

Harper meets with Canadian Alliance of Student Associations

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Post secondary education is limited to students who can afford it.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper met with student representatives from across Canada yesterday to discuss the effectiveness of the post-secondary education system in Canada. Arati Sharma, National Director of the Canadian Alliance of Students Associations (CASA) acknowledged last week's budget outlined some important steps to help Canadian researchers and students, but also reinforced the need to look forward to future steps to ensure that Canada's post-secondary system is accessible and effective.

“Unfortunately the federal government did not recognize the needs of students that are currently facing a cash and credit crunch due to last year’s recession,” says Sharma in a CASA press release. “Students lost \$500 million in income last year due to high unemployment but there were no new investments in the summer jobs program, no increases in the Canada Student Grants Program, and no changes to the student loan system so students can pay the bills they are facing today.”

Yesterday's meeting between members of CASA and over 130 Members of Parliament, Senators and government officials in Ottawa was to discuss, among other issues, critical changes to the student financial aid system. CASA says the majority of students are concerned about how they will pay for their education.

A “Canadian Student Survey: Summer Work and Paying for Post-Secondary Education” report released March 8, 2010 examines the strain of high youth unemployment rates, how students fund their education and how cash limitations affect their ability to pursue an education. The report commissioned by CASA and partners surveyed multiple institutions on university campuses across Canada in the fall term of the 2009/2010 school year.