



MEDIA RELEASE

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Post-Secondary Education System Neglected Again In Liberal Budget

HALIFAX — Stephen McNeil’s Liberal Government has delivered a budget whose university component once again ignores the serious structural problems the post-secondary system faces.

Dr. Chris Ferns, president of the Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers (ANSUT), which represents over half the province’s university faculty, said, “the Liberal government’s funding increase of 1% constitutes an effective funding cut as costs, accounting for inflation, outstrip funding.”

Ferns continued: “This budget directly contradicts Premier Stephen McNeil’s agreement with a recent government commissioned report that universities are one of our province’s greatest assets. The growth of casual academic labour will continue under these conditions. Quality of education will suffer, and labour disputes will become more likely as the constituent bodies of our universities compete for a dwindling pool of available capital.”

Nova Scotia’s students, too, are hurt by this budget, as they face another 3% tuition hike, adding up to a staggering 12% increase in the last four years. The budget offers modest improvements but, as with the 1% funding increase to universities, any gains for students are effectively annulled by the hikes. The interest elimination program is a welcome measure, but given its eligibility requirements, it is not clear how the program improves upon the Graduate Retention Rebate, which was canceled as of January 1st of this year.

Nonetheless, ANSUT is pleased to see increased funding to programs like the Student Career Skills Development program, which supports non-profit jobs the province’s in high unemployment areas, and the Strategic Cooperative Education Incentive program, which helps businesses recruit and provide meaningful work experiences to university and community college students.

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Contact: Matthew Furlong, ANSUT Communications Coordinator
Tel: (902) 414-8578
mfurlong@ansut.ca

Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers

Evaristus 425
www.ansut.ca 166 Bedford Highway @ANSUT_Tweets
Halifax NS B3M 2J6