

Background

British Columbia is still the only province without a system of grants to help students from low- and middle-income families to access post-secondary education.

In 2018, it was estimated by the Assembly of First Nations that there were 10,000 Indigenous students who were unable to access the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) due to inadequate funding of the PSSSP.¹ This number does not take into account Indigenous students without status, who are excluded from the PSSSP altogether.

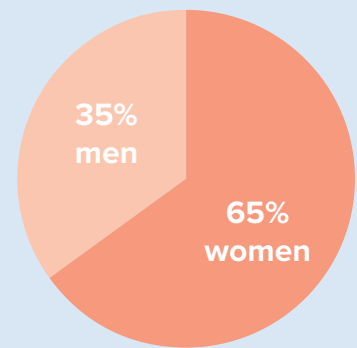
On average, Canadian women with degrees still earn 12% less than their male counterparts with similar levels of education,² which means that women will struggle more with repaying student loans. This is concerning, as women were more likely to access financial aid than men,³ despite the fact that they were also more likely to have a job while in school.⁴

Graduate students are not eligible for Canada Student Grants — which provide funding of up to \$3,000 to students with demonstrated financial need — and only have merit-based awards available to them from the government if they cannot pay for their education out-of-pocket.

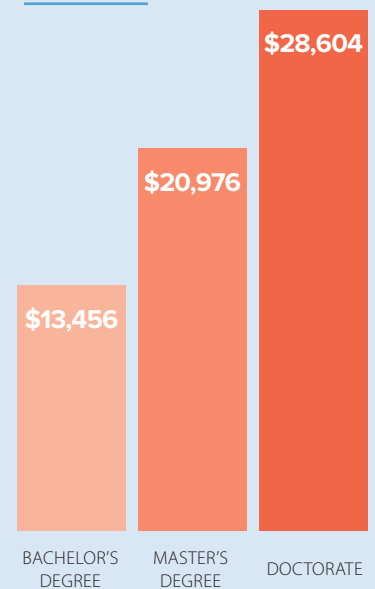
Recommendation

The Alliance of BC Students recommends that the Province of British Columbia match the Canada Student Grants program in funding for students. This ask is projected to cost the government \$90 million per year to cover undergraduate students, and \$4 million per year to cover graduate students.

GENDER ANALYSIS OF THOSE IN STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT⁵



AVERAGE STUDENT LOAN DEBT BY DEGREE⁶



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- ² Moyser, Melissa. "Women and Paid Work." 2017. Statistics Canada.
- ³ "Canada Student Loans Program – Statistical Review 2016–2017." 2019. Statistics Canada.
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Background

While we acknowledge the important work that the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training is currently undertaking to address issues around campus sexualized violence, many of the policies that were developed by institutions under the *Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy Act* do not meet the needs of survivors.¹

One in five women will be sexually assaulted during their time attending post-secondary, a statistic which has not changed for over 30 years.² We also recognize that people who are part of certain demographics face disproportionately higher rates of sexualized violence, particularly Indigenous women.³ Sexualized violence has devastating impacts on the academic performance and overall well-being of survivors, who are at higher risk of mental illness.⁴

By requiring institutions to implement minimum standards, we will see improvements such as the transparency and consistency within institutional policy that survivors require to feel protected. Furthermore, by introducing clear reporting requirements, student groups and the public will be provided with a more fulsome understanding of the way sexualized violence is being addressed on BC campuses.⁵ There must also be an independent oversight body to hear complaints from students who believe their rights have been violated by their institutions.⁶

Recommendation

The Alliance of BC Students recommends that the Province of British Columbia adopt into regulation the 11 minimum standards identified by Students For Consent Culture regarding the *Sexualized Violence and Misconduct Policy Act*.

The Alliance of BC Students recommends that the Province of British Columbia establish an independent oversight body under the BC Human Rights Commission, the Office of the Ombudsperson, or the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training.

The Alliance of BC Students recommends that the Province of British Columbia require institutions to submit annual public reports on their policy implementation progress as well as data on the usage of the policy.

MINIMUM STANDARDS TO BE MANDATED THROUGH REGULATION⁷

1. a defined stand-alone sexual violence policy
2. right to both criminal and institutional processes
3. mandatory sexual violence training for decision-makers
4. rape shield protections
5. protection from face-to-face encounters
6. timelines
7. protections from gag orders
8. broader scope
9. informing of sanctions
10. student representation on committees
11. review period of two years

WORKS CITED

¹ Salvino, Caitlin and Spencer, Connor. "OurTurn: One Year Later." 2019. Students For Consent Culture.

² Lindeman, Tracey. "Policy is not enough: Universities need a comprehensive approach to preventing sexual assault, experts say." 2018. Ottawa Citizen.

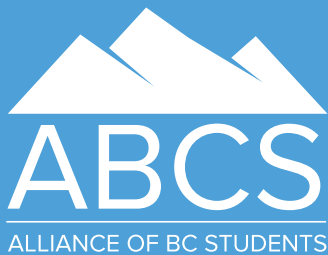
³ Brennan, Shannon. "Violent victimization of Aboriginal women in the Canadian provinces." 2009. Statistics Canada.

⁴ Victoria L. Banyard et al. "Academic Correlates of Unwanted Sexual Contact, Intercourse, Stalking, and Intimate Partner Violence: An Understudied but Important Consequence for College Students." 2017. Journal of Interpersonal Violence.

⁵ Salvino, Caitlin and Spencer, Connor. "OurTurn: One Year Later." 2019. Students For Consent Culture.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.



STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

Increasing Services to Promote Well-Being

Background

Most students enter post-secondary at ages where they are more at risk of experiencing mental illness than any other age group.¹ Combined with the fact that the second-highest cause of death for young people in Canada is suicide,² comprehensive action must be taken to support student mental health.

Many students have difficulty accessing mental health services because they do not feel that their specific needs and identities are understood and respected. Students from traditionally marginalized communities face multiple barriers to achieving optimum mental well-being due to minority stress, discrimination, and lack of representation in the design and delivery of services and policies.³

While we are pleased with the announced 24/7 support for students and believe this to be a good fit for some people, we are still advocating for more in-person resources to be provided. Students with more severe mental health conditions often achieve better results from in-person counselling.⁴ Because universities currently fund mental health resources out of their general budgets, counselling services are under-equipped to meet the level of demand they are facing. Students across the province frequently face significant and prohibitive wait times when trying to access the limited counselling their institutions provide.⁵ This lack of services is even more dramatic at smaller regional campuses in rural areas that are already struggling to attract mental health professionals to their communities.⁶

Recommendation

The Alliance of BC Students recommends that the Province of British Columbia direct \$2 million in annual funding to increase the number of full-time counsellors by one (1) per institution.

Counsellors hired with this funding must be hired to specifically support traditionally marginalized students, or to support regional campuses without on-campus counselling. The decision must come only after meaningful consultation with student representatives from traditionally marginalized and satellite campus student communities.

FAST FIGURES

Suicide rates among Indigenous youth aged 15-24 are

5-6X

the rate seen in the general Canadian population.⁷

51.6%

of students reported that they felt so depressed in the last 12 months that it was difficult to function.⁸

LGBTQ youth face approximately

14X

the risk of suicide and substance abuse.⁹

WORKS CITED

¹ Pearson, Janz and Ali. "Health at a glance: Mental and substance use disorders in Canada." 2013. Statistics Canada.

² "Leading causes of death, total population, by age group" 2018. Statistics Canada.

³ Dentato, Michael, P. "The Minority Stress Perspective." 2012. Psychology and AIDS Exchange Newsletter. American Psychological Association.

⁴ Novotney, Amy. "A Growing Wave of Online Therapy." 2017. Monitor on Psychology, Vol 48, No. 2. American Psychological Association.

⁵ James, Anna, and Kokosa, Kaitlyn. "The waiting game: Students struggle with lack of access to UVic Mental Health Services." 2017. The Martlet.

⁶ "Looking Forward: Improving Rural Health Care, Primary Care, and Addiction Recovery Programs." 2017. Select Standing Committee on Health.

⁷ Giroux, Ryan et al. "Mental Health and Suicide in Indigenous Communities in Canada." 2017. Canadian Federation of Medical Students. f

⁸ "NCHA Canadian Reference Group, Executive Summary Spring 2019." 2019. American College Health Association.

⁹ "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans & Queer identified People and Mental Health." Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario.

Background

Increases on international student tuition are currently not regulated by the Province of British Columbia, which has led to tuition fees for international students increasing at a much higher rate year over year than the tuition fees of their domestic counterparts.¹ At some institutions, international students have faced fee increases as high as 20% from one year to the next.²

Domestic students are currently protected by BC's Tuition Limit Policy, but no such protections exist for international students. For example, the average international student tuition fee rate for a bachelor of arts degree at the University of British Columbia in 2015 was \$26,399 but by 2018 had risen to \$36,588.³ This means that a person taking a four-year program had their tuition increased 38% by the last year of their studies. These dramatic increases compound the stress that international students already experience due to discrimination and exclusion while they study in Canada.⁴

To add to this, international students face federal limits on how much they are allowed to work in Canada while on a study visa,⁵ which makes it even harder to keep up with tuition and living costs that are continually rising.

Recommendation

The Alliance of BC Students recommends that the Province of British Columbia implement a 2% maximum annual increase on tuition for international students, in line with the same cap which exists for domestic students' tuition fees.

FAST FIGURES

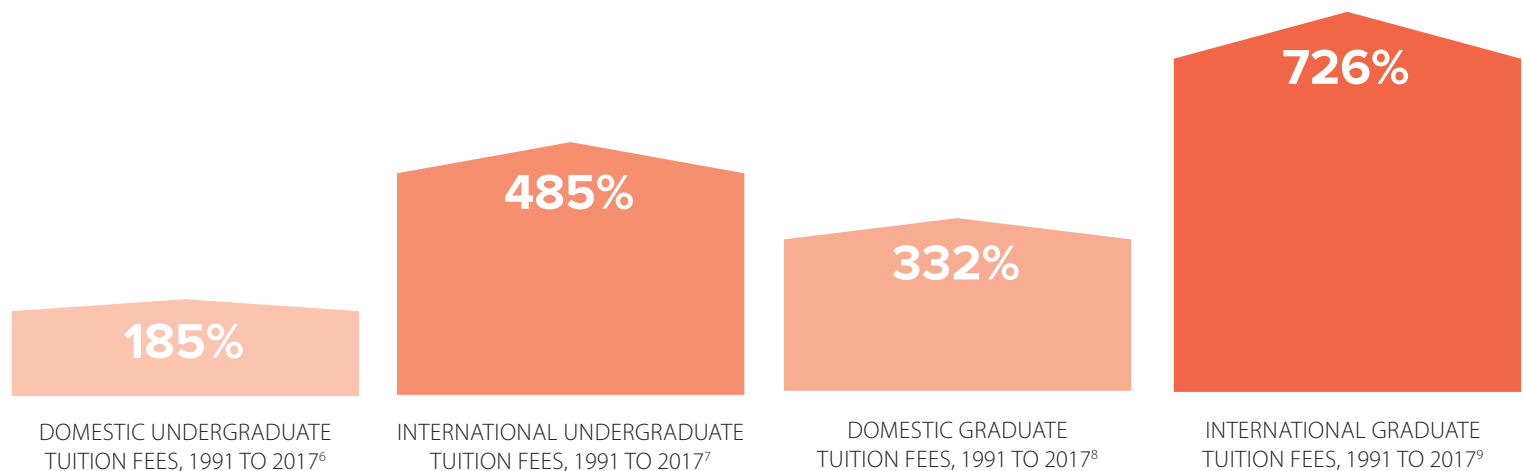
International students contributed

\$2.7 billion

to BC's GDP in 2016, and their spending translated to

40,499

jobs across the province in the same year.¹⁰



WORKS CITED

- ¹ "Canadian and international tuition fees by level of study." 2019. Statistics Canada.
- ² Hennig, Clare. "SFU to increase international students' tuition up to 20 per cent despite protests." 2019. CBC News.
- ³ Annual Academic Arts Program tuition fees for full-time international students at public post-secondary institutions by Economic Development Region (EDR) and by institution. Academic Years 2011/12 to 2018/19." 2018.
- ⁴ "Value Beyond the Dollars and Cents: International Students' Contributions to Canada and Their Need for Supports." 2018. Canadian Alliance of Student Associations.
- ⁵ "Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations - Section 186(v)." 2019. Department of Justice.
- ⁶ "Average Undergraduate Student Tuition, Domestic." 2017. Canadian Association of University Teachers.
- ⁷ "Average International Undergraduate Student Tuition." 2017. Canadian Association of University Teachers.
- ⁸ "Average Graduate Student Tuition, Domestic." 2017. Canadian Association of University Teachers.
- ⁹ "Average International Graduate Student Tuition." 2017. Canadian Association of University Teachers.
- ¹⁰ "Economic impact of international education in Canada – 2017 update." 2017. Global Affairs Canada, Roslyn Kunin & Associates, Inc.