President’s Page

REACHING HIGHER FOR MORE POST SECONDARY FUNDING

Chris articulates the priorities your student representatives are asking of the provincial budget

1 RATIONALIZING STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
- To address longstanding issues with both the delivery and enjoyment of student loans in Ontario, the Committee should:
  i. Raise the OSAP maximum to $60,000 and, for the future, to the maximum level to annual CPI increases.
  ii. This will accommodate important changes to the needs assessment framework.

2 ENSURING STUDENT SUCCESS
- The budget of 2010 should fund creative projects that help students succeed and persist through the completion of their degree, including:
  i. First pilot projects which would begin to give formal instruction in teaching methods and practice to PAID students at a total cost of $1 million.
  ii. A small number of Teaching Chairs, at a cost of $1.2 million, to focus on improving the quality of teaching.
  iii. Plotting early warning programs at five universities across the Province, at a cost of $1 million.

3 FUNDING CHALLENGING ECONOMIC TIMES
- The Standing Committee should ensure that this year’s budget returns fairness to Ontario’s cost sharing model for higher education by:
  1. Adding $300 million per year to the basic operating funds and regulating tuition increases at the rate of inflation.

As your Vice-President (Education), I’ve been working with partners across Ontario to collectively lobby the provincial government for improvements to our education system. This week, we submitted joint, well-grounded requests for post-secondary recommendations to the Ontario Standing Committee on Finance. Not all of these will end up in the budget, but we wanted positive feedback on many of the points. To ensure that the OSU membership is aware of what exactly these representatives have been advocating for, I have decided to publish the prioritized list of recommendations made by the OSU through the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance.

This year, one of the largest investments in post-secondary education in a generation is coming to an end. Over the past five years, the Ontario government’s Reaching Higher Plan has invested $6.2 billion into the sector, yet much is left to do. As the government designs a new plan, it is crucial that steps are taken to improve the quality and accessibility of higher education. For students, this means serious commitments to student financial assistance, student success initiatives, and the overall financial health of our institutions.

The success of our pre-budget consultation will be known upon the release of the 2010 Provincial Budget. We are hopeful, since the Premier has stated and demonstrated his commitment to Post-Secondary Education repeatedly. However, in light of the fact that the province is currently projecting a deficit, we must add a degree of caution to our optimism. Please send any questions or concerns you may have.

Vishal Tiwari
President

Andrew Richardson
VP Administration

Andrew Caterine
VP Finance

Chris Martin
VP Education