

Q&A with Human Resources Canada

Spokesperson Murray Gross answers questions about the Canada Student Loan Program

By Erin Millar | April 11th, 2008 | 6:12 pm

Maclean's On Campus spoke with HRDC spokesperson Murray Gross earlier this week in regard to the annual report of the Canada Student Loan Program. Read the full article about the report [here](#).

Maclean's On Campus: *The annual reports have been coming out more often, but the program is still behind. What steps are being taken to get the annual reports out quicker?*

Murray Gross: The accusation that these reports are behind schedule is wrong. These reports are on time and 2005-2006 is the last year for which complete data and analysis is available. At present we're working to analyze data generated following the last student loan year, which ended on Aug 31, 2007. A more standardized layout, printing and translation process has helped to speed up the actual publishing time after the data is generated and analyzed.

MOC: *What steps have been taken to implement the recommendations from the student loan review? Can you give anything more specific about what will be done with the money ear-tagged for "modernization"?*

MG: Canadian students and their families need simple, effective financial assistance programs. The complexities and gaps in the current system are preventing students from obtaining financial help and affecting their decision to pursue post-secondary education.

Budget 2008 commits \$123 million over four years starting in 2009-10 to streamline and modernize the Canada Student Loans Program.- \$23 million over four years for a new service delivery vision that will expand online services and enable students to manage their loans online from application through repayment.- \$26 million over four years to narrow the gap between contributions from spouses and parents of students by reducing the expected spousal contributions, and to make federal student loans more attractive to part-time students.- \$74 million over four years to make the Canada Student Loans Program more responsive to the economic circumstances of borrowers, including those with disabilities, by providing greater assistance for those experiencing difficulty in repaying their loans.

Over the next year, the Government will work with provinces and territories to implement these new measures and ensure effective coordination with existing

programs.

Budget 2008 is also launching a new consolidated Canada Student Grant Program to take effect in the fall of 2009, to coincide with the wind-down of the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation. All federal grants will be integrated into one program that will provide more effective support to more students for more years of study, assisting Canadian families who struggle with the cost of higher education.