BE BOLD.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE REPORT

72nd

FREE EDUCATION NOW

SEMI-ANNUAL NATIONAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday June 8th to Tuesday June 11th, 2019
Kanata, Ontario
LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to begin by acknowledging that this meeting is taking place on the unceded and unsurrendered Algonquin territories. We acknowledge the land both as an explicit reminder of the ongoing colonialism taking place here in Canada and as a reminder of the work that is yet to be done towards reconciliation between the Indigenous peoples of this land, settlers and the people who have been historically and violently displaced from their home territories to be placed here. It is not enough to just read these words at events, it is important to understand them, their historical context and their connection to promoting real reconciliation based dialogue and action.

ABOUT THE CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS

Established in 1981, the Canadian Federation of Students is the largest student organization in Canada, uniting more than 500,000 college, undergraduate and graduate students from coast to coast. Our ultimate goal is to achieve a universal system of high-quality, public, post-secondary education in Canada that is tuition-free for domestic and international students.
MESSAGE
FROM THE AT-LARGE REPRESENTATIVES

Dear Members,

Throughout this first half of 2019, we have represented and served the Canadian Federation of Students, and we have done so by drawing on the strength, resilience and tenacity we see in all of you. In the midst of some of the most challenging attacks on the student movement, it moves us to see the workers, parents, healthcare providers and students from all levels of education come together and rise up as a united front to push back against regressive policies.

In the Maritimes, we have seen domestic students stand in solidarity with international students as they fight against exorbitant tuition fee hikes. In Manitoba, healthcare providers and students have stood united as they condemn the provincial government’s decision to bar international students from the provincial health insurance. In Newfoundland and Labrador, students’ unions and organizations have consistently organized to demand that the provincial government reinstate needs-based grants, increase funding to post-secondary institutions and reduce tuition fees, thereby funding the future and ensuring the growth of the Newfoundland and Labrador economy.

This year also saw the introduction of the Student Choice Initiative by the Ontario conservative government. The policy removes collective membership dues for student-run groups and organizations and makes fees that students have voted on through democratic referenda optional. This is a grave threat to the abilities of students’ unions to represent and provide services for their members and present a worrying precedent for other provinces to follow.

Despite this trying time, students in the province have shown through their organizing that they will not passively accept these changes. Time and time again, they have gathered in great numbers to defend students’ right to organize and provide democratically-chosen services.

These threats mean we are currently facing a critical time within our organization. However, we have not faltered in our beliefs. We have not withered under the pressure. We are not shaken.

Rather, we continue to lobby federal and provincial governments on behalf of students across the country. We have found ways to strengthen our services and have created tools to help support Anti-Racist Organizing on Canadian campuses.

As the fall 2019 election session quickly approaches, it is crucial that we work together and encourage federal candidates to make Bold decisions that will benefit students. We must also strive to educate members on elections issues and on the infallible significance of the student voice at the polls.

We are excited to meet, organize and mobilize for the coming year and hope you enjoy this Semi-Annual General Meeting.
Member local students’ unions set the priorities and direction of the Canadian Federation of Students.

Each year, the Federation holds national general meetings where delegates vote on motions brought forward by member local students’ unions and determine campaigns priorities for the period that follows. During the meetings, sub-committees, constituency groups, caucuses and provincial components discuss these motions and offer amendments before all member local students’ unions vote on them. With the principle of “one member, one vote,” each member local students’ union has an equal say in all major decisions.

The National Executive Committee is comprised of representatives elected by member local students’ union.
CAMPAIGNS
The Federation’s We The Students campaign was created by CFS-Ontario earlier this year in response to unprecedented attacks on post-secondary education by the Ontario Provincial Government. The objectives of this campaign are to raise awareness about cuts and changes to post-secondary education and to mobilize students, faculty, workers and community members in the fight to protect democratic student organizations and publicly funded, high quality, accessible and affordable education.

The proposed cuts and changes include:
- A new framework for charging non-academic student fees, known as the Student Choice Initiative, intended to defund democratic student organizations such as student unions;
- More than $670 million dollars in cuts to student financial assistance; and
- Extraordinary changes to the college and university funding formulas, which will tie 60 per cent of institutional funding to performance-based-outcome

Amongst these detrimental cuts, the Student Choice Initiative (SCI) poses the greatest threat to the strength of the student movement. This policy will allow students to opt-out of previously mandatory student fees that are now being deemed “non-essential” by the Ontario government. Some of these fees include student union membership dues, service center fees (such as women centers, food centers, pride centers) and other student-led organizations such as independent campus media and the Canadian Federation of Students. Some fees will still be mandatory, including athletics, career services, student ID cards, walk safe progra

This policy will significantly reduce the ability of student unions/associations in Ontario to advocate for student interests as well as limit their ability to offer services, events and campaigns.

Detrimental impacts of the SCI extend beyond Ontario locals to the Federation and the rest of the country. Ontario is the biggest component of the Federation
with their membership fees making up over 80% of the Federation’s budget. With Ontario students now being able to opt-out of their CFS membership fee, the Federation expects to retain between 5% and 30% of Ontario locals membership fees. As a result, the Federation’s financial capacity will be scaled back considerably.

Those representing locals outside Ontario are not immune to these type of cuts. The implementation of the SCI will likely set a precedent for other provinces to follow.

Now more than ever, students need to be united to fight back against harmful cuts that threaten a progressive future for education. To date, champions of the campaign have collected nearly 17,000 petition signatures, facilitated dozens of volunteer trainings and town halls, started campus coalitions, led rallies and occupations, held a week of action, organized a province-wide walkout and more.

The goals and demands of the campaign are as follows:

1. Provide more grants not loans
2. Eliminate tuition fees for all students
3. Increase public funding for public education
4. Protect all independent student voices
5. Defend the right to organize

The next step is the campaign are to educate students on the value of their students’ union and Federation memberships. The Federation is also gearing up to assist other provinces in fighting expected similar cuts to post-secondary education.
Time to Be Bold is the Federation’s 2019 federal election campaign. This year, students are demanding bold action from candidates and elected officials.

Collective debt on federal student loans currently sits at $36 billion and is steadily rising. Without the talent of the youth, Canada cannot improve its economy. However, developing this talent remains impossible for many because of the high cost of tuition.

Despite education being a key factor in Reconciliation, Indigenous youth continue to be denied funding for tuition due to the backlog on the Post-Secondary Student Support Program. Climate change poses a devastating threat to life and learning for this generation and those to come. Additionally, international students, whose talent is essential to the Canadian economy, are made to pay three to four times more for tuition and face several obstacles when living in Canada such as being barred from the Canada Summer Jobs program and provincial health coverage.

Students in Canada will be going to the polls to demand a safe, liveable future free of debt and discrimination. The campaign aims to increase student voter turnout by focusing on these important issues and highlighting how students’ decisions at the polls will address them. The campaign will launch during the 72nd National General Meeting with a nationwide rollout planned shortly after.
High tuition fees impact racialized students disproportionately due to the marginalization of these communities. Access to equal education is already challenging in primary and secondary schools and more difficult within the post-secondary education system.

The Federation’s anti-racism campaign underwent a successful revision this year with the creation of an anti-racism toolkit set. The toolkit, which is freely available to the public in the digital form, contains resources for direct organizing, creating racialized student spaces on campus, an anti-oppression glossary, and identification of the need for race-based data and research. It has also expanded the previous anti-racism campaign by providing equity-based hiring practices to institutions and guidelines for student unions to use when interacting with anti-racism organizing groups.

The Federation’s anti-islamophobia campaign was created to acknowledge students' experiences of Islamophobia, to help them identify Islamophobia, and to empower them to seek all options available to them in instances where they are faced with Islamophobia.

The revamped campaign, which was created following consultations with representatives of different Muslim Student Associations, also demands that post-secondary institutions and student unions take greater steps to combat institutionalized Islamophobia on their campuses through measures such as providing prayer spaces and campus Imams for Muslim students.

As part of the campaign, the Know Your Rights Guide was also created in collaboration with the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM). The guide addresses issues like Islamophobia online and in the classroom and racial profiling on campus. It also gives students an understanding on how to define Islamophobia, laws and campus policies regarding Islamophobia, and information on what students can do when faced with Islamophobia.

The guide, which is in English and French, is currently available by request and will be made available to all students after the launch in September.
This year’s lobby week happened at an opportune time, as students across the country are gearing up for the fall federal election and looking to parties for bold action on the growing student debt crisis and underfunding for post-secondary education. With youth forming the largest segment of eligible voters in 2019, scrutiny will, and should, be paid to the promises made by the Liberal government five years ago. From February 19-22, delegates from various provincial components and members of the National Executive met with over 70 MPs and Senators to present student demands for post-secondary education, including:

- A fully-funded, universal, tuition-free system of post-secondary education, the elimination of interest rates on Canada Student Loans,
- A fully-funded Post-Secondary Student Support Program,
- Consultation on the Indigenous Languages Act with the Circle of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Students,
- Expanded eligibility of Canada Student Grants for graduate students, and
- Maintaining fair dealing provisions in the Copyright Act while expanding rights to First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities to determine how their knowledge is disseminated and compensated for.

As MPs and Senators were receptive to the demands, we’re looking forward to seeing them reflected in party policies during this federal election year.
The 2019 Federal Budget was released on March 19. The Federation had representatives in the economic and stakeholders lock-ups for pre-release analysis. Following the release, Executive Director Justine De Jaegher called into the Youth Secretariat’s briefing call on April 5 to receive a breakdown on what the budget entailed. A full advisory on the budget was also released to members detailing student wins, which included:

- Reduced interest rates on federal student loans (from prime +2.5% to prime)
- Funding over five years for the Post Secondary Student Support Program as well as funding over ten years for Métis and Inuit post-secondary access
- A five-year investment for the Canada Graduate Scholarships
- Expanded parental leave for granting council-funded students.

On March 18, Treasurer James participated in a consultation session with Possibility Seats, an organization hired by the Department of Women and Gender Equality (WAGE). During the consultation, they reviewed the first draft of the post-secondary gender-based violence framework. The framework will be exploring gender-based violence within post-secondary education in three realms: education, support and the adjudication process.
SOLIDARITY
The Canadian Association of University Teachers is a federation of independent associations and trade unions representing approximately 70,000 teachers, librarians, researchers and other academic professionals and general staff at 120 universities and colleges across Canada. The Association has consistently partnered with the Federation to educate students on fair dealings laws and Indigenous intellectual property.

"The Power Shift Network mobilizes the collective power of young people to mitigate climate change and create a just, clean energy future and resilient, thriving communities for all."

The Federation encouraged member locals and the general population to attend Powershift: Young and Rising youth climate convergence from February 14-17, 2019. The conference provided an opportunity for young environmental activists from across the world to meet and network with one another to discuss organizing strategies for the climate justice movement. A major theme of the conference was the discussion of bringing a Green New Deal to Canada to address the looming threat of climate change through massive public investment in clean energy infrastructure to create long-term jobs, build a sustainable economy and invest in the future. The Federation will continue to support youth climate justice initiatives and will assist in planning and promoting any future Powershift conferences held in Canada.
ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR (OFL)

“The OFL has grown to represent over one million Ontario workers belonging to more than 1,500 locals from 54 affiliated unions, making it Canada’s largest provincial labour federation.”

Staff and elected representatives of member locals and the Federation attended the OFL’s Power of Many: Take Back Ontario conference held in Toronto on March 25, 2019. The conference brought together labour leaders, activists and community allies from across Ontario to discuss strategies and escalating actions to address cuts coming from the provincial government. Following the conference, Federation representatives have attended regional Power of Many meetings and participated in days of action and rallies organized by labour groups affiliated with the OFL.

CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES (CUPE)

“The Canadian Union of Public Employees is Canada’s largest union, with over 665,000 members across the country. CUPE represents workers in health care, emergency services, education, early learning and child care, municipalities, social services, libraries, utilities, transportation, airlines and more.”

CUPE has always worked closely with the Federation to protect high-quality, accessible and affordable education. Recently, CUPE has been an invaluable resource to the Federation in mobilizing against cuts to post-secondary education.
The National Council of Canadian Muslims is an independent, non-partisan and nonprofit organization that protects Canadian human rights and civil liberties, challenges discrimination and Islamophobia, builds mutual understanding, and advocates for the public concerns of Canadian Muslims.

The Council collaborated with the Canadian Federation of Students to create the Know Your Rights Guide which gives Muslim students an understanding of how to identify Islamophobia and how to deal with institutionalized Islamophobia on and off-campus. The Guide is currently available in English and French.

The Federation supported high school students that mobilized across Ontario to walk out of their classes on April 4, 2019. High school students were self-organized in over 800 schools across the province that saw over 100,000 students walkout of their classrooms to protest the cuts to public education in elementary and secondary schools, as well as cuts to post-secondary education. The Federation will continue to work on creating a long-term relationship with high school students to plan future actions and create skills development to strengthen student organizing across the province.
During the 2018/2019 term, the Federation was approached by Benjamin Fraser, the Caribbean and Americas Representative of the Commonwealth Student Association, an international organization committed to amplifying the voices of students across all members states by joining student leaders together. The CSA aims to empower students across the world to influence change in education, contribute to their societies, amplify the student voice, through the collaboration between student leaders and educational stakeholders. The Commonwealth Student Association hopes to increase the involvement of student leaders from North America and learn more about the challenges and barriers faced by students studying in North America. For more information, please contact caribbeanamericas@gmail.com.
SERVICES
The Federation has a dual mandate to advocate on behalf of students and provide them with cost-saving services. These services offer both member locals and individual members access to quality programs that promote ethically sourced materials, an added value of membership, and cost savings. By participating, students can immediately offset the high cost of education through savings on day-to-day purchases.

The goals of the services are to bring additional revenue to the Federation to support campaigns and equity mandates and to bring added value to member locals and members through cost-savings. Over the years, the Federation makes changes to services in responses to the needs and direction of membership based on these goals. With a reduced operating budget, the Federation continues to streamline services to ensure that the goals are met and are sustainable for the organization.

NATIONAL STUDENT HEALTH NETWORK

The National Student Health Network is a consortium for health and dental insurance that uses the combined purchasing power of Federation members to secure lower rates and better coverage. Working with Canada’s only nonprofit insurance provider, Green Shield Canada, means the Network can provide students with the best value, health outcomes and work collectively to move the industry in a positive direction. The Network also emphasizes annual rather than predatory multi-year contracts, and more inclusive and holistic coverage options.

The Federation assists any member local with reviewing their plan renewal each year. The goal of this collaboration is to ensure that member locals receive the best possible services and rates for their members in a profit-driven industry.

Primary services of the Network include preparing promotional plan materials for each participating member local, processing opt-out requests, and
negotiating for the best possible rates. The Network assists member locals and health plan administrators with the day-to-day operations of the health and dental plans to ensure the best possible experience for students. In the past two years, the Network has saved participating students over $1 million dollars in premiums through this negotiation process.

In addition to servicing health and dental plans, the Network advocates for students’ health by collaborating with solidarity partners and lobbying provincial and federal governments. The Network continues to advocate for all members to demand better mental health resources and services.

A comprehensive rebrand of the National Student Health Network is being conducted which will be reflected on health and dental plan materials this coming September 2019.

**HANDBOOK AND DAY PLANNER SERVICE**

The members' Handbook and Dayplanner Service was initiated to reduce the time and cost of producing handbooks and as a means of improving the overall quality of student union-produced day planners. Each day planner includes a calendar, a local campus section and a Federation section.

The Federation hopes to continue its partnership with a Toronto-based unionized printing company. Like previous years, the program continues to produce the handbooks with post-consumer recycled paper and with vegetable ink.

The Federation has changed a number of standard features with the handbook and dayplanner in the lead up to the 2019 program. The program now has a new order form that allows locals to better prepare handbook layout and understand deadlines. The Federation has also released new templates that better incorporate bilingual translation and design. The program has introduced two new features: bookmarks and a four-page foldout.

The handbook and dayplanner service is one of the services most impacted by the Student Choice Initiative due to the precarious budgets faced by Ontario member locals. The Federation has produced an order form with pricing based on a substantially reduced order. Additionally, the Federation has sought out advertisement opportunities and reduction of handbook content to reduce the costs as low as possible. The Federation will need to review the capacity, structure, principles and future of the handbook and dayplanner program for the 2020 year.
The International Student Identity Card provides over 150,000 discounts worldwide including over 1,000 across Canada. The card allows members to save on everyday purchases, travel, events, and attractions. The card is free as a benefit of membership for all members of the Canadian Federation of Students.

The Federation and ISIC global have committed to a more environmentally friendly issuing process, promoting the virtual ISIC over physical cards. The virtual card allows members to have access to their ISIC at any time by using the mobile app available on all smartphones or computer. This ensures members always have access to their card and ability to obtain discounts.

With the virtual ISIC, member locals are able to issue cards more efficiently, without the need for a card printer or specific computer. Virtual cards can be issued the exact same way member locals issued physical cards, but now can be completed on a windows computer, mac, tablet, or smartphone. Once a virtual card has been issued, students receive an email will all the details about ISIC and how to access the virtual card.

By promoting the virtual ISIC, the Federation is able to provide the card to more members! It reduces the need for more physical card printers, ink, and plastic cards.

The Student Choice Initiative will severely affect the amount of overhead within the Federation. This will require the Federation to speed up the process to move the ISIC program to a completely virtual issuing system, reducing the costs associated with printers, ink and plastic cards. The Federation is currently working on a revised timeline to phase out the physical printers entirely.
SWAP Working Holidays is Canada’s largest international work exchange and travel program for students and youth. The program has been a Federation service since its inception. In the later 2000s, the program operations was contracted out to Merit Travel, a Canadian travel company. Due to contractual obligations and other factors, the program continues to negatively impact the Federation’s budget.

At a recent National Executive meeting of the Federation, the decision was made to sell or dissolve the SWAP program. This will allow the Federation to focus additional financial resources on campaigns and other work that benefits all members.

The Federation has changed the general structure of the Ethical Purchasing Network since the Single Mother’s Cooperative in El Salvador closed its doors and with some of the tariffs charged at the United States border in 2018. The Federation is using a Canadian supplier for textiles and other supplies previously offered through the network. The Federation will remain the point of contact for placing orders and communicating with suppliers.

The Ethical Purchasing Network is largely unchanged due to the Student Choice Initiative. Due to precarious budgets at member locals, the cost of Orientation items will increase due to smaller order quantities; however, with moving to a Canadian distributor, the program has also reduced some of the additional fees. Additionally, member locals will now be required to cover their own shipping fees.

The Federation continues its partnership with UFile to bring free tax filing to members across the country. Students continue to take advantage of using the free, intuitive software that features a step-by-step process to input tax information to bring the most favourable tax return.
While the Federation is making every attempt to reverse the devastating policy of voluntary student unionism in Ontario, this reversal may take months or years and could place the organization in a precarious cash flow situation in the meantime. As a result, the National Executive began the necessary processes of textile inventory sales, sale or dissolution of the SWAP Working Holidays program, downsizing national office space in event of building sale and/or lease, and, regretfully, staff restructuring and layoffs.

When the Federation was founded in 1981, the national membership fee was set at $2.00 per student per semester. In 1992, member locals voted to increase the fee from $2.00 to $3.00. At the same time, a Bylaw was adopted stipulating that, starting in 1996, the fee would be adjusted each academic year by the rate of change in the Canadian Consumer Price Index (CPI) during the previous calendar year. The Federation’s national membership fee for the current academic year is $4.67 per student per semester.
Between national general meetings, the National Executive, along with the staff of the organization, manages the federation’s projects and implements the vision outlined by members.

National Chairperson: vacant
National Deputy Chairperson: Jade Byard Peek
National Treasurer: Trina James

British Columbia Representative: Sarah Strachan
Alberta Representative: vacant
Saskatchewan Representative: Heather O’Watch
Manitoba Representative: Dele Ojewole
Ontario Representative: Sami Pritchard
Quebec Representative: vacant
New Brunswick Representative: Khaleel Arfeen
Nova Scotia Representative: Aidan McNally

Prince Edward Island Representative: Ashley McKibbon
Newfoundland & Labrador Representative: Sofia Descalzi
Circle of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Students’ Representative: Chance Paupanakis
Colleges & Institutes Representative: Arnel Fleurant
National Graduate Caucus Representative: Shannon Kitchings
Francophone Students’ Representative: Rizki Rachiq
International Students’ Representative: Diana Ombe
Racialized Students’ Representative: Leila Moumouni-Tchouassi
Student Disability Justice Representative: Megan Linton
Women’s Representative: Nikki Jamieson

The following individuals comprise the staff of the national Federation:
Executive Director: Justine De Jaegher
Director of Services: Corey Grist
Membership Coordinator: Raven Davidson
Communications & Translation Coordinator: Geneviève Charest
Manitoba Organizer: Elizabeth Shearer
Maritimes Organizer: Sarah Trower
Newfoundland & Labrador Organizer: Alyse Stuart
This year, the Federation has been featured in countless articles, radio broadcasts and television shows. We are considered the most reliable voice of the student movement and continue to be called on to share our opinions and advice. This is advantageous because it has allowed us to push student issues to the forefront of the media and public’s attention.

Following the changes to the Ontario Student Assistance Program and the introduction of the Student Choice Initiative, members of the Federation were looked to for opinions on the state of post-secondary education in Ontario.
An emergency rally organized just days after the Ontario government’s announcement was covered by news platforms across the country.

In January, Macleans published an opinion piece by National treasurer Trina James on the reckless cuts being made to the education sector by Ontario premier, Doug Ford. A subsequent walk out organized by the Ontario component of the Federation saw a turnout of thousands of students and allies and was covered by national media.

In Nova Scotia, the Federation’s campaign against rising tuition fees for both domestic and international students has been extensively covered.
Manitoba Chaiperson, Dele Ogewole, penned a piece in the Winnipeg Free Press urging the Manitoba government to invest in education and recognize the contributions of international students and address their rising differential fees.

Incoming chairperson Sofia Descalzi also shed light on the urgency of the global climate crisis and the complicity of our post-secondary institutions in this situation.

We look forward to another year of agitating for greater access to post-secondary education.