



RE: 17 January Ontario Government Announcement on Postsecondary Changes

Toronto — Today, the Ford Government [announced a set of changes to postsecondary policy](#) set to take effect in Fall 2019. These changes would:

1. Reduce tuition by 10%, negatively impacting university and college budgets, and potentially putting international students on the hook for shortfalls; and
2. Refocus the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP), making it more difficult for some students to access financial aid and for all students to pay off their loans; and
3. Make the payment of all non-tuition fees optional for students as part of a project called the Student Choice Initiative.

The University of Toronto Students' Union (UTSU) is a strong advocate for the affordability of postsecondary education, but the changes proposed by the government include measures that undermine this mission. We believe these changes would have serious negative consequences for students across the province.

The UTSU is deeply concerned with the changes relating to non-tuition fees, or “ancillary fees”, which fund vital programs and services enriching the lives of students across the province. At the University of Toronto (U of T), ancillary fees fund departments like Student Life, Hart House and Sports and Recreation, as well as student clubs, service groups, student societies, and student unions including the UTSU. The risk of significant funding reductions, direct or indirect, would be grave and irrevocably change campus life.

The lives of students extend beyond the walls of the classroom, and the potential elimination of services that support that reality is concerning. For students, the risk of reduced funding to organizations that animate our campus is also a risk to the quality of campus life. The Student Choice Initiative threatens student groups that establish vital social and growth opportunities on campus, the UTSU's own services like U of T's campus food bank, and the organizations that provide equitable programming for our most disadvantaged students. In pursuing these changes, the government risks endangering the essential groups that make student life what it is.

The UTSU is committed to protecting the students of U of T and the organizations that serve them. We will be working with campus partners and other stakeholders across the province to ensure that changes are made in the best interests of students. We will keep students and the public informed as decisions are reached and as more information becomes available.

Yours in service,

The UTSU Executive

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About the University of Toronto Students' Union

Founded in 1901, the University of Toronto Students' Union (UTSU) is the official student government of more than 50,000 students at the University of Toronto. If you're a full-time undergraduate student at the St. George Campus or the Mississauga Campus, you're automatically a member of the UTSU. As a student government, we operate independently of the University and strive to be a democratic, member-driven organization.

The UTSU is led by a President and six Vice-Presidents, all of whom report to a council called the Board of Directors. The President, the Vice-Presidents, and the Board of Directors are all elected directly by the members.

The UTSU has two essential functions: 1) advocacy and 2) service provision. Our advocacy work includes lobbying the government and the university administration, organizing public education campaigns, and supporting student initiatives. Our services include grants for students in need, funding for student clubs, and the student health insurance plan. Finally, all of our work is guided by a commitment to equity.

Press Contact

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