



Response to Q3 Ontario Budget Update

Tuesday, February 15, 2022

TORONTO, ON – Yesterday, the Minister of Finance, Peter Bethlenfalvy announced the 2021-22 Third Quarter Finances report, which details information on Ontario’s projected 2021-22 fiscal outlook.

This report comes issued shortly after Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk’s report on the state of the college sector, and its heavy reliance on increasing international student tuition to compensate for decades long funding cuts from the Ontario government. These fees alone totaled \$1.7 billion last year, which was more than what the province provided to the colleges in funding grants.

In his report, Minister of Finance Bethlenfalvy indicates that while the projected deficit of \$13.1 billion for 2021-22 is an improvement on the 2021 Budget projections, the total expenditure to Colleges & Universities has largely remained unchanged.

Infrastructure Expenditures for Colleges remains consistent at \$893 million, while total expenditure for Colleges & Universities has increased by a small margin of \$8.7 million, to a total amount of \$10.7 billion.

College students, particularly international students, are continuing to face significant barriers to financial aid, work options, and mental health resources. The provincial government continues to employ troubling language when referring to international students, including the recent Bill 13, *Red Tape Reduction Act*, where the government refers to international students as, “vital to Ontario’s economy.”

While college enrolment for international students has risen 342% since 2013, per-student transfers and provincial operating grants to colleges are the lowest in the country. In fact, the provincial government contributes \$563 million less to Ontario’s colleges than international students.

CSA believes that if college students are to be part of the post-pandemic recovery the solution overall is that per-student funding and support must increase, this means reducing tuition and providing OSAP grants not loans, returning our “publicly-assisted” sector back to “public” and provide overall stability to the sector.

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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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