



University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union
16 Bancroft Avenue
Toronto, ON., M5S 1C1
info@utgsu.ca
www.utgsu.ca

University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union (UTGSU) Executives Demand Accessible Education and No More Broken Promises to Indigenous Peoples

TORONTO - Representatives from the University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union (UTGSU) call for accessible system of public post-secondary. Students across the country lobbied in Ottawa for National Lobby Week (February 6 to February 10, 2017) and in Toronto for Provincial Lobby Week (February 27 to March 1, 2017) meeting with Members of Parliament (MP) and Senators.

"Students are in Ottawa to send a clear message to the federal government that we want increased access to post-secondary education and no more broken promises to Indigenous peoples," said Cristina Jaimungal, the UTGSU External Commissioner. "We have a plan to make education accessible to all, now we need our government to commit to take action," added Suzanne Narain, the UTGSU Civics and Environment Commissioner. Students are calling for a shift from piecemeal reforms to universal access now.

At the federal level, students put forward three strategic proposals to transform public post-secondary education in Canada:

1. Eliminate tuition fees for all skilled trades and apprenticeship, college and university students, including international students, by restoring federal public transfers for post-secondary education;
2. Fulfill Indigenous peoples' right to education by funding all First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners through the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP); and
3. Strengthen Canada's research capacity by increasing graduate student funding.

At the provincial level, students highlighted a lobby document, *Impact with Investment*, outlining several key recommendations to improve post-secondary education including:

1. Progressively reducing, and eventually eliminating tuition fees for *all* students through a 50/50 cost-sharing model with the federal government.
2. Developing a four-year Strategic Student Success Fund to drive improvement and innovation in academic support services for students.
3. Earmark funding for mental health support services in college and university operating grants and create a Mental Health & Wellness Division within the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development.
4. Reintegrate international students into the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP).
5. Introduce culturally appropriate and trauma-informed trainings on indigenous realities, experiences and histories to post-secondary faculty, staff and administrators.
6. Invest in an Open Educational Resources Innovation fund to research and develop open access textbooks, course materials and programs.

"University of Toronto graduate students are not alone in their struggles with high tuition fees and rising student debt," said Narain. Jaimungal adds, "We must move towards a system of universally accessible post-secondary education so that everyone in this country has an equal opportunity to learn and succeed".

About the UTGSU

The UTGSU represents over 17, 000 graduate students studying at University of Toronto in over 85 departments. The UTGSU is united with more than 650,000 students across Canada as a member of the Canadian Federation of Students.

For more information or to arrange an interview, contact Cristina Jaimungal, at: external [at] utgsu [dot] ca