

## **Students feel federal money misdirected**

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**Canwest News Service**

**Thursday, March 26, 2009**

A student organization says the federal government needs a math lesson when it comes to distributing post-secondary school grant money.

The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations says it's concerned that the new grant program -- which takes effect this fall -- will overlook many needy students who don't fit into the categories set up for the program.

The grant program is intended to give out \$350 million to students for the coming school year, with that amount increasing incrementally to \$430 million by the 2012-13 school year.

The amounts will be distributed based on a student's income, or the income of their family.

Students deemed "low income" would receive a grant of \$250 a month, while a grant of \$100 a month will go to those categorized as "middle class." These thresholds vary across the country and will be determined by the cost of living in each province and size of the family of the students requesting assistance.

However, the student organization said income earned by students and their families is not a real indicator of need because many students have unique expenses associated with attending school that offset income.

The program "doesn't necessarily reach all the students out there who -- no matter what their income -- are forced to take out large amounts of debt to pursue a higher education," said Canadian Alliance of Student Associations national director Zach Churchill.

About 59 per cent of students now leave post-secondary school with an average debt of \$24,000.