



Media Release

For immediate release:
Thursday, April 29, 2021

Students Disappointed in PSE Report

St. John's - 'All Hands on Deck' means everyone will pay more, except government. Students are furious, but not shocked, to see recommendations for government further back away from its commitment to fund post-secondary education. Students were largely underrepresented in this document. This announcement, during a pandemic that has left many students unemployed no less, shows this government has no desire to provide hope or options to young people wanting to call this province home.

"The recommendations in this report pertaining to tuition fees come as no real surprise as successive provincial governments in NL have been reducing funding to MUN and CNA for over 5 years," said Katherine McLaughlin, NL Chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students. "However, this confirms what students have feared since this report was announced in 2019, that the doors are open for untold tuition fee increases, something MUN has been eager to do for years," added McLaughlin.

Average student debt in Newfoundland and Labrador is roughly \$20,000 for a 4-year program at MUN, and that is with tuition frozen for students from NL. That figure will surely skyrocket, just as it did the last time the province allowed tuition fees to increase in the 1990s when tuition fees rose 151%, and soaring student debt combined with a crippled economy following the cod moratorium led to a surge in youth outmigration. Student debt is an enormous barrier for young people looking to start families, make major purchases like homes, appliances and cars, and prevents many young people from realizing their dreams of starting their own business. Financial barriers are also the single greatest barrier cited by young people who do not attend college or university.

"The premier, minister of education, and all of government, need to ask themselves if they are ready for history to look back on this decision to betray students by increasing education costs - the prerequisite for meaningful employment and participation in the labour force. We know student debt will rise because of this. We know people will move away to find better paying jobs to repay this higher student debt. We have seen this before. This decision, even in our fragile economy, is terribly short-sighted and lacks any vision for a better future for young people in NL. It is certainly not a way forward, unless of course the way forward is only for those families with enough wealth to absorb rising costs," said McLaughlin in closing.

The Canadian Federation of Students - Newfoundland and Labrador proudly unites 25,000 public post-secondary students in NL in the fight for high-quality, affordable, post-secondary education.

-30-

For further information, please contact:

Alex Wicks, Organizer
709.737.3204 (O), 709.640.2466 (M)
a.wicks@cfs-nl.ca