

Fact Sheet: The Crisis in Nova Scotia's Post Secondary Education System

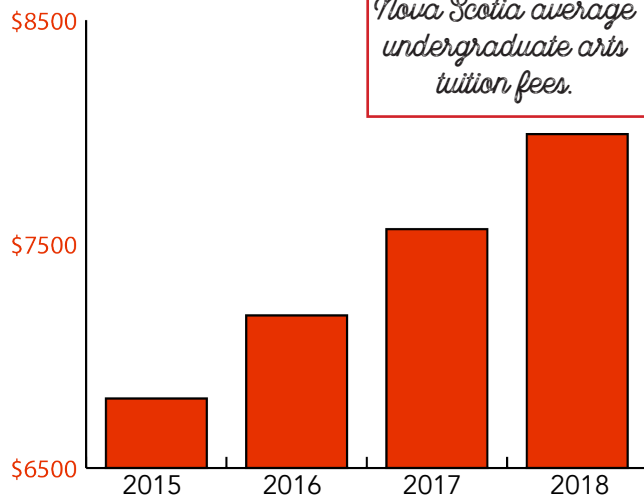
CRISIS IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Despite being a cornerstone of our communities there has been no vision or policy for access to post-secondary education.

Since the 1990's, average undergraduate tuition fees in Nova Scotia have increased by 272%. For professional programs tuition fee increases have been even more relentless, fees for dentistry have increased by 932%.

CRISIS IN NOVA SCOTIA

Students in Nova Scotia have been subjected to the implementation of the most regressive tuition fee policies in the country. In 2015 the current government, in an unprecedented move, allowed institutions to conduct a "market-reset" of tuition fees. This resulted in tuition fee increases of an average of over 20%, far surpassing the national average of \$6,838. The government also chose to completely deregulate tuition fees for out-of-province students, graduate and professional studies programs, and continued deregulation for international students. This year students in Nova Scotia are feeling the full impact of these increases.



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students are being leaned on to prop up Nova Scotia's failing post-secondary system. Nova Scotia has double the national average of international students, and has flagged them as key economic drivers in the province. Yet students are being under-supported and overcharged for attending post-secondary education institutions. International students pay an average of 3.5x the tuition fees than domestic students and continue to face some of the most aggressive tuition fee increases.

The last MOU resulted in average tuition fee increases of over 20%

This government has already allowed for disastrous tuition fee increases for all students, so what is next?

THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is an agreement signed between the provincial government and CONSUP – the Council of Nova Scotia University President's, that dictates university funding, tuition fees, amongst other things. The current MOU will expire March 31, 2019, and the government has indicated they are interested in signing a new agreement that will stand for the next 5 years. This negotiation is happening between the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, Labi Kousoulis and the President's of the 10 Universities and Nova Scotia. Despite previous MOU processes including students, the **students and the public have been shut out.**

Students have raised concerns about the transparency of CONSUP, which is not a public body, as they hold meetings that are not minuted and are exempt province's FOIPOP regulations. University presidents have failed to make their intentions for the next MOU public.

This means that ***the future of post-secondary education is being decided by 11 people behind closed doors.***

The MOU has failed students before:

- The MOU is supposed to keep universities in line by allowing the withholding of funding if regulations are contravened, but despite students raising concerns, this has never happened. The MOU has no public checks and balances.
- Students oppose the government withholding funding as a method of accountability as it would greatly impact students and faculties ability to learn and teach.
- The government and university presidents have consistently prioritized their relationship over what's best for students and Nova Scotians and honoring the MOU.

THE CASE FOR LEGISLATION

In many other provinces, like Manitoba and Alberta, decisions on post-secondary education and public fund allocation are made through legislation instead. This allows participation of all elected officials, instead of back-room negotiations with the Minister of the governing party.

Legislating tuition fees and funding also recognizes that post-secondary education affects all Nova Scotians. We deserve to have our elected representatives be able to debate and influence decisions about public institutions and funds.

FIGHTING FOR ALL NOVA SCOTIANS

The decisions made in this MOU will affect the future of post-secondary education for the next 5 years. Should we see a repeat of the last MOU process, ***students currently in Grade 8 could be looking at tuition fees in the area of \$10,500 per year for a bachelors of arts.***

This is a chance we are not willing to take.

Legislating tuition fees would include all of our elected officials in decisions affecting our public post-secondary system, instead of back-room negotiations with the Minister of the governing party.

PUBLIC SUPPORT

Over **70%** of jobs posted now require some form of post-secondary education, meaning that accessing PSE will only become more of a necessity.

88% of Nova Scotians support reducing tuition fees.

1/3 of Nova Scotian's said that in the past year, they or someone in their family did not attend university because it would mean taking on too much debt.

To take action or for more information visit: CFS-FCEE.ca/NS