

Members' Advisory  
**Federal Budget 2019**

April 2019

The 2019 Federal budget was released and we have broken down what this means for students.

### **Revisiting Budget 2018**

Budget 2018 victories included:

- \$1.7 billion over five years for fundamental research, which included \$1.2 billion in funding to the three granting councils, new funding for Canada Research Chairs, and other programs
- *A National Framework to Address Gender-Based Violence at Post-Secondary Institutions*, funded at \$5.5 million over five years

However, students failed to see direct investments in the post-secondary sector to meaningfully address skyrocketing tuition fees and student debt.

### **Progress in Budget 2019?**

Unfortunately, Budget 2019 leaves these problems largely unaddressed.

Despite over \$36 billion in public student debt, and average tuition rates in some provinces exceeding \$8,000 per year for a domestic undergraduate student, this government has once again failed to invest meaningfully in direct spending on post-secondary education.

### **Victories for Students**

Students did see significant victories in Budget 2019.

- Decreases in Canada Student Loans Program (CSLP) interest rates to prime (current floating rates at prime+2.5%)
  - Estimated average \$2,000 in savings over the duration of the loan
- Introduction of 6-month interest-free grace period following graduation
- Creation of a pan-Canadian suicide prevention service with 24/7 crisis support from trained responders

### **Budget 2019 for Student Parents**

- Interest-free student loan period when on parental leave
- Expanded parental leave (from 6 to 12 months) for granting council-funded students

### **Budget 2019 for Graduate Students**

- \$114 million over five years for Canada Graduate Scholarships, providing 500 more Masters and 167 more PhD scholarships per year

### **Budget 2019 for Student Workers**

- Investment of \$631.2 million over five years in, and expansion of, the Student Work Placement Program to include paid work-integrated learning opportunities for arts, humanities and social science students in addition to STEM and business students.
- Expansion to Youth Employment Strategy
- Introduction of *Canada Training Benefit*, which includes a \$250 per year training credit (up to a maximum of \$5,000) that can be applied to course fees and colleges and universities for people aged 25-64
  - Eligible participants need to have earned a minimum of \$10,000 prior to seeking training, but may not have had a salary in excess of \$150,000.
  - Also includes income support through Employment Insurance (EI)

#### **Budget 2019 for Students with Disabilities**

- Expansion of loan forgiveness eligibility for students with disabilities
- Expansion of *Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for Students with Permanent Disabilities* and *Severe Permanent Disability Benefit* eligibility

#### **Budget 2019 for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Students**

- \$327.5 million over five years to the Post-Secondary Student Support Program for First Nations learners
- \$125.5 million over ten years for Inuit student access to post-secondary
- \$362 million over ten years for Métis student access to post-secondary
- \$333.7 million over five years in funding for the *Indigenous Languages Act*
  - However, it is unclear how much of this funding may be allocated to the post-secondary sector in particular

#### **Budget 2019 for International Students**

- No expansion in eligibility for the Canada Summer Jobs Program
- No requirement under the *Canada Health Act* for provinces to offer the same public health care to international students that is provided to domestic residents

#### **Budget 2019 for Climate Justice**

- \$2.2 billion top-up for federal Gas Tax Fund for community infrastructure projects
- \$1.01 billion to increase energy efficiency in residential, commercial and multi-unit buildings, administered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities
- Purchase incentives and expansion of charging and refueling stations for zero-emission vehicles

#### **In A Nutshell?**

While this budget fails to address many of our core demands, new investments in CSLP reform, funding for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, and funding for graduate students are a reflection of our tireless work as student organizers, and proof that student action works.

This budget fails to act on debt-free access to education, but students will continue to fight. United, we shall not be defeated.

Access our proposal for an accessible public post-secondary education system on page \_ of the Alternative Federal Budget ([link](#)).