



## **Ontario's College Students Need Support to be Part of Provincial Recovery**

*March 24, 2021*

**TORONTO, ON** – One year into the pandemic, college students are still in need of essential support from the Government of Ontario. This afternoon, the Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance, presented the *2021 Ontario Budget* that outlined the government's investments for this coming year. While the College Student Alliance (CSA) understands that this year's budget is focused on health care it lacks new and direct measures to assist college students.

"We certainly appreciate the funding the government has provided, especially in mental health," said Tori Arnett, President of CSA, "The government needs to address the systemic issues in the post-secondary sector; that means providing the funding that makes our institutions public again and no longer publicly-assisted."

The government announced four specific commitments towards post-secondary students, OSAP funding for Micro-credentials, virtual learning funding, a commitment to the existing investments into mental health, and institutional infrastructure funding. CSA appreciates that the government has acknowledged the challenges in re-training, mental health, and quality of education; but more needs to be done to provide immediate support to college students.

CSA would welcome new funding in the area of post-secondary mental health and would encourage increased annual funding health to ensure students' mental health needs are met past the pandemic. As well, CSA is hopeful that the government will continue to increase the annual funding received by post-secondary institutions to promote the financial sustainability of the post-secondary sector and affordable tuition for international students. Most importantly, as student financial struggles continue to rise, CSA would encourage new funding in the area of expanded OSAP grants, especially for Indigenous students.

College students will be an integral part of Ontario's post-pandemic recovery, the government must give them the assistance to accomplish this. A skilled student population with the required support to successfully graduate and enter the workforce is essential in the rebuilding of our province. If enacted, CSA's recommendations will help to ensure that college students are adequately supported to complete their programs and contribute to a brighter future for Ontario.

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**About College Student Alliance:**

College Student Alliance (CSA) advocates on behalf of Ontario college students in partnership with student leaders. Through our member student associations, CSA represents the collective voice of Ontario's college students.

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