, compared to a national average of \$6,373.<sup>2</sup> This figure marks a 5.6% increase since 2015-16, compared to 2.8% nationally, a rate 7 times that of inflation. 2016-17 was the first year since 2011-12 that Nova Scotia's tuition fees surpassed Saskatchewan's, to retake second highest fees in Canada. Far from a cause for celebration, this feat demonstrates the total failure of the current government to control fee levels in Nova Scotia. Tuition fee market adjustments (originally intended to allow universities with tuition fee levels below the provincial average to exceed the existing 3% cap to come closer to that average) have effectively deregulated tuition fees in Nova Scotia. Since 2011, tuition fees in Nova Scotia have increased by a whopping 31%.

Rising tuition fees, and the prospect of student debt, have a detrimental impact on who chooses to attend a post-secondary institution. Polling released by the Nova Scotia Post-Secondary Education Coalition in 2014 found that 1 in 3 Nova Scotians either would not, or knew someone in their family who would not apply to attend a post-secondary institution because it would mean incurring too much debt.<sup>3</sup>

For those able to afford a post-secondary education in Nova Scotia, the challenges continue. Polling by the Canadian Federation of Students shows that an increasing number of students are forced to work part-time during their studies, and 75 per cent of those who do work say that it undermines their ability to effectively focus on pursuing their degree.<sup>4</sup> A 2013 BMO survey also found that the financial pressure of pursuing a post-secondary education puts more stress on students than achieving academic success in the degree itself.<sup>5</sup> Reducing tuition fees will allow students to focus on pursuing their degree, thus improving the quality of their education.

Students pursuing professional programs continue to face the most outrageous fee increases in Nova Scotia. The fees for these programs are entirely deregulated and have increased much more quickly than other fees. Since 1990, average undergraduate tuition fees in Nova Scotia have increased by 272 per cent. In comparison, fees for dentistry have increased by 932 per cent.

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2 CANSIM table 477-0077. Statistics Canada, 2016.

3 *Building for the Future: Public Opinion on Post-Secondary Education in Nova Scotia*. Halifax: Nova Scotia Post-Secondary Education Coalition, 2014.

4 *Public Education for the Public Good*. Ottawa: Canadian Federation of Students, 2014.

5 2013 BMO Student Survey: Canadian Students Relying Less on Family to Finance Higher Education. Bank of Montreal, 2013.

A study conducted by Statistics Canada in 2005 investigating the impact of deregulated professional fees in Ontario found that the lack of regulation altered the socio-economic background of students, as high fees discouraged low income Ontarians from studying.<sup>6</sup> If the Ontario case serves as any example, the deregulation of professional fees in Nova Scotia may reinforce existing disparities in access to justice and health care, exacerbating racial and socio-economic inequality.

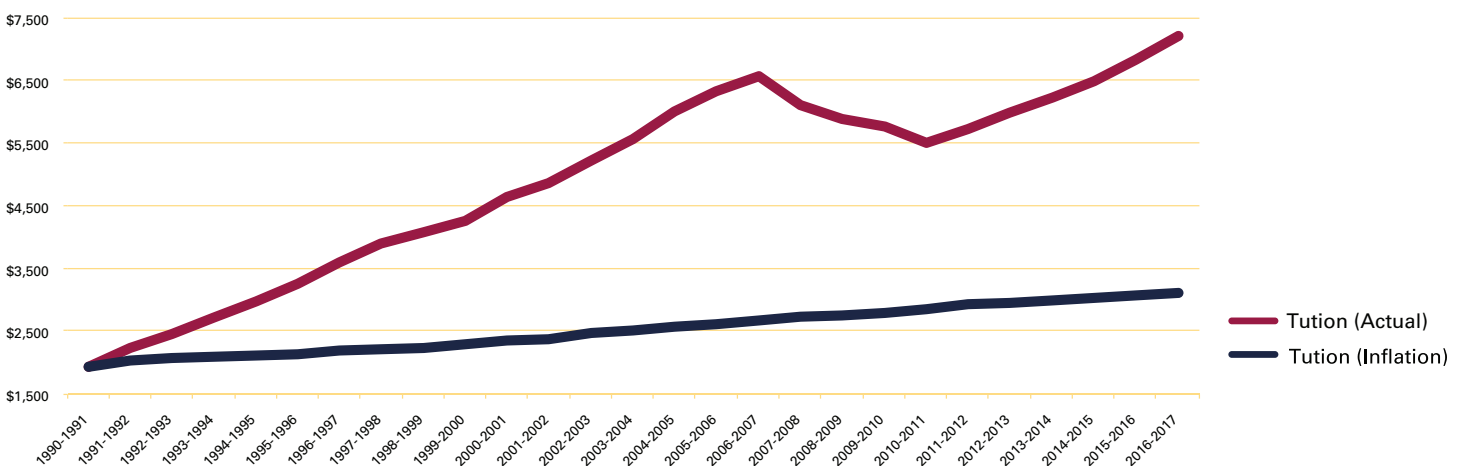
The government can offset the cost of reducing tuition fees by redirecting tax expenditures from the Tuition and Education Tax Credit. The money allocated to this tax credit, which applies to students once they have completed their degree and started earning a steady income, could be better spent on reducing the upfront barriers to post-secondary education.

Beyond 2017-18, the government must develop a framework to fully eliminate tuition fees for all programs at all post-secondary institutions in Nova Scotia. Such a framework should be developed by an advisory body of stakeholders, and include working with the Federal Government to develop a national Post-Secondary Education Act that includes dedicated Federal funding for universities and colleges.

### STUDENTS ARE CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT OF NOVA SCOTIA TO:

- Introduce legislation that will immediately regulate and freeze all university fees; including ancillary, auxiliary, international differential, and tuition fees; and
- Invest \$38 million to reduce tuition fees by 10% for the 2017-18 year; and
- Eliminate the Tuition and Education Tax Credit and redirect the \$30 million in new revenue to offset the impact of reducing tuition fees; and
- Setup an advisory body of stakeholders to develop a framework to progressively reduce and eliminate tuition fees in Nova Scotia by 2026.

### TUITION TABLE 1990-2016



6 Marc Frenette. "The Impact of Tuition Fees on University Access: Evidence from a Large-scale Price Deregulation in Professional Programs" Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2005.

## **NSCC**

**THE NOVA SCOTIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE IS A KEY COMPONENT** of education and training in the province. Not only does NSCC provide young people with access to skills and training for the workplace, but it is also a key component of skills re-training for workers who are unemployed or looking to change careers. The NSCC's 13 campuses across the province also make it a key component of any forward-looking economic and rural development strategy. In 2012–13, the NSCC contributed \$1.4 billion to the provincial economy, including paying its 1,595 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees in 2012–13 \$141.3 million in wages.<sup>7</sup> These jobs are often full-time, permanent positions, providing important good jobs in communities across the province. All told, for every dollar spent providing a student with a college education, there is a public return of \$7.20 over the life of that student.<sup>8</sup>

For students in rural communities, the NSCC makes post-secondary education more affordable and accessible. Articulation agreements between the NSCC and some Nova Scotia universities allow students to stay in their home community for a two-year program before going to complete a longer degree at a university. The significantly lower tuition fees at the NSCC and the savings associated with living at home make this option more accessible to low-income rural families. While less expensive than university, college tuition fees have not benefitted from past tuition fee freezes and rebate programs. Tuition fees at the NSCC increased by three per cent in 2016–17, to \$3,220 for a standard program and \$4,930 for an advanced diploma (this is compared to \$1,452 for most programs at the College of the North Atlantic in Newfoundland).<sup>9</sup>

### **STUDENTS ARE CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT OF NOVA SCOTIA TO:**

- Invest \$30 million to eliminate tuition fees at the Nova Scotia Community College.

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7 Fact Sheet: Demonstrating the value of the Nova Scotia Community College. 2014.

8 Ibid.

9 NSCC, Tuition Update, [http://www.nsc.ca/about\\_nsc/publications/nsc\\_factsheet\\_feb\\_2014.pdf](http://www.nsc.ca/about_nsc/publications/nsc_factsheet_feb_2014.pdf)

## REGULATION 67

**CURRENTLY, ANYONE USING SOCIAL ASSISTANCE SEEKING TO COMPLETE** a post-secondary education program longer than two years must apply for the CareerSeek program. Under CareerSeek, an individual must meet several rigid application criteria, including proving they are unable to otherwise find work and demonstrating the means to pay costs related to tuition, textbooks, student fees, child care, and transportation for the duration of the program through approved loans or other means.

Prior to 2000, students were permitted to receive social assistance while enrolled in postsecondary education. When this policy changed in 2000, 1,600 students were receiving social assistance. In contrast, just 7 individuals have been enrolled under the CareerSeek program since 2013. Repealing regulation 67 of the Employment Support and Income Assistance Act would allow students in need to access social assistance.

### **STUDENTS ARE CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT OF NOVA SCOTIA TO:**

- Repeal regulation 67.

## FUNDING

**WHILE UNIVERSITIES PROVIDE SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO NOVA SCOTIA,** over the past two decades, severe cuts to public funding for universities and colleges have shifted the burden of paying for education away from governments and onto individual students and their families through a flat tax: tuition fees.

This shift has taken place despite Nova Scotia's improving financial situation. Nova's Scotia's debt-to-GDP ratio, the best way to measure the province's ability to manage debt, fell from 48.7 per cent in 2000 to 36.2 per cent today. Moreover, debt-servicing charges as a percentage of GDP have fallen from 5.5% in 1995 to just over 2.2% today.<sup>10</sup> Nova Scotia should take advantage of its current financial situation to invest in programs that will guarantee future prosperity.



Speaking in purely financial terms, the province earns its investment in post-secondary education back. In a report released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in 2013, it was observed that Nova Scotia's income tax gain from a post-secondary degree holder offset public costs in 12.6 years.<sup>11</sup> An economic impact study conducted by the Association of Atlantic Universities in 2010 found that the post-secondary education system in Nova Scotia had a major impact on the provincial GDP and employment levels.<sup>12</sup> The report found that universities contribute \$1.12 billion to Nova Scotia's economy. The provincial and federal governments collect \$220 million in income tax revenues from those employed by universities. Universities account for over 18,500 jobs, which includes people directly employed by the university and indirect jobs. It is estimated that for each job created by the university, another job is created somewhere else in the economy.

Justifications for funding cuts also consistently undervalue the societal benefits of increasing the number of individuals pursuing a post-secondary education. Citizens who attain at least some post-secondary education are more likely to be civically engaged, will be more aware of sustainable practices, less dependent on the public healthcare system, and more efficient at finding work in the labour force.<sup>13</sup>

With increased funding to universities comes an increased need for public accountability from these institutions. The majority of university board of governors' meetings in the province are not open to the public, and only some post scheduled meetings and minutes online for public access. In order for institutions to be accountable to those living in the province, it is in the government's best interest to amend the legislation governing these institutions to ensure board meetings are consistently open to the public across Nova Scotia.

### **STUDENTS ARE CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT OF NOVA SCOTIA TO:**

- Invest a further \$12.5 million into the public university funding to match projected cost increases at universities for next year; and
- Amend legislation governing universities to standardize public access to university board of governors' meetings in Nova Scotia.

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11 Hugh Mackenzie. Learning and Earning: The Impact of Tuition in the Higher Education Debates. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternative, 2013.

12 The Economic Impact of Universities in the Atlantic Provinces. Association of Atlantic Universities, 2010.

13 Fairness, Funding and Our Collective Future: A Way Forward for Post-Secondary Education in Nova Scotia. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Nova Scotia, 2011.

## SECTION 2: STUDENT ASSISTANCE

**STUDENTS NEED STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS** that meet three criteria: assistance programs must provide adequate levels of financial support to students who need it the most, when they need it most; assistance programs must be easy for students and their families to access and understand; and assistance programs should combat the long term impacts of rising student debt levels in Nova Scotia. The Nova Scotia Student Grants program, introduced in 2008, exemplifies these criteria. The program provides 40% of a student's provincial student aid disbursement as a non-repayable grant. The student receives the assistance on a yearly basis, at the beginning of their term, with the amount being pegged to their need assessment from their student loan calculation.

The best way to strengthen student assistance in Nova Scotia is to increase the grants program to cover the entire amount of the provincial student loan, thereby eliminating provincial student loan debt. Despite the strong evidence supporting a grants based approach to student assistance, the Government of Nova Scotia has adopted a piecemeal approach to assistance programs.<sup>14</sup> This approach fails to support the students who need assistance the most.

Students are currently provided some debt relief through the Loan Forgiveness program. However, the program does not cover students studying outside Nova Scotia, students beyond their first four years of study, and provides no coverage if the student does not complete their degree. Considering that students from a low-income family are the most likely to take longer than four years to complete their degree, or not complete at all, the Loan Forgiveness program fails to provide support to those students who need it most.<sup>15</sup> A 2010 report from the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission shows that students from the Maritimes region are those most likely to extend their study beyond four years.<sup>16</sup> Students may need to extend their degree because of family or work obligations, program changes, or even administrative issues within their program. The Government of Nova Scotia should eliminate the Loan Forgiveness program, and use this funding to offset the cost of a 100% grants based student assistance program in Nova Scotia.

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14 Jordan MacLaren. *It's Complicated: An Interprovincial Comparison of Student Financial Aid*. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2014.

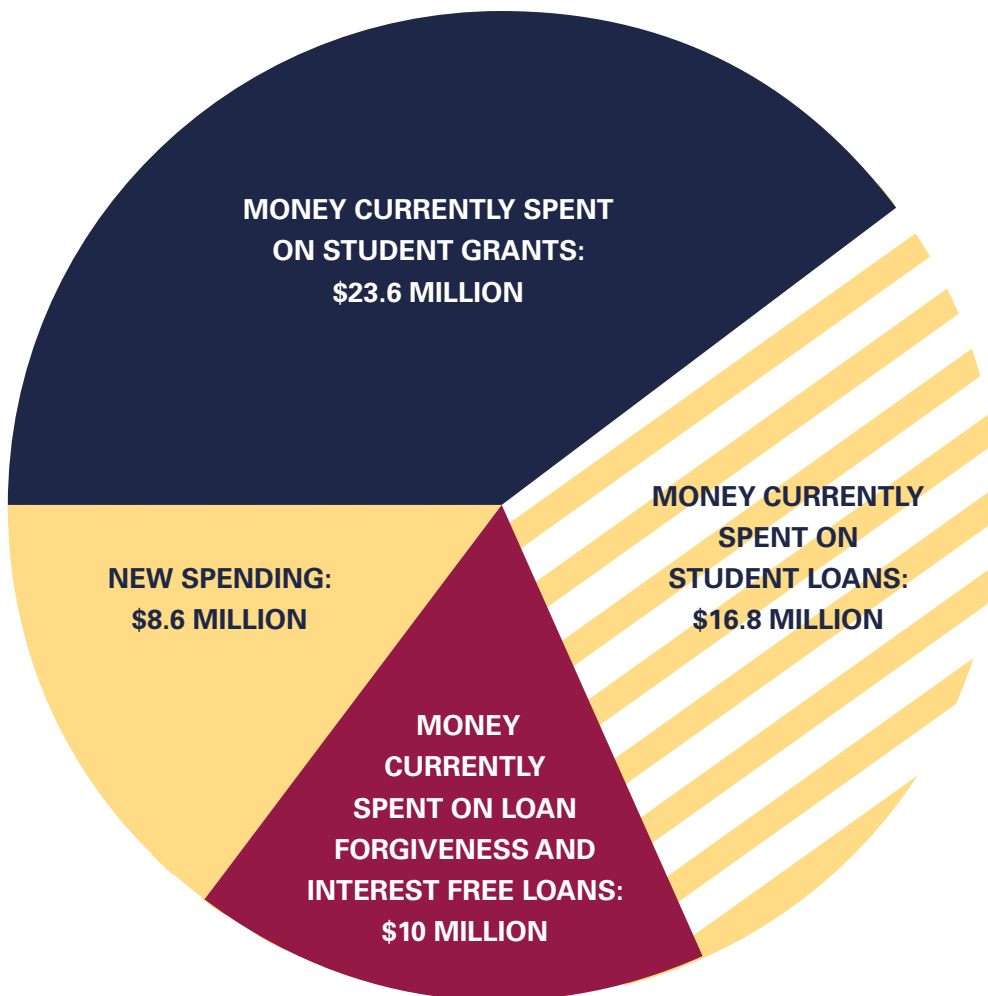
15 *Student Debt in Canada: Education Shouldn't be a Debt Sentence*. Canadian Federation of Students, 2013

16 *Student Progression Within University of First Entry: Persistence and Graduation*. Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission, 2010.

## STUDENTS ARE CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT OF NOVA SCOTIA TO:

- Invest \$18.6 million dollars to convert student loan disbursements into non-repayable grants; and
- Redirect the \$10 million spent on the Student Loan Forgiveness and Interest Free Student Loan programs to offset the cost of eliminating student loans.

## HOW TO PAY FOR A 100% GRANTS BASED STUDENT ASSISTANCE MODEL IN NOVA SCOTIA



## **SECTION 3:**

# **WORKING TOWARDS CONSENT CULTURE**

**EXPERIENCING SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE WHILE PURSUING A HIGHER EDUCATION** is the devastating reality for too many students in Nova Scotia. The rate of sexual assault for Canadians age 15 to 24 is 18 times higher than that of Canadians age 55 and older<sup>17</sup>, and one in five women studying in a North American post-secondary institution experience some form of sexualized violence over the course of her studies<sup>18</sup>.

Action must be taken to develop mandatory preventative education, well-funded and varied support resources, and mandatory accountability measures. These actions are the most effective way to combat sexual assault on campus. These resources must not replace current resources allocated to support services on campus. Instead, we must create more robust and complete systems of support.

The reality is that many on campus sexual assaults occur during the first eight weeks of classes. Students starting college or university in Nova Scotia may be unaware of concepts such as consent and/or lack an accurate definition of what constitutes sexual assault and, therefore, the start of the school year is a pivotal time to ensure that we are educating students about consent. Mandatory consent training is necessary for all incoming students to ensure that we are doing everything we can to prevent incidences of sexual violence on campus.

Universities and colleges are in a unique position to challenge rape culture by promoting consent education, funding support services, and establishing sexual assault policies. On campus resources such as these are critical given the pervasiveness of rape culture in wider society, including the practice of victim blaming, where survivors of sexual assault rather than the attacker are blamed for their abuse. It is estimated that four out of five women who have experienced sexual assault do not report out of fear of being re-victimized in the legal process.<sup>19</sup>

The rape chants captured at St. Mary's University, the management of the Dalhousie Dentistry incidents, the lack of sexual assault policies, and, most recently, Dalhousie's failure to fund a sexual assault support phone line, are clear examples of post-secondary institutions' refusal to invest in promoting safer campuses for students. Time and time again, institutions have chosen to prioritize the public image of the institution over the experiences of their students, leaving survivors of sexual assault to fend for themselves.

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17 Canadian Women's Foundation: *Sexual Assault and Harassment*, 2016.

18 Toronto Star, "Involving 'bystanders' to fight sexual violence on campus," March, 2014

19 Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario, *Sexual Violence Factsheet*, 2015.

The provincial government must provide greater oversight and establish accountability mechanisms when it comes to sexual assault in the post-secondary education sector. Universities and colleges are expected to respond to complaints of sexual assault, and when they don't, students often have nowhere to turn for reassurance that their safety will be maintained in the classroom, on campus, and in residence. The government can show leadership and work to combat rape culture on Nova Scotia's campuses, as well as ensure that a student who does experience sexual violence receives the crucial support they need.

### **STUDENTS ARE CALLING ON THE NOVA SCOTIA GOVERNMENT TO:**

- Invest \$2 million to create a dedicated Sexual Assault Support Resource Fund, which would be available to students, campus groups, universities, and the Nova Scotia Community College. Funding for projects created under this fund should be renewable on an annual basis, and the future size of the fund should be determined by community interest and the demand for renewals; and
- Bring forward legislation to mandate all post-secondary institutions have stand-alone sexual assault policies that are developed and renewed every four years through a student driven process and which includes a requirement for universities and colleges to report publicly on incidences of sexual violence, as well as initiatives underway to address sexual violence and harassment and their effectiveness.



**1 IN 5** women studying in North American post-secondary institutions experience some form of sexualized violence over the course of her studies



An estimated **4 OUT OF 5** women who have experienced sexual assault do not report out of fear of being re-victimized in the legal process

## **SECTION 4:**

# **FAIRNESS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ENROLLED** in post-secondary institutions in Nova Scotia contribute to the vibrancy and diversity of the province's universities and colleges. In addition to the contributions to the community on our campuses, there is a significant economic benefit to international students studying in Nova Scotia. In 2014, international students spent 324.7 million in our province, which resulted in 3,328 new jobs and \$142 million in wages<sup>20</sup>. International students are a critical component of our economy.

The Canadian Bureau for International Education reports that participation of international students in Canadian institutions has increased by 83% between 2008 and 2014<sup>21</sup>. Increased levels of participation have been critical to the higher education sector in Nova Scotia, as overall enrolment in universities and colleges in Nova Scotia declines. International student enrolment at Nova Scotia's post-secondary institutions increased by 7% in 2014-15<sup>22</sup>.

Universities in Nova Scotia cite increased international student enrolment as a priority, but the motivation behind this trend is troubling. After facing years of cuts to public funding for universities and colleges, institutions are turning to deregulated international student tuition fees as an alternative source of funding. This pattern exploits international students by charging up to 3 times the rate of domestic tuition fees for the same educational services. In addition to massive differential fees, international students face challenges in accessing basic services such as provincial health care in their first year of study. Increased public funding is a far more suitable alternative to long-term institutional sustainability than the exploitation of international students, many of whom will permanently relocate to Nova Scotia and continue to invest in the economy.

### **STUDENTS ARE CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT OF NOVA SCOTIA TO:**

- Invest \$500,000 to cover international students under medical services insurance upon their arrival in Nova Scotia.

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20 Global Affairs Canada, *Economic Impact of International Students in Canada – 2016*, 2016.

21 Canadian Bureau for International Education, *International Students in Canada*, 2015.

22 MPHEC, *Annual Digest: University Enrolment 2014-2015*, 2016.

# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT

## NOVA SCOTIA

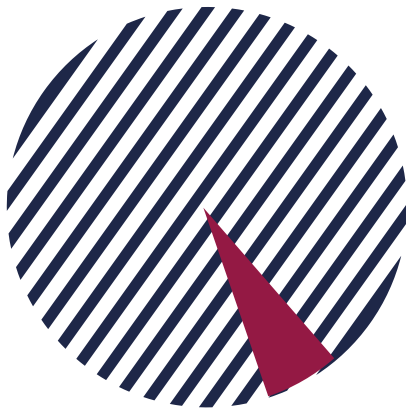


2004-2005  
**DOMESTIC 91%**  
**INTERNATIONAL 9%**



2014-2015  
**DOMESTIC 83%**  
**INTERNATIONAL 17%**

## CANADA



2004-2005  
**DOMESTIC 93.8%**  
**INTERNATIONAL 6.2%**



2014-2015  
**DOMESTIC 99.1%**  
**INTERNATIONAL 10.9%**



## **SECTION 5:**

# **PROTECTING YOUNG WORKERS**

**STUDENTS IN NOVA SCOTIA NOT ONLY FACE** some of the highest tuition fees in Canada, they also graduate into a job market with high rates of youth unemployment. Over 2016, youth employment ranged between 62,900 and 55,500<sup>23</sup> and on average, there were 2,600 fewer youth employed in 2016 than 2015. This number fails to capture the number of missing youth jobs that Nova Scotia has yet to recover since the financial crisis in 2008. When normalized for population decrease, Nova Scotia was 4,200 youth jobs short of pre-recession levels in 2016. While the Government of Nova Scotia should be applauded for its investment in the Graduate to Opportunities, Student Summer Skills Incentive, Apprenticeship START, and Co-op Education Incentive programs, it is clear that investing solely in job creation programs is not enough.

At times of high youth unemployment, students are especially vulnerable to exploitation in the workforce. High competition for work means that students are forced to take on multiple, precarious, part time jobs. Increasingly students are also forced to work unpaid internships, sometimes even paying to work for free in the hopes of developing experience that will lead to paid work. The government needs to ensure that students are fairly compensated for the work they do – to do anything else would be to condone the exploitation of young people. There have been some positive steps from the government in this regard. By reducing the experience required for employment in the civil service, the Government of Nova Scotia has lead by example in demonstrating that employers need to reinvest in entry-level positions. The government should send another strong message that replacing entry-level positions with unpaid work is unacceptable by immediately ending the practice of hiring unpaid interns in the provincial government.

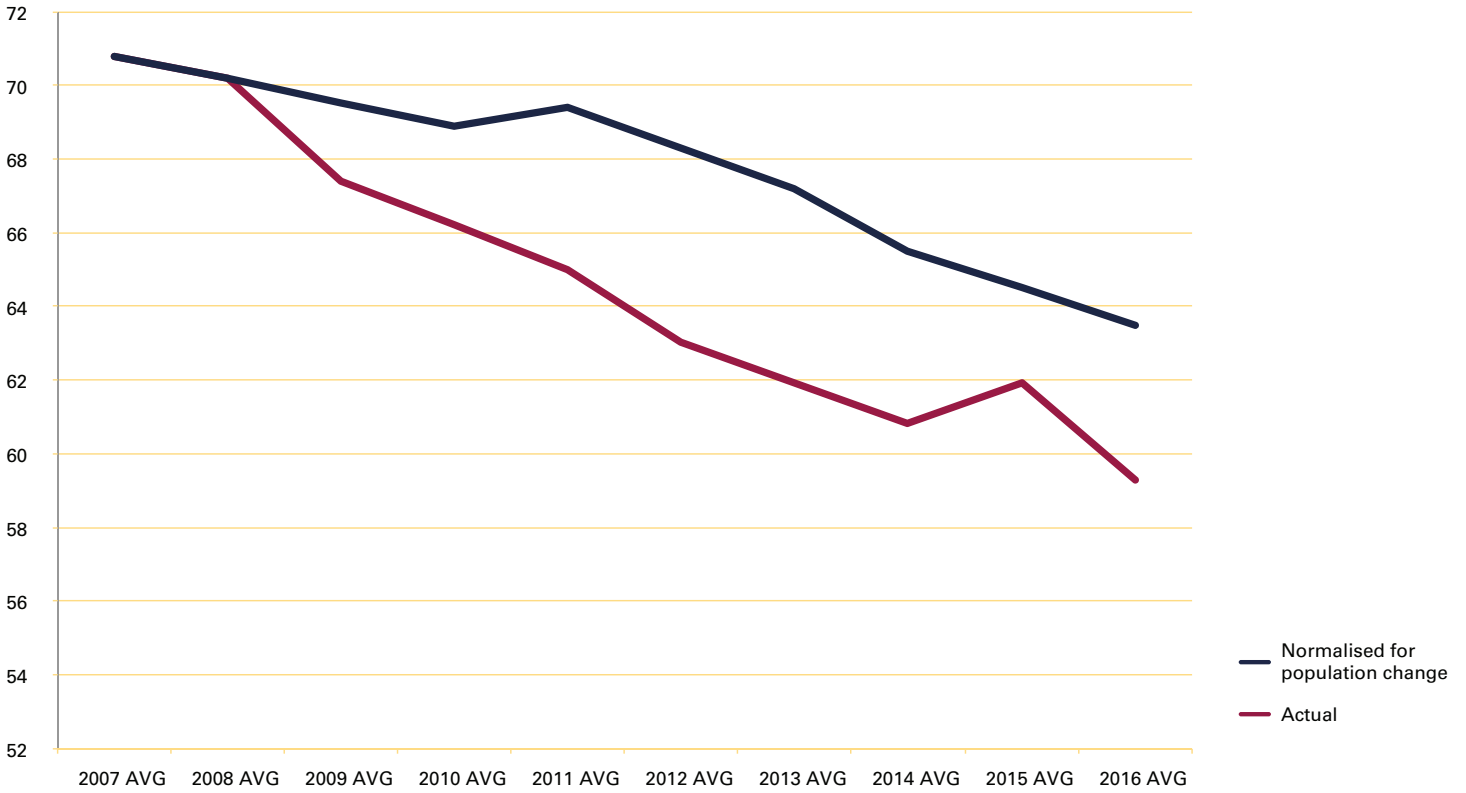
Nova Scotia is one of only three provinces that have a separate minimum wage for inexperienced employees, which impacts students and first time workers. An inexperienced employee is an employee who has not been employed by their present or other employer for a total period of three calendar months in their specific field. Inexperienced employees are entitled to a wage \$0.50 below the minimum rate. A separate wage for inexperienced workers impacts students, who will often have several, temporary, part-time jobs while in school. Over the course of a four-month summer job, a student may make the inexperienced employee minimum wage for most of their employment term. Employees should be compensated based on work performed, not past experience. Eliminating the inexperienced worker wage would better represent and compensate young people's contributions to the Nova Scotian economy.

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23 CANSIM Tables 282-0087, 282-0088. Statistics Canada, 2017.



## AVERAGE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT



### STUDENTS ARE CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT OF NOVA SCOTIA TO:

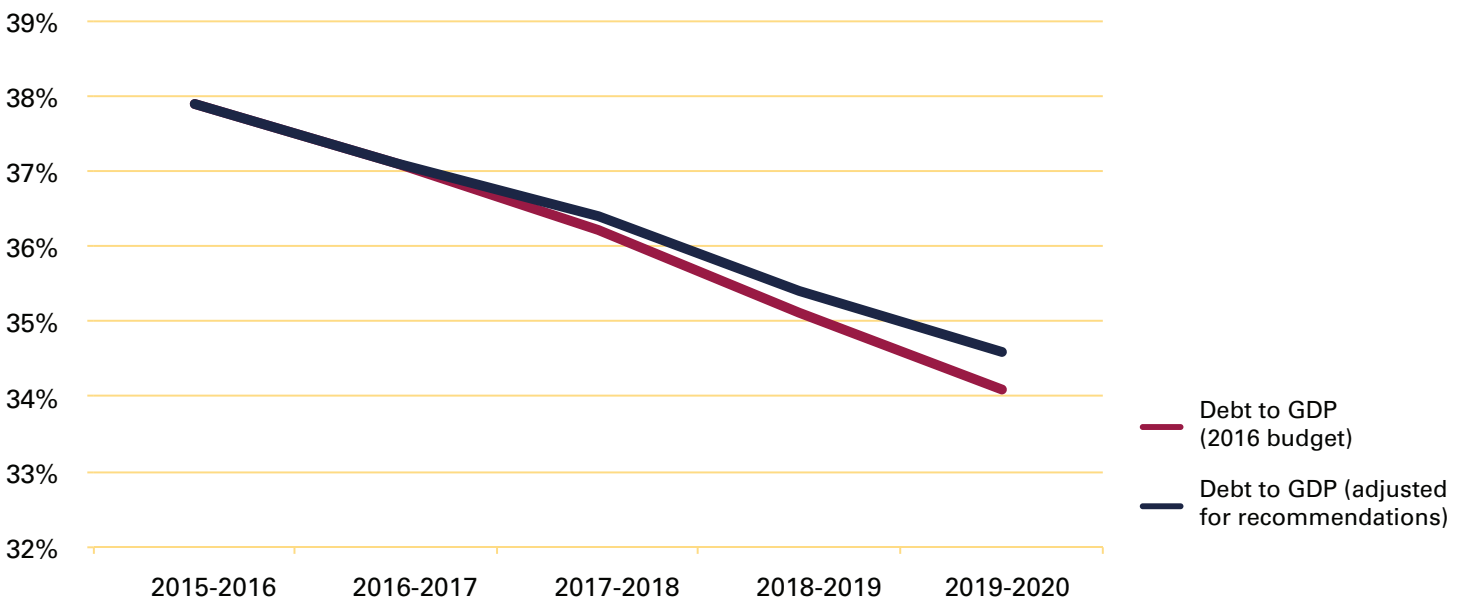
- End the practice of using unpaid interns in the provincial government; and
- Eliminate the inexperienced minimum wage rate.

# BROADER FISCAL FRAMEWORK

**STUDENTS ARE CALLING ON THE NOVA SCOTIA GOVERNMENT** to invest \$61.6 million in our post-secondary education system next year. Although this amount sounds substantial, it is well within the realm of affordability for our province. Nova Scotia's debt burden is measured by our debt-to-GDP ratio. Last spring the provincial budget projected a targeted debt-to-GDP ratio reduction of 0.9% between 2016-2017 and 2017-2018, from 37.1% to 36.2%.<sup>24</sup> Based on these assumptions, an additional \$61.6 million in spending would only adjust that reduction to 0.7%, resulting in a debt-to-GDP ratio of 36.4%. This is still a considerable reduction and does not take into account the economic growth that an investment of \$61.6 million investment in post-secondary education will result in.

Since being elected in 2013, the current government has consistently targeted the post-secondary education system and students for cuts to public spending. The elimination of the Graduate Retention Rebate in 2014, which students had recommended redirecting into needs based grants, was a cut of \$49.5 million. Furthermore, funding to universities has failed to keep pace with inflation. By investing in the recommendations contained within this document, the Government of Nova Scotia will show its commitment to post-secondary education by reversing the cuts it has made over the last 4-years.

## DEBT TO GDP PROJECTIONS



This table presumes public funding to universities will increase by a further 3% in 2018-19 and 2019-2020.

# CONCLUSION & SUMMARY

## THE INVESTMENT STUDENTS ARE CALLING FOR WILL BENEFIT ALL NOVA SCOTIANS.

Increasing access to post-secondary education will ensure that our province's workforce can attain the skills and training they need to take part in today's economy. Increasing university funding will increase the quality of education and protect the good jobs that our regional economies depend on to thrive. Combatting sexual and gender-based violence will ensure that students are safe while pursuing their degrees. Supporting international students will sustain our post-secondary education system as our own population declines. Students are calling on the Government of Nova Scotia to work with us as we strive to create a better post-secondary education system in our province.

### FEES AND FUNDING:

- Introduce a Post-Secondary Education Affordability Act, freezing all fees at post-secondary education institutions in Nova Scotia
- Reduce tuition fees by 10% and eliminate the Tuition and Education Tax Credit - \$8 million
- Develop a framework with stakeholders to eliminate tuition fees by 2026
- Repeal Regulation 67
- Eliminate tuition fees at the Nova Scotia Community College - \$30 million
- Increase public funding to universities by 3% - \$12.5 million
- Standardise public access to university board of governors meetings

### STUDENT ASSISTANCE

- Convert student loans to non-repayable grants and eliminate the Debt Forgiveness and Interest Free Student Loan Program - \$8.6 million

### BUILDING CONSENT CULTURE

- Bring forward legislation to mandate all post-secondary institutions have stand-alone sexual assault policies that are developed-and renewed every four years-through a student driven process
- Create a Sexual Assault Support division within the Government of Nova Scotia and establish a long-term Sexual Assault Support Resource Fund available to students, campus groups, universities and the Nova Scotia Community College - \$2 million
- Require universities and colleges to report publicly on incidences of sexual violence, as well as initiatives underway to address sexual violence and harassment and their effectiveness

### FAIRNESS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- Cover international Student under Medical Services Insurance upon their arrival in Nova Scotia - \$500,000

### PROTECTING YOUNG WORKERS

- End the practice of using unpaid internships within the Government of Nova Scotia
- Eliminate the Inexperienced Minimum Wage rate

