

**Canadian Alliance
of Student
Associations**



Access & Opportunity



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CASA-ACAE.COM



The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) is an alliance of 26 student associations from coast-to-coast. CASA represents over 320,000 college and university students at the national level. CASA's members believe that Canada's post-secondary education system should be affordable, accessible, and of the highest quality. We believe that the federal government has an important role to play in higher learning and research. CASA is committed to working with decision makers at the federal and inter-provincial levels to promote the innovative policy solutions developed by our members.

Members

Acadia Students' Union

Alma Mater Society of the University of British

Columbia

Brock University Students' Union

Dalhousie Student Union

University of the Fraser Valley Students Union
Society

University of Prince Edward Island Student Union

Red River College Student Association

Saint Mary's University Student Association

Southern Alberta Institute of Technology Student
Association

St. Francis Xavier University Students' Union

St. Thomas University Students' Union

McMaster Student Union

Student Association of Mount Royal University

UNB Fredericton Students' Union

UNB Saint John Students' Representative Council

University of Alberta Students' Union

University of Calgary Students' Union

University of Lethbridge Students' Union

La Fédération des étudiants et étudiantes du
Centre universitaire de Moncton

University of Waterloo Federation of Students

University of Western Ontario Student Council

Wilfred Laurier University Students Union

Graduate Student Association - University of
Waterloo

Mount Allison Students' Administrative Council

Athabasca University Graduate Student

Association

Kwantlen Student Association

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CASA Recommends

the federal government implement the following balanced, affordable solutions to make college and university education better for students and Canada:

Prioritizing Access

- Amend the Canada Student Loans Program's (CSLP) assessment of borrower assets to exempt ownership of one vehicle per-student, which will promote participation for rural and suburban students.
- Give graduate students access to needs based grants within the Canada Student Grants Program, to make Canada more competitive with other international jurisdictions.
- Further amend the assessment of borrower assets to eliminate the expected parental income contribution through an annual 25% reduction of expected contributions over the next four fiscal years to ease the burden on Canadian families and acknowledge diverse family backgrounds.

Access for Aboriginal Canadians

- Lift the 2% funding cap on the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP), allocate funding to support the backlog of students, and provide additional funds to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) for program administration to help thousands more Aboriginal peoples succeed in post-secondary education.

Copyright that Supports Innovation

- Create a free market for academic materials by ending the private tax on books paid by students and other consumers, saving \$30 million each year for students at no cost to the government.
- Amend Canada's Copyright Act to allow for the practical use of digital materials shared between libraries, reflecting the modern needs of students and researchers.
- Allow for the circumvention of Technological Protection Measures for non-infringing purposes in Canada's Copyright Act to encourage innovation and quality in educational institutions.
- Eliminate the 30-day destruction clause on classroom lessons in Bill C-11 to make it more efficient for institutions to offer high-quality instruction, encouraging lifelong learning and discovery.

Building Global Connections

- Make Canada a welcoming destination for international students by eliminating the \$150 fee international students must pay to work off campus.
- Examine the feasibility of providing multiple-entry visas to all international students studying in Canada

The Post-Secondary Student Support Program: Taking Action on Canada's Commitments

Increasing educational outcomes among Canada's Aboriginal population is essential to supporting a group that faces challenges, while also enhancing Canada's overall fiscal strength. The Post-Secondary Student Support Program was intended to promote access to post-secondary education among the First Nations and Inuit populations.

Unfortunately it has not reached its goal. Due to a funding cap on the program, the number of Aboriginal students accessing post-secondary education through the program dropped 9% between 1996 and 2007, despite growing demand.³¹

Between 1971 and 2001 Canada's Aboriginal populations grew 322% compared to 37% in the non-Aboriginal population.³² Furthermore, First Nations populations are some of the youngest groups in Canadian society. Half are under the age of 25 and a third under the age of 14.³³ First Nations unemployment remains almost three times the rate for non-Aboriginals, and they make 17% less in median salary.³⁴

Investing in First Nations education will increase tax revenues by \$3.5 billion per year and reduce government expenditure by \$14.2 billion annually by 2026.³⁵ Government must act now to ensure the educational needs of all Aboriginal Canadians are met to both benefit them and significantly improve Canada's fiscal situation.

- In 2008, 3,213 eligible students were denied funding and there is a backlog of 10,589 eligible students.

- Increasing post-secondary education access will help to close the gap employment and earnings gap between the aboriginal and non-aboriginal population.

- If Aboriginals had equal post-secondary attainment with non-Aboriginals, it would increase Aboriginal income by \$36.5 billion, tax revenues by \$3.5 billion and reduce government expenditure by \$14.2 billion per year. By 2026 this would mean a \$401 billion increase in cumulative income for Aboriginals, \$39 billion in cumulative tax revenue and a \$77 billion reduction in cumulative government expenditure.³⁶

\$401 Billion
cumulative increase to
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\$39 Billion
Increase in tax revenue

\$77 Billion
decrease in government
expenditure

CASA Recommends that the Federal Government:

- Lift the 2% funding cap on the Post-Secondary Student Support Program, allocate funding to support the backlog of students, and provide additional funds to AANDC for program administration to help thousands more Aboriginal peoples succeed in post-secondary education. Based on 2008 numbers, this would cost the government \$424 million.

Lack of Support for Improving First Nations and Inuit Access to Education

Seven in ten First Nations youth aspire to complete post-secondary education.³⁷ Unfortunately, the outlook for education and employment for this crucial group of young Canadians is not good.

The education of Canada's Aboriginal population is an integral component of Canada's continued economic success and cultural development. Apologizing to the former students of the Indian Residential Schools and endorsing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are good first steps, but there remain substantial challenges that need to be addressed.

- **First Nations unemployment is almost three times the national average.³⁸**
- **First Nations people earn 17% less in median salary than other Canadians.³⁹ This is symptomatic of lower rates of educational attainment.**
- **7.7% of adult Aboriginal Canadians have a bachelor's degree as compared to 23.4% of the non-Aboriginal population.⁴⁰**

7.7%
of Aboriginal Canadians
have a bachelor's degree
as compared to **23.4%**
of the non-Aboriginal
Population

First Nations unemployment
is almost **3x**
the national average



Photo 3

Canada has a moral obligation to its Aboriginal population. Studies show that by adequately supporting the Aboriginal population to achieve higher education levels the government could expect to see increases in tax

revenues of \$3.5 billion and an annual reduction in government spending of \$14.2 billion by 2026.⁴¹

Population and Progress

Between 1996 and 2006 Canada's Aboriginal Population grew nearly six times faster than the non-Aboriginal population.

⁴² Almost 1.2 million people reported Aboriginal identity in the 2006 census.

Compared to the non-Aboriginal population, Aboriginal Canadians are much younger. The median age of Aboriginal persons living in Canada is 27 compared to 40 for non-Aboriginals.⁴³ 36.2% of Registered Indians, those included in PSSSP, are under the age of 19.⁴⁴

Canada's average age is increasing. 16.9% of Canadian workers are over the age of 55, and the median worker is aged 40.⁴⁵ These numbers are increasing. Ensuring improved educational outcomes for this young, crucial community has the potential to address the generational labour gap.

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Removing the 2% Funding Cap for PSSSP on AANDC Funding

Lift the cap, fund the backlog, allocate money for administration and help Canada's youthful First Nations and Inuit populations flourish in post-secondary education

The PSSSP has potential. Completion rates among those who receive funding are at an all-time high. Unfortunately, because of the 2% cap, fewer eligible applicants receive funding every year. From 1997 to 2009, recipients of PSSSP have dropped from 22,939 to 18,729. This is because rising education costs and eligible students have rapidly outpaced 2%.

In order for the PSSSP to effectively deliver on its policy goal, direct, immediate investment is required. As of 2008, \$424 million in increased investment is required to bring First Nations post-secondary attainment up to national levels. \$147 million would be directed to cover the real costs of the 22,303 students who currently receive funding, \$64 million for the 3,213 who are eligible but were denied funding, \$208 million to address the backlog of the 10,589 ready-to-enrol, and \$5 million for 280 new students to close the gap.

⁴⁶

The need for funding is very real. Without investment, the backlog will grow dramatically as the one-third of First Nations people who are 14 and under become of age to enrol in post-secondary education. There is too much opportunity for the government to remain inactive.

10,589
The number of students in the
backlog who are ready-to-enrol

3,213
students are eligible yet denied
funding

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