

CBC News

December 11, 2012 Tuesday

International students easy prey for immigration recruiters

CBC News

Vipul Patel thought that coming from India to study in Canada would be a good way to gain a foothold in a country he hopes will become his permanent home.

But nearly a year after making the move, the 23-year-old is frustrated, confused and not sure who to believe in the sometimes murky "and costly" world where ghost consultants mingle with legitimate agents wanting to help foreign students come to Canada.

"It's very hard for me to trust anyone," says Patel.

Patel's suspicions developed after he turned to Edu Edge, a Toronto-based consulting firm that, with the help of a subagent, was promoting "study and immigrate" packages to students in India.

Edu Edge isn't licensed to provide immigration consulting services, but its president, Naveen Kolan, says the firm hires such

services as needed by seeking out Quebec lawyers who can offer them.

The company also hires subagents and in this case, the agent may have overstated what it was able to deliver, Kolan says. Edu Edge has told the subagent to take down the online ads in question.

Complained to regulator

In his complaint to the Immigration Consultants of Canada Regulatory Council, the federal regulator launched last year by the federal government to crack down on unauthorized immigration representatives, Patel said he was made false promises about immigration timelines and the need for French to study and work in Quebec.

Patel wanted to enrol in an accounting course offered by the Lester B. Pearson School Board, the largest English-language school board in Quebec.

His complaint alleges he was given "false advertisement on Facebook"

promising that students could get permanent residency in 24 months and that no French would be required for residency in Quebec, misconceptions that Patel says were verbally reinforced.

"French is compulsory in Quebec. You need French in order to apply for [Quebec's skilled worker program,]" says Johnny Purohit, president of the Montreal-based registered consulting firm CIS Experts, who helped Patel file his complaint.

"Vipul was led to believe that he would get a three-year work permit if he studied in Quebec for two years, which is misleading" and it played a big role in his decision to come to Quebec to study here."

At Edu Edge, Kolan says the company advised its subagent to remove the ads "right away" after questions regarding them were brought to the company's attention.

Edu Edge tries to give "fair and accurate" information about the accounting pro-

gram and educational outcomes to students, Kolan said.

At the same time, he says, the company works with partners whose advertisements are "difficult for us to monitor" and who sometimes "resort to practices which are not standard practices."

Open letter

The Lester B. Pearson School Board has been using Edu Edge to recruit students from India for specialized accounting courses that are only offered to students from that country.

"We wanted to break into the Indian market. We'd done our investigation and [Edu Edge] seemed to be very thorough," says Carol Mastantuono, the board's international studies coordinator.

The board has had a good partnership with Edu Edge, she says, and is looking at extending its agreement with the group.

Still, Mastantuono told CBC News she would discuss the Patel complaint with Edu Edge.

"If it's proved that any company" and it's not just Edu Edge" any company or any organization that we dealt with was proven to be not on the up an up or there would be prob-

lems or difficulties with them, then we would move towards, absolutely, you know, nullifying the contract. There'd be no question about that."

The ICCRC wouldn't comment on Patel's complaint, which is still being reviewed, because of confidentiality rules. But it does acknowledge the difficulty international students can face, and has posted an open letter to Canadian colleges and universities on its website.

"We are asking Canadian educational institutions to protect international students by encouraging their recruiters to operate within Canadian laws," the letter says.

"It has come to our attention that foreign students are often victims of abuse and improper advice. Either they are being coerced into purchasing airline tickets at a higher fee, or they are threatened and intimidated by agents, especially when the students ask for a refund when applications are refused."

Fast-tracking students

The federal government has served notice it sees international students as an attractive immigration target.

In early November, Immigration Minister Jason Kenney announced plans

to fast-track foreign students and have more admitted as immigrants each year under the Canadian Experience Class.

Kenney made his announcement flanked by young foreign university students, noting "these are the kind of bright young people we are trying to recruit."

The government has also proposed changes to its International Student Program "in order to better protect international students and enhance Canada's reputation as a destination of choice for their studies," Citizenship and Immigration Canada said in an email.

More details on that are expected in the next few weeks. But in the meantime, not everyone is happy with the idea of promoting Canadian post-secondary education as an immigration tool.

Come for an education

Naomi Alboim, chair of the policy forum at the School of Policy Studies at Queen's University in Kingston, Ont., says international students should be coming here because they want an education, not necessarily because they see it as a quicker route to immigration.

"The transition from international student status to

permanent resident status should be a byproduct of students choosing to remain and being eligible to remain as opposed to the primary intent for why they're coming here as an international student."

Alboim says she's much more worried about students who are coming to vocational schools, language schools or other educational institutions, rather than international students attending Canadian universities.

Those students attending Canadian universities go through a screening process and receive an education that is generally very good, she says.

Whereas students at the other schools or institutions "may be exploited in the sense that they pay high fees but they're not getting the education they need.

"Those are the kinds of institutions that tend to use third-party recruiters, that

tend to in some cases promise the students the sky and can't deliver."

Not a packaged deal

Alboim says it's to the federal government's credit that it has proposed regulations that would require provinces to identify educational institutions that they think should be able to host international students.

As Brent Farrington, internal co-ordinator for the **Canadian Federation of Students**, says, more and more international students are running into trouble in Canada.

"It's a growing issue, obviously, with the number of international students increasing in Canada," he said.

Speaking generally about the subject, and not referring specifically to Edu Edge, Farrington said: "because the recruiters are paid essentially for fulfilling quotas, they make a lot of

promises, many of which are not true, to the international students they're recruiting."

"That's not to say that all recruiters are bad, but we've reached a level where the federal government is stepping in to adopt a law to require recruiters and agents to register with the government if they're providing advice on Canadian immigration - and that includes work permits, study permits and paths to permanent residency."

Farrington says recruiting agents who make promises that students will be able to immigrate into Canada once they have a degree "should receive hefty fines because that's not true."

"What we have is a situation in which international students have a great chance of being able to immigrate, but it's certainly not a packaged deal," he says.

The Leader-Post

December 17, 2012 Monday Final Edition

Regina, Saskatchewan: NEWS; Pg. A8

U of R budget worries

Kent Peterson,
The Leader-Post

I would like to respond to the Dec. 8 story about concerned faculty and staff from the University of Regina (U of R) writing to the university's administration about possible cuts to academic programming.

Our province's universities are facing significant budgetary constraints due to underfunding by our provincial government. In a province that can afford more MLAs and more statues, we ought to be embarrassed post-secondary education is left to wither on the vine.

U of R vice-president of external relations, Barb Pollock, advised that we all have to "tighten our belts". Belt-tightening is never ideal in a booming province, but when it must be done, it should be done equally. Students have done their fair share of the heavy lifting - this year alone, some U of R students faced tuition fee hikes of nine per cent and even more in auxiliary and man-

datory fee increases.

Faculty have also carried their fair share of the load. The U of R is currently in the midst of the largest wholesale austerity exercise in recent history and its sights are aimed at academic programs and faculty.

The university's senior administration, however, has been spared from belt-tightening. Amazingly, bonuses might still be in order for the university's highest-paid members! I don't think that is anybody's definition of belt-tightening.

The university's administration needs to get real and disclose its salaries and contracts, slash administration spending and take any notions of administration bonuses off the table.

Kent Peterson, Regina

Peterson is Saskatchewan representative,
Canadian Federation of Students.

Waterloo Region Record

January 9, 2013 Wednesday First Edition

LOCAL; Pg. B6

Student association leader paid six figures

Matthew Van Dongen,
News services

Sam Minniti is one of the highest-paid student association executives in Ontario.

The executive director of the McMaster Association of Part-Time Students was paid \$126,151 in 2011, according to the provincial public salary disclosure list.

The Hamilton Spectator polled other Ontario university student associations, but couldn't find one that paid a top staffer as much as Minniti, who has not responded to interview requests.

Many of his contemporaries are paid "much, much less," said Sandy Hudson, executive director of the University of Toronto's student union, which represents more than 40,000 full-time students.

"I make less than half that," she said of the \$126,151 figure. "All I could think when I saw that number was, 'Oh, my goodness.' People are talking about it."

While Minniti is not a university employee, he appears on the province's so-called "sunshine list" because McMaster processes the association's payroll.

The university is withholding collected part-time student fees

from the students' association while it probes "significant," but unspecified concerns with association spending.

Minniti is an experienced student advocate. Before he was hired by the association in 2005, he served as vice-president, president and speaker for the McMaster Students Union, which represents full-time students. He also worked at McMaster's Centre for Student Development, according to his LinkedIn profile.

But Hudson, a former Ontario chair of the **Canadian Federation of Students**, said she didn't know of any other student union staffer making six figures. They do exist, according to a consultant's report done for the McMaster Students Union.

The association that represents McMaster's 21,000 full-time undergraduate students is in the midst of a salary review for its full-time staff, said vice-president David Campbell. He said a 2009 report for the students' union showed salaries for top staff at 11 Ontario university and college student associations ranged from \$45,000 to \$118,000.

As an example, Wilfrid Laurier's full-time student union recently hired Roly Webster, a former university official, at a salary in the range of \$85,000 to \$110,000.

But full-time student unions tend to offer more services and oversee bigger budgets.

Campbell said the students' union stickhandles a \$13-million operating budget that covers 21 full-time staffers and 200 part-time staff. They provide services for 21,000 full-time undergraduate students, including child care, restaurants, copy shop, health education centre, newspaper and radio station.

He refused to reveal the salary range for the McMaster Students Union's general manager, but added "none of our employees make six figures."

By comparison, the part-time students' association represents 4,000 members and offers advocacy and counselling for part-time students, as well as student awards, bursaries and a resource centre. Its annual budget is unclear; the association website lacks budget and bylaw documents and meeting minutes.

Minniti appears to be the only full-time staff member for the part-time students' association, whereas many full-time student associations have several paid executives to share responsibilities.

The Hamilton Spectator

January 9, 2013 Wednesday First Edition

Ontario, Canada: LOCAL / NEWS; Pg. A1

MAPS chief's salary called 'ridiculous,' 'concerning' Minniti's pay among highest in province

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full-time student associations boast several paid executives to share responsibilities.

The Continuing Education Students' Association of Ryerson, which represents 16,000 students, has three full-time staff, said membership director Annie Hyder, but the top executive makes "in the \$40,000-plus range."

Hyder called a \$126,000-plus salary "ridiculous" and "concerning."

The Spectator hasn't been able to determine exactly how or when the position's salary has changed over the years. An anonymous letter outlining unproven allegations of MAPS mis-spending says the position paid \$60,000 a year prior

to Minniti's arrival.

Bruce Misch made less than that when he served as MAPS' executive director in 1999.

The Smithville resident and chef said he was "part-time office manager, part-time counsellor" while at the helm.

"Advocacy was a big thing, because part-time students have a lot of unique needs," he said, pointing to challenges such as child care and class scheduling.

Misch said the responsibilities of the executive director have likely grown over the years.

"Or maybe I was just really underpaid," he said, laughing.

The Guelph Mercury

January 9, 2013 Wednesday First Edition

LOCAL; Pg. A4

McMaster students' association director made \$126,151 in 2011

Matthew Van Dongen,
News services

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Canwest News Service

January 11, 2013 Friday

Federal government loses hard drive with information on more than half a million people

OTTAWA - The federal government has called in the RCMP on what could be one of the largest privacy breaches in Canadian history, after losing an unencrypted external hard drive containing the personal information of 583,000 Canada Student Loans borrowers.

The lost hard drive contained sensitive information - including names, social insurance numbers, dates of birth, addresses and loan balances - of more than half a million Canada Student Loans borrowers across the country between 2000-2006.

An employee with Human Resources and Skills Development Canada discovered the hard drive was missing in early November from an office in Gatineau, Quebec, but it took more than two months to investigate internally and ultimately report it publicly to Canadians on Friday.

No banking or medical information was included on the portable external hard drive, which was not approved for use by the federal government. (The file did not contain information of borrowers from Quebec, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, which manage their own student loan programs).

The information was being used to contact individuals for a survey and was saved onto the external hard drive as a backup storage option, according to federal officials. However, the information was not encrypted - an extra layer of security required by the government - but not followed in this case.

Human Resources Minister Diane Finley has notified the RCMP and federal privacy commissioner of the incident, and is promising stricter new protocols for the security and storage of personal information, following the second privacy breach in a few weeks.

The federal government, however, says it does not have any reason to expect criminal intent with the latest incident, or that the information has been accessed or used for fraudulent purposes. The personal contact information of 250 HRSDC employees was also on the hard drive.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada discovered the loss of personal information of 583,000 Canada Student Loans borrowers while reviewing a separate incident from late 2012 of a lost USB key that contained the personal information of more than 5,000 Canadians.

"I have expressed my disappointment to departmental officials at this unacceptable and

avoidable incident in handling Canadians' personal information," Finley said Friday in a news release.

"As a result, I have directed that departmental officials take a number of immediate actions to ensure that such an unnecessary situation does not happen again."

Employees at HRSDC are no longer permitted to use portable hard drives and unapproved USB keys are not to be connected to the network. The department will also conduct an immediate risk assessment of all portable security devices to ensure "appropriate safeguards" are in place.

All employees will also receive mandatory training regarding the handling of sensitive information, and "disciplinary measures" will be implemented for staff failing to follow protocols - although a spokesperson for the minister wouldn't say whether the employee in question has been disciplined.

On Nov. 5, the HRSDC employee discovered the external hard drive was missing and began searching for it, but it wasn't until Nov. 28 that the department security officer was notified.

On Dec. 6, HRSDC discovered that personal information of Canada Student Loans Program clients was on the hard drive. The department then notified the Office of the Privacy Commissioner on Dec. 14.

The incident was ultimately referred to the RCMP on Jan. 7 and details publicly released Friday - more than two months after the federal government first discovered a hard drive was missing.

Alyson Queen, a spokeswoman for the minister, said it took two months to notify Canadians of the privacy breach because it's a "lengthy and expensive process" to determine exactly what happened and be sure the information was actually lost.

HRSDC says it will attempt to contact all individuals whose information was lost and will send letters to those affected (if the government has current contact information). A toll-free number has been set up for Canadians to call to check if they are affected - 1-866-885-1866 - but the number won't be operational until Monday.

The RCMP confirmed Friday the matter was referred to the commercial crime section of A Division, the detachment responsible for investigations in the National Capital Region.

Cpl. Lucy Shorey wouldn't comment on specifics but said the process in a case like this involves evaluating the information provided by the complainant, in this case, HRSDC. The RCMP will conduct interviews to "determine the substance of the allegations," she said.

"If it is determined that an investigation is not warranted, the RCMP would likely confirm the complainant of its results," she said.

"If it is determined that an investigation is warranted, one would be initiated but in order to protect the integrity of the investigation, the event evidence, the privacy of those involved, we would not comment during the course of the investigation, and in most cases

only in the event of arrest and charges would we provide information to the public."

Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet, NDP deputy critic on HRSDC matters, said it's disappointing the government isn't following its own security protocols when handling sensitive personal information of Canadians.

"That's too dangerous to let especially that kind of information roam around," Boutin-Sweet said Friday.

She also can't understand why it took the government several weeks to notify Canadians of the privacy breach, when most people would want to react immediately to losing, for example, a credit card or social insurance number to help prevent identify theft.

"It would be nice to have a little transparency," she added. "Even a weekend is too long."

The Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada said Friday it is launching an investigation after being informed by HRSDC that a hard drive was lost.

"The assistant commissioner determined that there are reasonable grounds for a commissioner-initiated complaint against HRSDC to ascertain whether there has been a contravention of the Privacy Act," the watchdog agency said in a statement hours after the government released details about the breach.

A spokesman for the privacy commissioner said the average investigation takes about seven months and in this case, the commissioner's role is basically that of ombudsman.

Scott Hutchinson said officials will try to determine what happened. If they conclude a contravention had indeed occurred, a set of recommendations aimed at rectifying the situation may be drafted but Hutchinson noted they're not binding.

Adam Awad of the **Canadian Federation of Students** said government officials personally informed his organization of the breach Friday.

He called the loss of unencrypted information "frustrating," but welcomed the government's response.

"It seems they are taking this quite seriously," he said, adding he was pleased to learn both the privacy commissioner and RCMP have been alerted and that new security measures were put in place.

As for how long it took the government to inform Canadians of the breach, he was told that it was only just before the holidays that officials realized how much information was on the lost hard drive and that the response was "adequate given the time of year."

What the breach really highlights, he said, is the extent to which young people across Canada must go into debt to pay for school.

"It seems indicative of the enormity of the student loan system and how big it's gotten over the last decade that hundreds of thousands of students rely on student loans to go to school," he said.

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Examples of privacy breaches in Canada:

. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada reported last November that a USB key containing personal information, including the social insurance numbers of about 5,000 Canadians, went missing.

. The personal information, including the birth dates, driver's licence numbers and some telephone numbers, of some 553,000 New Brunswick voters was compromised when Elections New Brunswick accidentally sent it to politicians last spring.

. About 800 Ottawa pensioners learned in July that their names, birthdates, social insurance numbers and pension information may have been stolen when New York-based Towers Watson, the company that has evaluated the financial status of the city's superannuation fund for more than a decade, lost track of a hard drive while switching to a new computer system in the Philippines last spring.

. Staples Business Depot was chastised by the federal privacy commissioner in June 2011 for selling used computers, hard drives and USB sticks without first wiping them clean of data.

. Two surgery videos and 3,600 photos of wounds, lab specimens and pictures of dead infants, all labelled with the patients' names, and stored on an unencrypted portable hard drive went missing during an office move involving an Edmonton hospital in January 2011.

. Nearly 84,000 people who attended flu clinics in the Greater Toronto Area in 2009 learned their personal health information and health-card numbers were compromised after an unencrypted USB key was lost.

Canwest News Service

January 11, 2013 Friday

Feds lose hard drive containing data on than half a million student loan borrowers

Jim Bronskill

OTTAWA - A federal agency has lost a portable hard drive containing personal information about more than half a million people who took out student loans - prompting investigations by the RCMP and the national privacy watchdog.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada said Friday the device contained data on 583,000 Canada Student Loans Program borrowers from 2000 to 2006.

The missing files include student names, social insurance numbers, dates of birth, contact information and loan balances of borrowers, as well as the personal contact information of 250 department employees.

Borrowers from Quebec, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories during this time period are not affected.

No banking or medical information was on the portable device.

Human Resources Minister Diane Finley said she has called on the RCMP to assist with the incident, "given its serious nature."

"I want all Canadians to know that I have expressed my disappointment to departmental officials at this unacceptable and avoidable incident in handling Canadians' personal information," she said in a statement.

In addition, the office of the federal privacy commissioner announced Friday it would investigate.

It is too early to gauge the magnitude of the lapse, said Scott Hutchinson, a spokesman for the privacy czar. "Given the numbers the department has shared, it looks, at the outset, to be pretty big."

Human Resources is sending letters to affected people, for whom it has current contact information, to advise them on how to protect their personal information.

A toll-free number has been set up at 1-866-885-1866 (or 1-416-572-1113 for those outside North America) to help people determine whether they are affected. It will begin taking calls Monday morning.

"It's definitely unfortunate," said Adam Awad, national chairman of the **Canadian Fed-**

eration of Students, which received a briefing on the loss.

"It highlights how easy it is for information in today's age to be misplaced, to be misappropriated, to be stolen - if that's what the case was."

The group is "very appreciative" of the steps taken to deal with the breach, he added.

The federation was assured that federal officials who deal with social insurance numbers have been put on alert to watch for activity concerning the numbers of those whose files have been lost, Awad said.

The loss of the hard drive from an office in Gatineau, Que., came to light as the department looked into another breach - a missing USB key containing the personal information of more than 5,000 Canadians.

The privacy commissioner's office has already begun a probe of that incident, which was publicized last month.

Human Resources says that while there is no evidence any of the information in the latest breach has been used for fraudulent purposes, an extensive search for the hard drive continues.

In her statement, Finley said she had directed officials to take immediate action to ensure "that such an unnecessary situation" does not happen again.

She has requested that departmental employees across Canada receive information about "the seriousness of these recent incidents" and that they participate in mandatory training on a new security policy.

The new policy immediately bans portable hard drives within the department. In addition, unapproved USB keys are not to be connected to the computer network.

All portable security devices will be assessed for the risk they pose, to ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place.

New data-loss prevention technology - which can control or prevent the transfer of sensitive information - will also be introduced.

Finally, staff will be subject to disciplinary measures, including possible firing, should privacy and security codes not be followed.

Alyson Queen, a spokeswoman for the minister, said the Mounties were contacted Monday. "They will determine what further steps are required."

Waterloo Region Record

January 12, 2013 Saturday First Edition

NEWS; Pg. A3

Lost hard drive held personal data on student loan borrowers

Jim Bronskill,
The Canadian Press

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The Toronto Star

January 12, 2013 Saturday

NEWS; Pg. A6

RCMP looks into hard drive blunder **Personal information of 583,000 students gone since November**

The RCMP are looking into how a hard drive containing the personal information of 583,000 student loan borrowers, including social-insurance numbers, went missing from a Gatineau, Que., office in November last year.

Human Resources and Skill Development announced Friday that the external hard drive contained the private details of borrowers from 2000 to 2006.

Staff at the Quebec office noticed the hard drive missing on Nov. 5. Information on the hard drive, used as a back-up storage option, contained student names, dates of birth, social-insurance numbers, addresses and student loan balances from borrowers across Canada.

No banking or medical information was on the device, which included personal contact information of 250 department employees.

Quebec, Nunavut and Northwest Territories' borrowers were unaffected.

It wasn't until Dec. 6 that department staff found out what was on the hard drive, and the privacy commissioner was told on Dec. 14.

Adam Awad, chairman of the **Canadian Federation of Stu-**

dents, said this type of record loss was bound to happen.

Second in size only to the Canadian Pension Plan with respect to the money involved in a government program, Awad said the lost records are, "a side effect of this enormous system we've created."

Officials with the RCMP said Friday they have been asked to review the incident and determine if an investigation is needed. The investigative unit in Ottawa is handling the referral. Based on the evaluation of information, police may launch an investigation.

In a statement Friday, Minister Diane Finley said she was disappointed, calling it an "unacceptable and avoidable" incident in handling Canadians' personal information.

"As a result, I have directed that departmental officials take a number of immediate actions to ensure that such an unnecessary situation does not happen again," she said.

An official with the minister's office said the hard drive was an unencrypted device, which is against department protocol. When asked why the device - likely purchased and approved by higher-ups in the department - was used, communications

director Alyson Queen couldn't say.

A department spokesperson said in an email that it was determined during an initial investigation that "tracking of devices connected to the network, were inadequate."

This is the second time in as many months human resources department staff has lost personal information of Canadians. In late 2012, the department informed the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of a lost, unencrypted USB key that contained information on more than 5,000 residents.

"Neither were encrypted and neither were approved," Queen said. "The protocol wasn't followed and additional gaps are being closed in terms of the security policies at the department."

The department is sending letters to all individuals affected to let them know of the incident and what they can do to help protect their personal information.

Finley said new policies have been put in place so government staff is more diligent at protecting personal information. Portable hard drives are no longer allowed and unapproved USB keys are not to be connected to government networks.

National Post

January 12, 2013 Saturday All but Toronto Edition

CANADA; Pg. A11

Personal data on student loans lost 583,000 Canadians

Jim Bronskill,
The Canadian Press

OTTAWA - A federal agency has lost a portable hard drive containing personal information about more than half a million people who took out student loans -- prompting investigations by the RCMP and the national privacy watchdog.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada said Friday the device contained data on 583,000 Canada Student Loans Program borrowers from 2000 to 2006.

The missing files include student names, social insurance numbers, dates of birth, contact information and loan balances of borrowers, as well as the personal contact information of 250 department employees. No banking or medical information was on the portable device.

Borrowers from Quebec, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories during this time period are not affected.

Human Resources Minister Diane Finley said she has called on the RCMP to assist with the incident, "given its serious nature." In addition, the office of the federal privacy commissioner

announced Friday it would investigate.

It is too early to gauge the magnitude of the lapse, said Scott Hutchinson, a spokesman for the privacy czar. "Given the numbers the department has shared, it looks, at the outset, to be pretty big."

Human Resources is sending letters to affected people to advise them on how to protect their personal information. A toll-free number has been set up at 1-866-885-1866 to help people determine whether they are affected. It will begin taking calls Monday morning.

"It's definitely unfortunate," said Adam Awad, national chairman of the **Canadian Federation of Students**, which received a briefing on the loss.

"It highlights how easy it is for information in today's age to be misplaced, to be misappropriated, to be stolen -- if that's what the case was."

The group is "very appreciative" of the steps taken to deal with the breach, he added.

The federation was assured that federal officials who deal with social insurance numbers have

been put on alert to watch for activity concerning the numbers of those whose files have been lost, Mr. Awad said.

The loss of the hard drive from an office in Gatineau, Que., came to light as the department looked into another breach -- a missing USB key containing the personal information of more than 5,000 Canadians.

The privacy commissioner's office has already begun a probe of that incident, which was publicized last month.

Human Resources says that while there is no evidence any of the information in the latest breach has been used for fraudulent purposes, an extensive search for the hard drive continues.

In her statement, Ms. Finley said she had directed officials to take immediate action to ensure "that such an unnecessary situation" does not happen again.

She has requested that departmental employees across Canada receive information about "the seriousness of these recent incidents" and that they participate in mandatory training on a new security policy.

Kamloops Daily News

January 12, 2013 Saturday Final Edition

British Columbia: NEWS; Pg. B4

Federal agency loses student data

Jim Bronskill,
Canadian Press
OTTAWA

A federal agency has lost a portable hard drive containing personal information about more than half a million people who took out student loans -- prompting investigations by the RCMP and the national privacy watchdog.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada said Friday the device contained data on 583,000 Canada Student Loans Program borrowers from 2000 to 2006. The missing files include student names, social insurance numbers, dates of birth, contact information and loan balances of borrowers, as well as the personal contact information of 250 department employees. No banking or medical information was on the portable device.

Human Resources Minister Diane Finley said she has called on the RCMP to assist with the incident, "given its serious nature."

"I want all Canadians to know that I have expressed my disappointment to departmental officials at this unacceptable and avoidable incident in handling Canadians'

personal information," she said in a statement.

In addition, the office of the federal privacy commissioner announced Friday it would investigate. It is too early to gauge the magnitude of the lapse, said Scott Hutchinson, a spokesman for the privacy czar. "Given the numbers the department has shared, it looks, at the outset, to be pretty big."

Human Resources is sending letters to affected people, for whom it has current contact information, to advise them on how to protect their personal information.

A toll-free number has been set up at 1-866-885-1866 to help people determine whether they are affected.

It will begin taking calls Monday morning.

"It's definitely unfortunate," said Adam Awad, national chairman of the **Canadian Federation of Students**, which received a briefing on the loss.

"It highlights how easy it is for information in today's age to be misplaced, to be misappropriated, to be stolen -- if that's what the case was."

The Star Phoenix

January 15, 2013 Tuesday Final Edition

Saskatoon: FORUM; Pg. A6

Include students

Kent Peterson,
The StarPhoenix

On Friday, University of Saskatchewan president Ilene Busch-Vishniac fired a warning shot to the university community in the form of a three-page letter outlining significant austerity measures that are about to occur.

She presented her vision for massive cost-cutting - namely at the expense of academic programming - to save her institution \$20 million to \$25 million. The U of S now joins the University of Regina in systematically dismantling the academic structures of the two universities.

That our universities have to undertake such initiatives is a damning indictment of the provincial government's lack of priority concerning higher learning and the associated economic benefits.

The most disturbing part of Busch-Vishniac's letter is that the two task forces being set up to review university priorities will not include student representation. Such undemocratic and unrepresentative tactics deny the most obvious fact regarding austerity: Ultimately, it will be the students who - through higher tuition fees, increased debt and limited academic options - will shoulder the burden of cost-cutting and off-loading.

I urge the government to properly fund post-secondary education, and I urge Busch-Vishniac to learn from the mistakes of the U of R and include student representation and consultation in every aspect of the two task forces.

Kent Peterson
Saskatchewan representative
Canadian Federation of Students

Postmedia Breaking News

January 19, 2013 Saturday

ONLINE

Students want input in program review

Students at the University of Saskatchewan say they want their voices heard as the institution undergoes a massive program review that aims to slash \$25 million in spending.

The new plan will rank hundreds of programs and departments to determine potential cuts or mergers to campus offerings in the face of a \$44.5-million budget shortfall by 2016.

"We as students are in a very reactionary position. We don't know what's coming. We are left in the dark," University of Saskatchewan Students' Union (USSU) president Jared Brown said in an interview.

"It would be nice to know what is going on."

As students' union president, Brown sits on the university's board of governors and has been privy to some high-level discussions about the school's spending priorities, but he says he has not been told how the review process will work and the criteria involved.

The process - titled "TransformUS" - has just started so the criteria by which the programs will be ranked hasn't been developed, but similar plans at other universities have included factors such as demand and revenue versus cost. Members of task forces to be set up as part of the process will be drawn

from different areas of the campus.

Brown says since their education is at stake, students need to have input into how the programs are going to be ranked.

"Yes it's not going to be easy, it's not something that we are going to take lightly, but we know that our perspectives can help," Brown said.

The university says students will be involved.

"The task forces will solicit input, operate transparently and share their analysis, but without interest-based representation," U of S provost and vice-president of academics Brett Fairbairn said in a written statement. "Students can certainly be involved by providing input to the task force."

Some student groups have said the process doesn't allow enough time for student input. Kent Peterson, the **Canadian Federation of Students** Saskatchewan representative, says he wants the review to be pushed back at least a year to allow time for proper student consultation.

"This is about more than cost-cutting - it's prioritizing the functions of the university," said Peterson. "When you talk about prioritizing what the university does and how it functions, that involves students."

Student representatives sit on major boards such as presidential search committees.

Brown thinks they should be consulted in this process, especially in the early stages when the criteria for what will be cut is developed.

"I don't think that administration have the student perspective anymore. I think fundamentally, administrators lose the feel of what it means to be a student and that perspective is so key," Brown said.

Brown says he has heard from a lot of students - specifically from those in the arts and humanities programs - who are concerned about their education and what the pending cuts will mean for their departments.

"I would not doubt that there will be a lot of frustrated students when this is all said and done," Brown said.

The program rankings will be compiled into a report that will be made public in November.

U of S officials will then suggest cuts and changes that will be sent to university council and the board of governors for approval.

It is not yet known when the cuts will be implemented.

Canadian Press

January 22, 2013 Tuesday

Student expelled for hacking Quebec college system gets job offers

Nelson Wyatt, The Canadian Press

MONTREAL - Most students don't see any silver linings when they get expelled from school. Ahmed Al-Khabaz isn't one of them.

He's getting job offers from computer software companies - including one whose security flaw he found while rooting around in Dawson College's system.

"I think I'll move on," Al-Khabaz said Tuesday, adding he enjoyed attending Dawson College until he was kicked out in November.

"I'll take one of those job offers I've got and I'll apply to another English (junior college) in September."

Al-Khabaz says he has been offered employment by the president of Skytech Communications, which provides the software for Dawson's system. Another 10 or so offers are also on the table.

A Skytech spokesman was not immediately available for comment.

Al-Khabaz, 20, became persona non grata at Dawson after discovering a major security flaw in the school's computer system while working on a class project.

At a news conference on Tuesday, Dawson director-general Richard Filion acknowledged Al-Khabaz had found the flaw but said he was expelled after he repeatedly tried to gain access to areas of the college information system where he had no authorization.

Filion said the student was kicked out because he breached the college's code of professional conduct.

"Dawson College has the responsibility to instil the principles of proper conduct in the workplace so that employers hiring our graduates know they are responsible citizens and qualified workers who understand how to behave in a professional environment," Filion said.

Francois Paradis, the college's director of information services, said Al-Khabaz was warned after being sighted twice in Dawson's system before he reported the computer flaw. Paradis said Al-Khabaz was spotted again after being told about limitations on tests he could conduct after finding the flaw.

Dawson said it was speaking out because of what it called inaccuracies in a media barrage in the last 24 hours that has seen Al-Khabaz gain support from students beyond Montreal.

In Ottawa, Adam Awad, national chairperson of the **Canadian Federation of Students**, accused Dawson of being more interested in protecting its own image than guarding students' personal data.

"The administration chose to punish the whistle-blower in hopes that the problem would quietly go away," Awad said as he called for Al-Khabaz to be reinstated.

Filion said Dawson considered pushing for criminal charges against Al-Khabaz but the institution decided to deal with the matter on an academic level and leave any further action to Skytech.

Speaking to reporters after Dawson's news conference, which he attended as a member of the audience, Al-Khabaz rejected the college's version of events. He said it concentrated on "the negative stuff."

"I was just scanning the software because I was scared for our data," he said.

The student said he also asked for permission to do the later scan when he was told he was not authorized to carry out the task.

He said he had three meetings with college officials and explained what he was doing.

"I really wanted to help," said Al-Khabaz.

He rejected the college's characterization of his activity as an attack, calling the allegation "false."

"A smart man would hide his identity if he was going to do that," he said, pointing out he never tried to conceal who he was or cover his tracks.

Postmedia Breaking News

January 23, 2013 Wednesday

CANADA

Student expelled after he discovered flaw in school's data security was warned twice, college says

Dawson College, the school that expelled 20-year-old student Ahmed Al-Khabaz after he discovered a vulnerability in the college's data security has responded to the public and online outcry after the story was reported in the National Post.

Al-Khabaz, 20, became persona non grata at Dawson after discovering a major security flaw in the school's computer system while working on a class project.

At a news conference on Tuesday, Dawson director-general Richard Filion acknowledged Al-Khabaz had found the flaw, but said he was expelled after he repeatedly tried to gain access to areas of the college information system where he had no authorization.

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Related

Montreal student expelled after finding data security threat receives job, scholarship offers while college refuses to reinstate him

Pupil expelled from Montreal college after finding 'sloppy coding' that compromised security of 250,000 students personal data

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A Skytech spokesman was not immediately available for comment.

With files from National Post Staff

The Vancouver Province

January 27, 2013 Sunday Final Edition

WORKING; Pg. A39

Sky's the limit for expelled student

MONTREAL

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Times Colonist

January 27, 2013 Sunday Final Edition

CAPITAL & VAN. ISL.; Pg. A3

Rallying students focus on social stigma

Judith Lavoie,
Times Colonist; CP

The face of racism is familiar to Camosun College student Simka Marshall, and the daily struggle with stigmatization is one reason she hopes the Idle No More movement will change the perceptions of Canadians.

"We need to end social stigma, which is really damaging," said Marshall, a member of Ahousaht First Nation and one of the student organizers of an Idle No More rally and march that drew more than 250 people to the B.C. legislature on Saturday.

She hopes the Idle No More movement will help lead to that change.

"I would just like indigenous people to be recognized and respected, and for others to start to treat us like people," the 19-year-old said in an interview.

Marshall said she was shocked when she first started studying at Camosun College to find people

instantly assumed she came from a background of poverty and alcoholism.

"There's so much generalizing," she said.

Those stereotypes are reinforced by inequalities, said Megan Marshall, the aboriginal students liaison for the **Canadian Federation of Students B.C.**

"In Canada, only eight per cent of aboriginal persons hold a university degree, compared to 23 per cent of non-aboriginal people," she said.

"Access to education is just one example of the many challenges aboriginal people in Canada face."

There is a need to empower indigenous women as Idle No More heads into its next phase, rally organizers said.

Women and young people will take the movement forward, said Cole Sayers, a University of Victoria student.

"A lot of times, because of

the Indian Act, patriarchy has really decimated the role of women," he said. "We need a nation-to-nation relationship, and the role of women is so important."

Demonstrators waved signs, ranging from Omnibus Bill C-45: Confuse Us To Control Us to comments about Prime Minister Stephen Harper, and appealed to the government to recognize and act on the Douglas Treaties - which cover approximately 925 square kilometres of land around Victoria, Saanich, Sooke, Nanaimo and Port Hardy - and turn around the history of colonialism.

Demonstrators also urged supporters to not listen to predictions that the Idle No More movement could falter.

"Our weapon of choice is the drum," said speaker Donna Cook.

Another Idle No More event is planned for today at noon. A flashmob will march down Government Street from Centennial

Square to the legislature, reading passages from the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.

CONFUSION REIGNS ABOUT AIMS: POLL

Canadians remain confused by aboriginal efforts to improve the relationship between First Nations and the rest of Canada, a poll suggests.

The Canadian Press/Harris-Decima telephone survey, released last week, found that four out of 10 respondents said they are both familiar with and sympathetic to the goals and aims of the Idle No More aboriginal

movement.

The survey also suggests that the more people know about the goals of the movement, the more supportive they become.

Almost two in three respondents to the poll who said they were aware of the movement's goals expressed sympathy for it, with Atlantic Canadians and British Columbians most likely to be supportive.

"This suggests to me that if Idle No More can continue to raise their profile and understanding of what they stand for, their influence can only grow," said Harris-Decima chairman

Allan Gregg.

The telephone survey of 1,000 people was carried out between Jan. 17 and 20 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

GRAPHIC: / A man wielding a sign takes part in Saturday's Idle No More rally at the legislature.; Lyle Stafford, Times Colonist; To the beat of a drum, a chorus of Idle No More demonstrators marches along Government Street on Saturday. Another event is planned for noon today.

Postmedia Breaking News

February 7, 2013 Thursday

ONLINE

Friday, Feb. 8: Low taxes far from top concern for young, skilled workers

Re: Wave goodbye to skilled labourers, Opinion, Feb. 4

Andrew Wilkinson is woefully misguided in asserting that young skilled workers are opposed to paying more income tax in British Columbia.

Unlike the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' (CCPA) study that he refutes, Wilkinson doesn't rely on data, but rather on anecdotes from the 1960s, and his own ideology, to measure the opinions of young skilled workers. The fact is young people want to work where there is a good standard of living with public services on which their families can rely.

Graduates seek accessible child care, good public schools and comprehensive public transit.

A decade of tuition fee increases under the B.C. Liberals, record high student debt and policies that emaciate public services are precisely how we keep taxes in B.C. artificially low.

The good news is that there is room to grow the tax base to improve public services. The CCPA's research shows that the majority of British Columbians, especially young people, are ready for that conversation.

IAN BOYKO,

Research and communications officer,
Canadian Federation of Students-BC

Andrew Wilkinson takes issue with our recent report Progressive Tax Options for B.C. He claims the tax increases we model would harm the economy and result in wealthy people fleeing the province.

I will grant Wilkinson this: It does bother me that the late great George Harrison likely had different views on taxes that I do (Gerard Depardieu not so much). But let's make tax policy based on evidence and not anecdote.

Our CCPA report offers up a host of reform ideas, and models 16 scenarios for raising provincial income taxes in an equitable manner.

Notably though, even under the "highest tax" scenario we model, B.C. income taxes would remain the lowest, or second lowest, in Canada for everyone with an income up to \$120,000.

Right up to individuals with taxable income of \$150,000, all the tax options we model generate income tax increases of two per cent or less of income. To suggest such options would have significant economic consequences or result in skilled

labourers leaving the province is far-fetched.

SETH KLEIN,
B.C. director,
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

NDP critique of BC Hydro policy doesn't hold water

Re: NDP projects billion-dollar loss for BC Hydro, Feb. 5

John Horgan's argument that BC Hydro is losing millions of dollars over private power purchases is disingenuous and misleading.

BC Hydro is not buying \$92/MWh power and selling it at \$35/MWh into the open market.

Rather, the 20+ year fixed price contracts for green power are used to supply renewable, reliable power to the core market. These long-term power contracts shouldn't be confused with the spot market, which is trading below \$40/MWh, but has been as high as \$1,100/MWh in recent history.

Contracting for long-term fixed price power is a prudent way for BC Hydro to hedge its future requirements.

Total reliance on the spot market for energy shortfalls is

The Vancouver Sun

February 8, 2013 Friday Final Edition

EDITORIAL; Pg. A10

Low taxes far from top concern for young, skilled workers

Ian Boyko,
Vancouver Sun

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Ian Boyko
Research and communications officer,
Canadian Federation of Students-BC

Canadian Press

February 12, 2013 Tuesday

Ontario tuition grant not going to students who need it, has to go: Tories; Liberals defend 30 per cent tuition grant

Maria Babbage, The Canadian Press

TORONTO - Newly minted Training, Colleges and Universities Minister Brad Duguid is giving an "F" to a Progressive Conservative proposal to scrap a 30 per cent break on post-secondary tuition.

But he's not shooting down the Opposition's idea to tie student aid to those who get good marks.

It's part of their "colleges first" plan to skew enrolment towards colleges rather than universities in an effort to groom graduates for the job market.

Too many students are going to university, when they could be considering careers in skilled trades, said Tory Leader Tim Hudak.

"Across Ontario today, there are far too many students who have degrees and big debts and they're back on dad's couch, they've got no job to go to," he said.

"At the same time, we have a great number of jobs in the skilled trades, but nobody that's able to take them on."

Duguid said he's open to looking at those ideas, but getting rid of the tuition grant his government created isn't going to happen.

"If their plan is to take \$40 million out of the pockets of middle- and lower-income students, to me that's a non-starter for our students, that's a non-starter for our system that would defeat the purpose of trying to make our system more accessible," he said.

But the program has failed in its objective, said Tory critic Rob Leone, a former assistant professor of leadership and journalism at Wilfrid Laurier University in Brantford, Ont.

"Two-thirds of Ontario students don't qualify for the grant," he said.

"It's not going to students who actually need it, for example, single parents who are going back to school after raising their kids don't qualify for the grant."

Student aid should be given to those who are hitting the books and can show they're using the money to get an education that will help get them employment, he said.

The government shouldn't judge which students will do well later on in life based on their marks in college or university, said New Democrat Gilles Bisson.

"I would remind you that people like Einstein didn't do so well in mathematics when they went to university," he said.

"Some of the highest achievers in our society could be people who didn't have good marks in college or university. So I think that's, to me, not something that makes a lot of sense."

Among their proposals, the Tories want to allow and encourage colleges to offer three-year degrees and expand the dual-credit program, so students can earn credits in high school and college at the same time.

Credits should be easily transferred between colleges and universities, so college students can move directly to a university if they choose, Hudak said.

The Council of Ontario Universities said it welcomed the recommendations, noting that there are already 500 credit transfer arrangements.

A spokeswoman for the council said they involve almost all publicly funded colleges and universities, but didn't know the exact number.

But the Ontario division of the **Canadian Federation of Students** was less than enthusiastic. Rather than improve the quality of post-secondary education and make it more accessible, the Tory proposals would do the opposite, said chairwoman Sarah Jayne King.

"The Tory plan would continue to shift the burden for funding education onto the backs of students and their families, while forcing institutions to do more with less," she said in a release.

The Tories also proposed online post-secondary education to give access to students who can't afford to go to a campus - something the Liberals had promised but have yet to deliver.

The Conservatives also want to have teachers spend more time in the classroom and be rewarded for good teaching as well as strong research.

The ideas were among the trial balloons the Tories are floating in a series of so-called "white papers." But they aren't official party policy.

Duguid's willingness to listen to opposition ideas on education was a common refrain among Premier Kathleen Wynne's new cabinet. Many of the ministers seemed to be reading from the same script, striking a more conciliatory tone about building bridges with the opposition.

Education Minister Liz Sandals was more diplomatic in rejecting another Tory proposal to make extracurricular activities part of a teacher's job description.

Former Tory premier Mike Harris had a task force that looked at that years ago, she said.

"The reason they didn't get implemented at the time were that they weren't terribly practical," said the former school board trustee.

"The whole concept of paying for extracurricular is problematic."

Many public school teachers have put the kibosh on such voluntary activities, outraged over the government's decision to impose new two-year contracts that cut benefits and most of their wages.

Sandals promised to make extracurriculars her top priority, but was vague on how she could entice teachers to bring them back.

"This isn't really about negotiating extracurriculars," she said. "It's about we need to improve the relationship."

Windsor Star

February 13, 2013 Wednesday Final Edition

NEWS; Pg. C8

Ontario tuition grant not going to students

Maria Babbage,
The Canadian Press
TORONTO

Ontario's newly minted Training, Colleges and Universities Minister Brad Duguid is giving an "F" to a provincial Progressive Conservative proposal to scrap a 30 per cent break on post-secondary tuition.

But he's not shooting down the Opposition's idea to tie student aid to those who get good marks.

It's part of their "colleges first" plan to skew enrolment towards colleges rather than universities in an effort to groom graduates for the job market.

Too many students are going to university, when they could be considering careers in skilled trades, said Tory Leader Tim Hudak.

"Across Ontario today, there are far too many students who have degrees and big debts and they're back on dad's couch, they've got no job to go to," he said.

"At the same time, we have a great number of jobs in the skilled trades, but nobody that's able to take them on."

Duguid said he's open to looking at those ideas, but getting rid of the tuition grant his government created isn't going to happen.

"If their plan is to take \$40 million out of the pockets of middle-and lower-income students, to me that's a non-starter for our students, that's a non-starter for our system that would defeat the purpose of trying to make our system more accessible," he said.

But the program has failed in its objective, said Tory critic Rob Leone, a former assistant professor of leadership and journalism at Wilfrid Laurier University's Brantford, Ont. campus.

"Two-thirds of Ontario students don't qualify for the grant," he said.

"It's not going to students who actually need it, for example, single parents

who are going back to school after raising their kids don't qualify for the grant."

Student aid should be given to those who are hitting the books and can show they're using the money to get an education that will help get them employment, he said.

The government shouldn't judge which students will do well later on in life based on their marks in college or university, said New Democrat Gilles Bisson.

"I would remind you that people like Einstein didn't do so well in mathematics when they went to university," he said.

"Some of the highest achievers in our society could be people who didn't have good marks in college or university.

"So I think that's, to me, not something that makes a lot of sense."

Among their proposals, the Tories want to allow and encourage colleges to of-

fer three-year degrees and expand the dual-credit program, so students can earn credits in high school and college at the same time.

Credits should be easily transferred between colleges and universities, so college students can move directly to a university if they choose, Hudak said.

The Council of Ontario Universities said it welcomed the recommendations, noting that there are already 500 credit transfer arrangements.

A spokeswoman for the council said they involve almost all publicly funded colleges and universities, but didn't know the exact number.

But the Ontario division of the **Canadian Federation of Students** was less than enthusiastic. Rather than improve the quality of post-secondary education and make it more accessible, the Tory proposals

would do the opposite, said chairwoman Sarah Jayne King.

"The Tory plan would continue to shift the burden for funding education onto the backs of students and their families, while forcing institutions to do more with less," she said in a release.

The Tories also proposed online post-secondary education to give access to students who can't afford to go to a campus - something the Liberals had promised but have yet to deliver.

The Conservatives also want to have teachers spend more time in the classroom and be rewarded for good teaching as well as strong research.

The ideas were among the trial balloons the Tories are floating in a series of so-called "white papers." But they aren't official party policy.

Duguid's willingness to listen to opposition ideas on education was a common refrain among Premier Kathleen Wynne's new cabinet. Many of the ministers seemed to be reading from the same script, striking a more conciliatory tone about building bridges with the opposition.

Education Minister Liz Sandals was more diplomatic in rejecting another Tory proposal to make extracurricular activities part of a teacher's job description.

Former Tory premier Mike Harris had a task force that looked at that years ago, she said.

GRAPHIC: Frank Gunn, The Canadian Press; Ontario PC Leader Tim Hudak, left, speaks as PC Colleges and Universities critic Rob Leone speaks at Queen's Park in Toronto on Tuesday.

The Toronto Star

February 13, 2013 Wednesday

NEWS; Pg. A6

Hudak cracks whip on students

Tories want to tie loans to grades, push students toward college programs

Student loans should be tied to marks as an incentive to succeed in college or university, Progressive Conservative Leader Tim Hudak says in his latest policy paper aimed at a provincial election that could come later this year.

And with youth unemployment double the national rate of about 7 per cent, he says more young adults should be steered toward applied learning programs at community colleges, rather than universities, to improve their job prospects.

"There are far too many students who have degrees and big debts and they're back on Mom and Dad's couch with no job to go to," Hudak said Tuesday after presenting his 27-page policy paper on improving higher education.

He urged community colleges to offer more three-year degree programs with applied training in various fields and called for universities to work more closely with colleges on degree programs - something the Council of Ontario Universities said is already happening.

But the idea of tying student loans to marks - and Hudak's proposal to scrap the minority Liberal government's 30-per-cent tuition credit, saying two-thirds of students don't qualify - earned sharp criticism.

The **Canadian Federation of Students** warned of higher tuition fees and "surveillance measures" on student loans, while New Democrat MPP Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay) said both of the Tory concepts are foolish.

"People like Einstein didn't do so well (in) mathematics when they went to university," Bisson said.

"For us to presuppose how a student's going to do in the end ... I think is a pretty big step.

"The strength of our post-secondary system is to give youth the opportunity to go to college, go to university, and to do the best they can."

Newly appointed Training, Colleges and Universities Minister Brad Duguid didn't rule out the loans-for-marks proposal, but called the plan to scrap the tuition credits "a non-starter."

Tory MPP Rob Leone (Cambridge), his party's higher education critic and a former university professor, said financial aid for students should be tied to how well they do in their courses as a way of instilling "market discipline."

"We don't want to reward mediocrity; we want to reward merit," Leone said while presenting the white paper, which notes Duguid's Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities spends \$7.5 billion a year.

Funding for institutions should be tied to the rate at which graduates find jobs, the policy paper states.

"We want a return on our investment," Leone said, adding that colleges and universities would be encouraged to structure student aid rules and benchmarks for grades.

GRAPHIC: Tory Leader Tim Hudak, left, is joined by MPP Rob Leone for the release of a Tory white paper.

Canadian Press

February 20, 2013 Wednesday

NSCAD University future in doubt as pressure builds to get fiscal house in order; Future of Nova Scotia art university in doubt

Aly Thomson, The Canadian Press

HALIFAX - The future of Canada's oldest independent arts university has been cast into uncertainty as it contends with growing pressure to cut costs, increasingly tense labour negotiations and talk of merging programs with other schools.

NSCAD University, formerly the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, has cut jobs, eliminated some classes and raised tuition fees in recent years in an effort to get its fiscal house in order. And more belt-tightening is expected despite outcry from faculty and students.

The Nova Scotia government has asked the cash-strapped school to submit a three- to five-year sustainability plan in exchange for about \$1.3 million to cover its deficit this fiscal year, says NSCAD's acting president, Dan O'Brien.

The province has provided funding in the past to pay off the school's deficits. But this time, the government has asked NSCAD to devise a plan by March 15 that aims to pay down its \$18 million debt, reduce classroom space and explore affiliations with other schools, O'Brien says.

He says that is puzzling because provincially funded studies that are looking at NSCAD's spatial needs and possible affiliations with Dalhousie University and Saint Mary's University won't be completed until later this spring.

"The wisdom of asking us to project conclusions that precede the completion of the studies escapes us," he says.

"We have every intention in attempting to comply, but we want to make abundantly clear that we will not be able to meet the conditions that they have laid down in the time allotted."

The government declined to confirm details of the proposal but said it wants NSCAD to come up with a plan to address its financial problems.

"The province is committed to the continued success of NSCAD as an excellent and autonomous arts university," Advanced Education Minister Marilyn More said in an email.

"There are significant financial challenges to be overcome, which were identified as early

as three years ago. Some progress has been made and we have always been clear about what we expected from NSCAD. I have confidence that the board and senior management will provide the leadership needed to ensure NSCAD's future."

But Karin Cope, a professor of art history and critical studies, said the government's demands make it difficult for the 126-year-old school to remain independent.

"Part of our labour here is to persuade the provincial government that they can't turn this particular apple into a plum," Cope said.

"They're not really going to reap more and better results by changing the nature of what NSCAD is."

Cope, an organizer of a group called the Friends of NSCAD, said she hopes the government will consider working together to come up with a plan to pay off the debt without cutting staff or selling the school's Granville campus in downtown Halifax.

"Further attrition is going to be damaging and is dramatically going to affect our ability to attract students and keep them at NSCAD."

Alvin Comiter, president of NSCAD's faculty union, said morale among the school's staff has been dwindling as pressures from the government intensify.

"The government is putting a gun to our heads," Comiter said.

The union, which represents about 110 full- and part-time faculty members, is in contract negotiations with the university. Those talks hit an impasse last week, and Comiter has warned that picket lines could be set up March 6.

"When we signed our last 18-month contract, we thought that we would be negotiating a new contract with a clearer picture of what the future of NSCAD would look like," he said.

"We still have no idea what's going to be forced upon the university."

Elise Graham, a fifth-year student at the university and the provincial chairwoman of the **Canadian Federation of Students**, said her peers are "worried."

She said students are calling for staffing levels and programs to be kept.

NSCAD has also been tasked with finding a new president, but O'Brien said he wouldn't be surprised if he was asked to stay on beyond May 16, when his term ends, given the circumstances.

Canadian Press

February 27, 2013 Wednesday

Student group hails resignation of university vice-president as victory; University vice-president won't be replaced

The Canadian Press

REGINA - The **Canadian Federation of Students** says it is thrilled to hear of the resignation of Barb Pollock, vice-president of external relations for the University of Regina.

Spokesman Kent Peterson says the decision from university president Vianne Timmons reflects the concern that his group has been hearing from students on campus.

He says up until now, the university has been reluctant to cut any senior administration positions.

He says the university appears to now be admitting the administration is too big, and he regards Pollock's resignation as a victory for students.

Nobody from the school's management was available for comment.

However, the University has announced that her position, along with its salary of \$202,000 a year, will not be filled after Pollock steps down.

According to the university's website, Pollock had been responsible for "reputation management and relationship management" with the university's donors and alumni.

The university has been under pressure to cut its budget by three per cent over three years, roughly \$5 million a year.

Previous efforts to reduce spending have included merging or cutting seldom-used programs.

(CJME)

The Leader-Post

February 28, 2013 Thursday Final Edition

Regina: NEWS; Pg. A3

Resigning VP not being replaced

Emma Graney,
Leader-Post

As the University of Regina deals with the very real possibility of less cash from the government in next month's budget, a U of R vice-president has resigned.

Barb Pollock, VP of external relations, will finish up her 11-year stint with the university at the end of April. When she leaves, her position will not be filled.

University president Vianne Timmons said Pollock's decision to leave was "completely her own" and there is no ill will.

Pollock's departure comes as the U of R faces pressures from students and faculty to redirect funds from administration into academics.

The university is currently going through a full academic program review and, earlier this month, it got rid of nine existing programs while adding four others. All faculties were also asked to develop a budget in the event of no government funding increases (the province currently provides 59 per cent of the university's funding).

"With the budgetary concerns of the university, I want to look at realigning our vice-presidents' roles," Timmons said.

"I need to be able to demonstrate to the campus and the community that I'm looking at every efficiency possible and I'm ... taking this opportunity to do so."

Not filling Pollock's \$202,000-per-year position is one of the moves the U of R has made in recent years as it commits to trimming administrative costs.

Timmons said Premier Brad Wall has "made it very clear" next month's provincial budget will be a challenging one for the university, but that's something the institution has been preparing for.

"We've been working very hard to have efficiencies on our campus in preparation of ... what may be a few challenging years ahead," Timmons said.

"I would see this as a positive move by the university administration to say 'We're looking at every position quite seriously' ... and looking at how we can manage going forward with less investment in areas of administration."

"Any funds we have, we want to put into front line teaching, and that's the intent and principle we're designing our budget on."

The Saskatchewan component of the **Canadian Federation of Students** has applauded the decision to leave Pollock's position vacant for the time being.

"Senior administration salaries have been bloating at the University of Regina for many years, and we are pleased that the university will have one less vice-president to pay," federation spokesman Kent Peterson said in a media release.

As for how the university will deal with the loss of Pollock, Timmons said her departure would be "felt significantly" on campus.

"She's often been the spokesperson (for the university) and we'll have to look at how we manage those roles with external relations and external stakeholders," Timmons said.

"It will be a challenge for us, but it is absolutely a statement by me by not filling that position that I'm looking at administrative costs very carefully across the entire institution."

Postmedia Breaking News

February 28, 2013 Thursday

ONLINE

Resigning VP not being replaced

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Waterloo Region Record

March 4, 2013 Monday First Edition

NEWS; Pg. A1

Province may rein in tuition increases

Louis Brown,
New services

For the first time in seven years, Ontario will likely hold post-secondary tuition increases below five per cent - a nod to the fact that the hefty \$7,180 average undergrad fee now stands as the highest and fastest growing in Canada.

In an interview with the Toronto Star, new Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities Brad Duguid said that while the government has not yet made a decision on tuition, "extending the current framework (a five-per-cent annual cap the Liberals set in 2006) is not where my head is at right now.

"As the father of a Grade 11 and Grade 12 student, I'm keenly aware of the need to ensure affordability," said the Scarborough Centre MPP recently named to the post-secondary file.

Duguid also said he hopes to "make progress" on reining in extra fees many students face, sometimes just for waiting for their

student loan to come in before paying tuition.

Some speculate the province may let tuition rise by inflation plus one per cent, as a compromise between student groups calling for a freeze, student groups asking for a 30-per-cent drop over three years, and institutions that argue they need that five-per-cent tuition increase with Queen's Park cinching its belt.

Indeed, the province told universities and colleges to shave a total of \$40 million off spending this year, which spelled a \$5.2-million cut for the University of Toronto, for example, \$3 million less for York and \$1.8 million less for Ryerson and the University of Guelph, the Council of Ontario Universities says.

They're being asked to shave twice as much - \$80 million together - off next year's budgets.

Duguid acknowledged the fiscal challenges facing colleges and universities, but signalled that for now, student pocketbooks get

top billing.

"I'm confident we'll strike a balance that I hope will be supported by students and institutions, but I will be looking at this through the lens of parents and students first," said Duguid. "My goal will be to reach a balance that is fair to students, acceptable to post-secondary institutions and that focuses on ensuring both quality and affordability."

A decision can't come too soon for either side.

"The closer we get to April, the more challenging it is to plan," said Bonnie Patterson, president of the Council of Ontario Universities, whose 20 members argue they need five-per-cent tuition hikes to combat the lowest per-student grants in the country.

"There isn't a hope the government is going to put more money into play until they balance the books, but we already have the highest student-faculty ratio in the country at a time when we're trying to boost student supports for men-

tal health and increase experiential learning," said Patterson, adding some universities now offer certain courses only every other year because of staffing shortfalls.

"At some point, it all starts to fall apart, and we're broaching that point now," warned Patterson. "It all boils down to quality."

The **Canadian Federation of Students** in Ontario is pushing for a 30 per cent cut over three years - 17 per cent right away - to be paid for by scrapping a provincial education tax credit as well as the new 30-per-cent tuition rebate for students whose fami-

lies earn less than \$160,000 a year.

Students are "having a hard time stomaching increases so out of line with the cost of living," said Rylan Kinnon, executive director of the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, which wants a one-year freeze to give student budgets a break, then tuition hikes that match inflation.

"If the gap in affordability continues to grow," said Kinnon, "that's a concern for a province that wants to attract the best and the brightest."

Community colleges say

they, too, need the five-per-cent tuition raise because the province now pays less than half of their operating costs, said Linda Franklin, president of Colleges Ontario.

But because college tuition in Ontario is among the lowest in Canada and many students live at home rather than out of town, she said there is room to grow.

But the College Student Alliance noted Ontario's per-student grants for college students are \$6,066, well below the national average of \$9,450, so the government should pitch in before tapping students.

The Toronto Star

March 4, 2013 Monday

NEWS; Pg. A1

Province vows tuition hike 'balance' Undergrads may face increases below 5% this year

For the first time in seven years, Ontario will likely hold post-secondary tuition increases below 5 per cent - a nod to the fact that the hefty \$7,180 average undergrad fee now stands as the highest and fastest growing in Canada.

In an interview with the Star, new Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities Brad Duguid said that while the government has not yet made a decision on tuition, "extending the current framework (a 5-per-cent annual cap the Liberals set in 2006) is not where my head is at right now.

"As the father of a Grade 11 and Grade 12 student, I'm keenly aware of the need to ensure affordability," said the Scarborough Centre MPP, who was just named to the post-secondary file.

He also said he hopes to "make progress" on reining in extra fees many students face.

Some speculate the province may let tuition rise by inflation plus 1 per cent, as a compromise between student groups calling for a freeze, student groups asking for a 30 per cent drop over three years, and institutions arguing they need that 5-per-cent tuition increase with Queen's Park cinching their belts.

Indeed, the province told univer-

sities and colleges to shave a total of \$40 million off spending this year.

That spelled cuts of \$5.2 million for the University of Toronto, for example, \$3 million for York and \$1.8 million for Ryerson and the University of Guelph, according to the Council of Ontario Universities. They're being asked to shave twice as much - \$80 million altogether - off next year's budgets.

Duguid acknowledged the fiscal challenges facing colleges and universities, but signalled that for now, student pocketbooks get top billing.

"I'm confident we'll strike a balance that I hope will be supported by students and institutions, but I will be looking at this through the lens of parents and students first."

Welcome to the other education standoff facing new Premier Kathleen Wynne, between a cash-starved ivory tower and debt-weary students. A decision can't come too soon for either side.

"The closer we get to April, the more challenging it is to plan," said Bonnie Patterson, president of the Council of Ontario Universities, whose 20 members argue they need 5-per-cent tuition hikes to combat the lowest per-student grants in the country.

To Ryerson student Rachel Saunders, who paid \$8,670 in tuition for her third year in civil engineering, a higher fee would mean having to work more hours at her part-time job, which she already fears is dragging down her marks. "Once I've paid tuition and spent \$1,000 on books, I have hardly anything left for food and my Metropass," said Saunders, 21, who commutes from her mother's home in Markham.

The **Canadian Federation of Students** in Ontario is pushing for a 30-per-cent cut over three years to be paid for by scrapping a provincial education tax credit as well as the new 30-per-cent tuition rebate for students whose families earn less than \$160,000 a year.

Students are "having a hard time stomaching increases so out of line with the cost of living," said Rylan Kinnon, executive director of the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, which wants a one-year freeze to give students a break, then tuition hikes that match inflation.

Community colleges say they, too, need the 5-per-cent tuition raise because the province now pays less than half of their operating costs, said Linda Franklin, president of Colleges Ontario. But because Ontario college tuition is among Canada's lowest, she said there is room to grow.

The Mississauga News

March 4, 2013 Monday Final Edition

NEWS; Pg. 1

Ontario post-secondary tuition fee hikes likely under 5 per cent

Torstar Network

For the first time in seven years, Ontario will likely hold post-secondary tuition increases below 5 per cent - a nod to the fact that the hefty \$7,180 average undergrad fee now stands as the highest and fastest growing in Canada. New Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities Brad Duguid says that while the government has not yet made a decision on tuition, "extending the current framework (a 5 per cent annual cap the Liberals set in 2006) is not where my head is at right now. "As the father of a Grade 11 and Grade 12 student, I'm keenly aware of the need to ensure affordability," said the Scarborough Centre MPP. He also said he hopes to "make progress" on reining in extra fees many students face, sometimes just for waiting for their student loan to come in before paying tuition.

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a freeze, student groups asking for a 30 per cent drop over three years, and institutions that argue they need that 5 per cent tuition increase with Queen's Park cinching its belt. Indeed, the province told universities and colleges to shave a total of \$40 million off spending this year, which spelled a \$5.2 million cut for the University of Toronto, for example, \$3 million less for York and \$1.8 million less for Ryerson and the University of Guelph, according to the Council of Ontario Universities. They're being asked to shave twice as much - \$80 million together - off next year's budgets. Duguid acknowledged the fiscal challenges facing colleges and universities, but signalled that for now, student pocketbooks get top billing. "I'm confident we'll strike a balance that I hope will be supported by students and institutions, but I will be looking at this through the lens of parents and students first," said Duguid. "My goal will be to reach a balance that is fair to students, acceptable to post-secondary institutions

and that focuses on ensuring both quality and affordability." Welcome to the other education stand-off facing new Premier Kathleen Wynne, between a cash-starved ivory tower that sees tuition hikes as a funding lifeline, and debt-weary students who say they're paying more than their share. A decision can't come too soon for either side. "The closer we get to April, the more challenging it is to plan," said Bonnie Patterson, president of the Council of Ontario Universities, whose 20 members argue they need 5 per cent tuition hikes to combat the lowest per-student grants in the country. "There isn't a hope the government is going to put more money into play until they balance the books, but we already have the highest student-faculty ratio in the country at a time when we're trying to boost student supports for mental health and increase experiential learning," said Patterson, adding some universities now offer certain courses only every other year because of staffing shortfalls. "At some point, it all starts to

fall apart, and we're broaching that point now," warned Patterson. "It all boils down to quality." The **Canadian Federation of Students** in Ontario is pushing for a 30 per cent cut over three years - 17 per cent right away - to be paid for by scrapping a provincial education tax credit as well as the new 30 per cent tuition rebate for students whose families earn less than \$160,000 a year.

Chair Sarah Jayne King said the rebate excludes too many, from part-time, international and grad students to those entering post-secondary after being out of high school more than four years. But it's not enough just to freeze tuition, she said, because "it's skyrocketed at a rate that drastically outpaced inflation. I absolutely agree we need more government funding to improve quality," said King, who noted class sizes are growing, equipment needs updating

and "lots of things on our campuses are always broken." Students are "having a hard time stomaching increases so out of line with the cost of living," said Rylan Kinnon, executive director of the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, which wants a one-year freeze to give student budgets a break, then tuition hikes that match inflation. "If the gap in affordability continues to grow," said Kinnon, "that's a concern for a province that wants to attract the best and the brightest." Community colleges say they, too, need the 5 per cent tuition raise because the province now pays less than half of their operating costs, said Linda Franklin, president of Colleges Ontario. But because college tuition in Ontario is among the lowest in Canada and many students live at home rather than out of town, she said there is room to grow. "We need funds to keep programming up with the job mar-

ket so our grads can hit the ground running, especially as new fields open up like green energy. We have to be able to turn on a dime and make sure we have new curriculum and professors," said Franklin. "We believe 5 per cent more is manageable if combined with student aid." But the College Student Alliance noted Ontario's per-student grants for college students are \$6,066, well below the national average of \$9,450, so the government should pitch in before tapping students for a larger share. "We think a two-year freeze would make sense; after all, our faculty accepted a two-year wage freeze and they always say salaries are the single largest line in a budget," said Tyler Epp, the group's director of advocacy. "We don't want to see the cost of maintaining quality placed on the backs of students."

The Hamilton Spectator

March 4, 2013 Monday First Edition

Ontario: CANADA / WORLD; Pg. A8

Duguid eyes smaller tuition-fee hike New minister looking 'through lens of parents, students first'

Torstar News

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tutions arguing they need that 5 per cent tuition increase with Queen's Park cinching their belts.

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Duguid acknowledged the fiscal challenges facing colleges and universities, but signalled that, for now, students take priority.

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The Guelph Mercury

March 4, 2013 Monday First Edition

Ontario: LOCAL; Pg. A4

Province looks to rein in post-secondary tuition hikes

Louis Brown,
New services

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In an interview with the Star, new Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities Brad Duguid said that while the government has not yet made a decision on tuition, "extending the current framework (a five per cent annual cap the Liberals set in 2006) is not where my head is at right now.

"As the father of a Grade 11 and Grade 12 student, I'm keenly aware of the need to ensure affordability," said the Scarborough Centre MPP, who was just named to the post-secondary file.

He also said he hopes to "make progress" on reining in extra fees many students face, sometimes just for waiting for their student loan to come in before paying tuition.

Some speculate the province may let tuition rise by inflation plus one per cent, as a compromise between student

groups calling for a freeze, student groups asking for a 30 per cent drop over three years, and institutions that argue they need that five per cent tuition increase with Queen's Park cinching its belt.

Indeed, the province told universities and colleges to shave a total of \$40 million off spending this year, which spelled a \$5.2 million cut for the University of Toronto, for example, \$3 million less for York and \$1.8 million less for Ryerson and the University of Guelph, according to the Council of Ontario Universities. They're being asked to shave twice as much - \$80 million together - off next year's budgets.

Duguid acknowledged the fiscal challenges facing colleges and universities, but signalled that for now, student pocketbooks get top billing.

"I'm confident we'll strike a balance that I hope will be supported by students and institutions, but I will be looking at this through the lens of parents and students first," said Duguid.

"My goal will be to reach a balance that is fair to students, acceptable to post-secondary institutions and

that focuses on ensuring both quality and affordability."

Welcome to the other education standoff facing new Premier Kathleen Wynne, between a cash-starved ivory tower that sees tuition hikes as a funding lifeline, and debt-weary students who say they're paying more than their share.

A decision can't come too soon for either side.

"The closer we get to April, the more challenging it is to plan," said Bonnie Patterson, president of the Council of Ontario Universities, whose 20 members argue they need five per cent tuition hikes to combat the lowest per-student grants in the country.

"There isn't a hope the government is going to put more money into play until they balance the books, but we already have the highest student-faculty ratio in the country at a time when we're trying to boost student supports for mental health and increase experiential learning," said Patterson, adding some universities now offer certain courses only every other year because of staffing shortfalls.

"At some point, it all starts to fall apart, and we're broaching that point now," warned

Patterson. "It all boils down to quality."

To Ryerson student Rachel Saunders, who paid \$8,670 in tuition for her third year in civil engineering, a higher fee would mean having to work more hours at her part-time retail job, which she already fears is dragging down her marks.

"I could be doing better at school if I didn't have to work, but I get about \$10,000 in student aid and grants and once I've paid tuition and spent \$1,000 on books I have hardly anything left for food and my Metropass," said Saunders, 21, who commutes from her mother's home in Markham.

"And there's always other expenses, too, like lab coats and steel-toed boots for when we test concrete. I know a lot of people like me who work to help pay for school."

The **Canadian Federation of Students** in Ontario is pushing for a 30 per cent cut over three years - 17 per cent right away - to be paid for by scrapping a provincial education tax credit as well as the new 30 per cent tuition rebate

for students whose families earn less than \$160,000 a year. Chair Sarah Jayne King said the rebate excludes too many, from part-time, international and grad students to those entering post-secondary after being out of high school more than four years.

But it's not enough just to freeze tuition, she said, because "it's skyrocketed at a rate that drastically outpaced inflation. I absolutely agree we need more government funding to improve quality," said King, who noted class sizes are growing, equipment needs updating and "lots of things on our campuses are always broken."

Students are "having a hard time stomaching increases so out of line with the cost of living," said Rylan Kinnon, executive director of the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, which wants a one-year freeze to give student budgets a break, then tuition hikes that match inflation.

"If the gap in affordability continues to grow," said Kinnon, "that's a concern for a province that wants to attract the best and the brightest."

Community colleges say they, too, need the five per cent tuition raise because the province now pays less than half of their operating costs, said Linda Franklin, president of Colleges Ontario. But because college tuition in Ontario is among the lowest in Canada and many students live at home rather than out of town, she said there is room to grow.

"We need funds to keep programming up with the job market so our grads can hit the ground running, especially as new fields open up like green energy. We have to be able to turn on a dime and make sure we have new curriculum and professors," said Franklin.

"We believe five per cent more is manageable if combined with student aid."

But the College Student Alliance noted Ontario's per-student grants for college students are \$6,066, well below the national average of \$9,450, so the government should pitch in before tapping students for a larger share.

Torontoist

March 5, 2013 Tuesday

BLOG POST

Newsstand: March 5, 2013

Mar 05, 2013 (Torontoist: <http://torontoist.com/> Delivered by Newstex) Busy news day today. We've got everything from casinos to cats! In the news: Casino developers continue to woo Toronto; Ontario tuition increases could lead to protests; U of T has a new president; a depressing new report on the health future for the province's kids; Toronto is full of unlicensed driving schools; and ermahgerd, the internet helps a Toronto kitch high-end casino facility[1] in Toronto that would include restaurants, a spa, hotel rooms, and a convention facility. Meanwhile, MGM has given several city councilors private briefings on its vision for a Toronto casino[2] as part of its extensive lobbying to develop at Exhibition Place. Mayor Rob Ford's executive committee votes on considering casino proposals later this month. Ontario's student leaders aren't ruling out protests in reaction to comments from Brad Duguid, Minister of Colleges and Universities, indicating that tuition fees in Ontario will rise again[3]

next year-albeit by less than five percent. Representatives from both the **Canadian Federation of Students**-Ontario and the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance indicated that protests could result from another fee increase if there is demand from their members, but nothing is currently planned. The **Canadian Federation of Students** released last month a report calling for a 30-percent drop in tuition fees over the next three years. The University of Toronto has selected a new president[4]: Meric Gertler, currently the dean of arts and science. Gertler arrived at U of T in 1983 as a geography professor and will succeed David Naylor, who has been president since 2005 and is expected to leave his post sooner than the planned date of December. A new report from Ontario Healthy Kids Panel asks the provincial government says that without major changes like banning the marketing of junk food to children younger than 12, 70 percent of today's children are estimated to be overweight[5]

as adults. The report also calls for more support for pregnant women and infants, a better food environment for children and families, and healthier communities that encourage activity. Deb Matthews, Ontario's Minister of Health, said yesterday that she will chair a working group to examine the implementation of the report's suggestions. A Toronto Star investigation found that dozens of driving schools in Toronto offer in-car lessons to new drivers despite lacking the provincial authorization[6] to do so, and their lack of regulation leaves them completely outside of government oversight. Many of the schools sign a contract with one that is approved by the Ministry of Transportation, then offer their own unauthorized lessons on the side, the Star reported. Transportation Minister Glen Murray said after being shown the paper's findings that his ministry is taking steps to educate new drivers, schools, and instructors about laws regulating driver education. The internet proved its cat love

by banding together to raise money for a sick Toronto kitty[7]. A local couple found Tigress, a stray tortie, nearly frozen to death in front of their home in North York on January 23. They brought her in to a vet for treatment, but couldn't afford the rising bills, but an Indiegogo campaign has managed to raise the \$2,270 required to pay for her care thanks to help from the Watchcat Coalition. The coalition was founded to help a cat, Panda, who was shot by a pellet gun in the east end and later died. Tigress, thankfully, is now on her way to recover and looking for a new home. All together now: AWWWW.

[1]:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/mgm-lobbying-hard-for-exhibition-place-casino-resort/article9293913/> [2]: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/mgm-lobbying-hard-for-exhibition-place-casino-resort/article9293913/> [3]: [<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/education/u-of-t-new-prez-on-his-insider-status-i-can-hit-the-ground-running/article9256825/> \[4\]: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/education/u-of-t-new-prez-on-his-insider-status-i-can-hit-the-ground-running/article9256825/> \[5\]: <http://www.torontosun.com/2013/03/04/ban-junk-food-marketing-to-kids-under-12-panel-urges> \[6\]: \[http://www.thestar.com/news/investigations/2013/03/05/star_investigation_toronto_driving_schools_bending_the_rules_to_make_a_buck.html\]\(http://www.thestar.com/news/investigations/2013/03/05/star_investigation_toronto_driving_schools_bending_the_rules_to_make_a_buck.html\) \[7\]: \[http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2013/03/03/dying_cat_finds_salvation_online.html\]\(http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2013/03/03/dying_cat_finds_salvation_online.html\)](http://www.torontosun.com/2013/03/04/ontario-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

National Post

March 5, 2013 Tuesday

Financial Post Business Magazine; Dusty Wallet; Pg. 49

School Values

Garry Marr,
Financial Post

Getting an education is all well and good, but students have to be realistic about the debt they take on to do so

Just because the youth unemployment rate is double that of the general population doesn't mean education is a waste of money, but it's easy to understand why students might think so. The **Canadian Federation of Students** says the average graduate hits the workforce with a debt load of \$27,000. It doesn't help that tuition is rising faster than inflation, climbing another 5% this academic year, according to Statistics Canada, while inflation has been well below the Bank of Canada's 2% target.

The whole idea of borrowing money -- or leverage -- is to use it to get a better return on your money. That's a difficult prospect given the interest rates on student loans charged by the government. Ottawa, which is responsible for about 60% of the loans, asks for 250 basis points above prime for those that take a variable rate. That's a whopping 5.5% based on current rates.

Two years ago, a Toronto-Dominion Bank study showed double-digit returns for an investment in education, but chief economist Craig Alexander acknowledges the study might be dated based on job numbers today. "If you experience a bout of unemployment early in your career, it does back up your wage growth over time," says Alexander, adding that those people who experience early unemployment can have lower income than their fully employed counterparts by 9% over one to two decades. Economists even have a name for this backup. It's called scarring. People can even end up on a different career path or just never be able to catch up on lost wages.

Before you say forget about taking on debt for education, remember there has been virtually no job growth over the past decade for employment outside of those professions that require a post-secondary degree. "I still think education is the great enabler," Alexander says. "You may be at a disadvantage compared to other generations, but it's still a higher rate of return than without any post-secondary

education."

Of course, the expected debt load makes choosing a particular degree that much more important. How you use debt is paramount in any financial discussion and some degrees are simply going to pay more than others. Carleton University professor Saul Schwartz, who has followed the student debt issue for more than a decade, says the message is getting through to students. More than one humanities program has been closed because of lack of demand. He says some students have become very rational, but he still sees students "borrowing \$30,000 for a film studies degree" with no job in sight. "We still have a mismatch between the education that people are getting and the jobs that are available," Schwartz says. "But there is an adjustment going on."

Taking on debt for an education is not a waste of money when students are realistic. That said, the debt has to be kept as low as possible and students have to target a job that will recoup the investment.

Postmedia Breaking News

March 9, 2013 Saturday

CANADA

Marginalized and on the defensive, university conservatives forced to grow tougher

Of the many young stereotypes who wander the quadrangles of Canadian universities - the anguished poet, the math nerd, the charity cheerleader, the stoned philosopher - few seem as awkwardly marginalized as the campus conservative.

A bow tie among scarves, he affects an intellectual style that befits an older, wiser man. He is the inverse of the ageing hippie. Beset on all sides by people who put the liberal into liberal arts, he is counter cultural in a way the average starry-eyed proto-socialist can only dream of, and when he grows up and enters the real world, its toughness comes as a validation.

Darren Calabrese/National Post
Professor Janice Fiamengo

But what happens when the conservative stays within the academy, and tries to change it from inside?

The University of Toronto witnessed a case study Thursday night, when the Men's Issues Awareness Society invited Janice

Fiamengo, a University of Ottawa literature professor and columnist for American right-wing blogs, to argue the case against feminism.

Having won many big battles of equality, academic feminism has now turned to the petty ones of moral superiority, and has become, she said, empty, incoherent, dishonest, defensive, illiberal and foolish.

"The suspiciousness of feminism was once its strength and is now its weakness," Prof. Fiamengo said.

Naturally for the modern academic climate, criticizing feminism raises serious security concerns, and the venue was changed at the last minute from a classroom to a theatre with doors that campus security could easily manage. Last time this group hosted a speaker, police were called to defend a classroom from student protesters.

Some of the tension seemed overwrought. Although a crowd of black-masked activists holding

Canadian Federation of Students placards jostled at the entrance, there were no protesters chained by their necks to the stage, as the University of Waterloo saw at a talk about native protests, nor mob violence. When someone pulled the fire alarm as Prof. Fiamengo's lecture was about to begin, it seemed almost quaint, like throwing spitballs, although the firefighters who responded in three trucks probably did not think so.

Chris Selley: Ron Paul gives Canadian conservatives a refreshing look at an ideologue

Sanctioned sex club events and Israeli Apartheid Week have some university students angry over what their money funds

Free speech at Canadian universities 'abysmal,' report says

Eventually, things got underway, as Prof. Fiamengo described how feminism pushes students toward a "smug sense of oppositionality, woundedness and bitterness," how "masculinist" became a

scholarly cuss word, and how this has fostered a legal culture - both family and criminal - that is stacked against men.

"There just aren't that many legitimate enemies around," Prof. Fiamengo said. Feminism "can't admit when its reform goals have been achieved, because to do so would be to radically weaken the claimed necessity of its continued existence."

Hers is the zeal of the convert. She used to be a feminist, worked in a rape crisis centre, marched in Take Back the Night, and was generally "full of passionate intensity," she said, quoting William Butler Yeats' poem The Second Coming, in which intensity is not a compliment.

As a young idealist, she would have criticized her future self by saying it was "disingenuous" to blame women's studies for failing to live up to some objective ideal of pure scholarship.

"I would have said there is no such thing as pure scholarship. All disciplines have vested interests. All carry the biases of their surrounding culture, whether it be the woman-hating, Eurocentric, white supremacist biases of Western countries, etc. I would have said women's studies is merely more

honest than the others in clarifying what its interests are," she said.

Darren Calabrese/National Post Professor Janice Fiamengo was asked to speak at the University of Toronto by the Men's Issues Awareness Society.

"Here I am now to say that I was wrong," Prof. Fiamengo said. "After 15 years working as a professor in a discipline that has been extensively shaped by feminist theory, I have come to the conclusion that much of what passes for women's studies scholarship today needs to be fundamentally re-thought. Academic feminism has lost its way. [and] become the institutional arm of a special-interest advocacy movement."

To say this did not go over well would be an understatement. To be sure, there was a strong contingent of people from father's rights groups, men's rights organizations, and the newly founded Canadian Association For Equality, all of whom applauded at all the expected times.

But this was a hostile crowd, and it revealed itself during the raucous question period, which pitted ranting questioners against a rudely dismissive emcee who kept cutting power to the microphone.

Prof. Fiamengo's talk was broad and provocative, typically conservative in tone and content, but almost comically short on evidence. It was primarily based on two short course-calendar descriptions of women's studies courses. The first used loaded terminology ("hegemonic masculinity") to describe the latent violence in the "phobic cultures" of the West. The second, about gender in Islam, offered a curiously gentle overview, focused on "ideal" expression of gender at the expense of lived reality."

It was on this question of evidence that Prof. Fiamengo was noticeably tripped up, claiming in response to a question that children do better with both a father and mother, which was shouted down as "atrocious" "heteronormative" "bullsh-t," in that it fails to account for healthy children of gay couples.

Her attempt to cite McGill bioethicist Margaret Somerville - who has argued in favour of children's rights to a father and mother, preferably their biological ones - prompted one young man in the front row to howl through his cupped hands that Prof. Somerville is just a philosopher.

For an academic setting, this seemed an unfair smear of philosophy. But

this was more than a lecture. It was a battle in the campus culture wars, in which liberals are confident that others have their backs, but conservatives have become so defensive they adopt the very victim pose they like to decry in others, according to Amy Binder, a sociologist at UC San Diego.

In her book *Becoming Right: How Campuses Shape Young Conservatives*, published in January with co-author Kate Wood, she reports that in any given first year class in the U.S., there are roughly equal numbers of self-identifying liberals and conservatives, something like 20% each. Of the conservatives, about 60% are male.

"Both are minorities, in the same proportion," she said, but it is the conservatives who feel it most acutely, and co-opt the lingo of oppressed minorities for themselves. National conservative organizations promote this idea that universities are "absolutely awash with liberals who try to indoctrinate everybody," she said.

The trend has inspired some resistance, including right-wing pundit David Horowitz's Academic Bill of Rights, which seeks to

protect students "from the imposition of any orthodoxy of a political, religious or ideological nature."

FilesMichael J. Fox (R) as the insufferable young Republican Alex P. Keaton on *Family Ties*.

Research out of the University of British Columbia suggests there is a liberal-bent to the average university professor, but the indoctrination and marginalization claims are less solid.

There is also something about the young conservative that can seem out of step with his time, a theme the actor Michael J. Fox explored to comic effect as the insufferable young Republican Alex P. Keaton on the TV comedy *Family Ties*.

"Basically, there are a lot of dweebs in the conservative movement, like a lot of oddballs," as several conservative students told Prof. Binder. This presents an image problem that some campus conservative groups try to solve by recruiting attractive young women to positions of prominence.

"There is an effort to beautify the movement and have sexy girls on the front line," Prof. Binder said.

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University is a place where dangerously divisive ideas can be safely hashed out in the respectful setting of a classroom, but it is not immune to the entrenched politics of the wider culture.

One response that Prof. Binder heard repeatedly in her survey of campus conservatives is that they take solace in what might be called the revenge of the nerds. Just as the high school science dork can take comfort in the prospect of a high-paying job in the future, so too does the campus conservative believe that he is getting a better education than the liberal cool crowd. Forced to hone arguments, do extra work and debate against the grain, they believe conservatives grow tough while liberals grow complacent.

Campus conservatives "think of themselves as having benefited immensely from having been conservative in a sea of liberals and moderates," Prof. Binder said.

If Prof. Fiamengo's nasty reception was any guide, they may be right.

National Post

March 9, 2013 Saturday National Edition

CANADA; Pg. A5

Revenge of the nerds

Forced to debate against the grain, university conservatives grow tougher

Joseph Brean,
National Post

Of the many young stereotypes who wander the quadrangles of Canadian universities - the anguished poet, the math nerd, the charity cheerleader, the stoned philosopher - few seem as awkwardly marginalized as the campus conservative.

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GRAPHIC: Darren Calabrese, National Post; Professor Janice Fiamengo was asked to speak at the University of Toronto by the Men's Issues Awareness Society.; Darren Calabrese, National Post; Firefighters respond to a pulled fire alarm at Toronto's George Ignatieff Theatre prior to a lecture arguing against feminism by professor Janice Fiamengo Thursday.

The Leader-Post

March 11, 2013 Monday Final Edition

Regina, Saskatchewan: NEWS; Pg. A8

U of R demands clear

Kent Peterson,
The Leader-Post

Regarding the March 8 story, "U of R board of governors chair unsure what council meeting sought".

University of Regina board of governors chairman Paul McLellan expressed confusion about what faculty and students want stemming from an historic University Council meeting. I am one of very few student members of council and was present at the meeting. Council was clear: it wants the university to deal with bloated senior administrative salaries; it wants the university to open the books, and; it wants the university to stop slashing academic programmes.

Where's the confusion?

Finally, was McLellan being facetious

when he wondered what students want in all of this, and how their concerns can be taken into consideration? McLellan was the chairperson of the board when a group of 15 students tried to attend a board of governors meeting to express their concerns. What happened? Students were locked out of their own boardroom and escorted away by security officers.

Further to that, every instance of students wanting to participate in any real way in the operation of their university has been blocked by senior administrators, including during the recent council meeting when students were denied the opportunity to fill their voting positions and then also denied voice at the meeting.

Kent Peterson, Regina Peterson is Saskatchewan representative, **Canadian Federation of Students**.

National Post

March 12, 2013 Tuesday

FINANCIAL POST MAGAZINE

Students have to be realistic about the debt they take on to get an education

This article appears in the March edition of the Financial Post Magazine. Visit the iTunes store to download the iPad edition of this month's issue.

Just because the youth unemployment rate is double that of the general population doesn't mean education is a waste of money, but it's easy to understand why students might think so. The **Canadian Federation of Students** says the average graduate hits the workforce with a debt load of \$27,000. It doesn't help that tuition is rising faster than inflation, climbing another 5% this academic year, according to Statistics Canada, while inflation has been well below the Bank of Canada's 2% target.

We still see a mismatch between the education people are getting and the jobs that are available

The whole idea of borrowing money - or leverage - is to use it to get a better return on your money. That's a difficult prospect given the interest rates on student loans charged by the government. Ottawa, which is responsible for about 60% of the loans, asks for 250 basis points above prime for those that take a variable rate. That's a whopping 5.5% based on current rates.

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Not all student loans qualify for interest tax credit

Canada must streamline education to turn degrees into jobs

New Canadians need to play catch-up on education, retirement savings

Before you say forget about taking on debt for education, remember there has been virtually no job growth over the past decade for employment outside of those professions that require a post-secondary degree. "I still think education is the great enabler," Alexander says. "You

may be at a disadvantage compared to other generations, but it's still a higher rate of return than without any post-secondary education."

Of course, the expected debt load makes choosing a particular degree that much more important. How you use debt is paramount in any financial discussion and some degrees are simply going to pay more than others. Carleton University professor Saul Schwartz, who has followed the student debt issue for more than a decade, says the message is getting through to students. More than one humanities program has been closed because of lack of demand. He says some students have become very rational, but he still sees students "borrowing \$30,000 for a film studies degree" with no job in sight. "We still have a mismatch between the education that people are getting and the jobs that are available," Schwartz says. "But there is an adjustment going on."

Taking on debt for an education is not a waste of money when students are realistic. That said, the debt has to be kept as low as possible and students have to target a job that will recoup the investment.

The Guelph Mercury

March 15, 2013 Friday First Edition

Ontario: EDITORIAL; Pg. A8

Being occasionally offended the price we pay to live in a free society

Faye Sonier

Every few years, city bus banner ads in Guelph trigger debate about free speech rights.

A few years ago, it was an atheist ad that read: "There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life." This year, it's a couple of ads from Alliance for Life Ontario. One ad depicts a fetus at 19 weeks of development and states, "This is a child, not a choice." The second includes images of fetuses with the message, "I'm a human being with potential, not a potential human being."

Coun. Ian Findlay shared on his blog that he had received complaints about the ads and posted one such anonymous complaint. The complainant argues that the ads are "highly inappropriate for public property", that as a woman she finds the ad offensive and that since abortions at 19 weeks are rare, the first ad is misleading.

And to the complainant, I

say "So what?"

We live in a pluralistic, multicultural society where no two citizens hold identical views, or are required to do so. We live in a constitutionally described "free and democratic society" that is characterized by freedoms of expression, conscience, association and religion, among others, guaranteed constitutionally in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

If, as a society, we fail to value the conversation that arises from an open marketplace of shared ideas, and if we were to appoint someone, such as the complainant, to judge which expressions should be banned according to her subjective standards of "offensiveness" or "misleadingness," there would be very little free speech indeed.

In fact, the complainant would in a short time also find herself and organizations that she supports muzzled from expression by another someone, somewhere, who might be offended by their beliefs,

expressions or advertising.

The Supreme Court of Canada dealt with this kind of advertising in 2009. The **Canadian Federation of Students** and the British Columbia Teachers' Federation wanted to place political advertising on Vancouver buses in the run-up to the 2005 provincial election. The city's transit authority refused.

Through a series of appeals, the case made its way to our highest court. The court found that the transit authority was a government entity, that the charter applied to its actions and, accordingly, to restrict reasonable advertising was to violate the charter's right to free expression.

The court found that bus ad space "allows for expression by a broad range of speakers to a large public audience" and that "like a city street, a city bus is a public place where individuals can openly interact with each other and their surroundings."

And, importantly for us all,

that "citizens, including bus riders, are expected to put up with some controversy in a free and democratic society."

Being occasionally offended is one of the small costs we pay to live in our society.

I don't like being ridiculed any more than the next person. Being an Evangelical Christian and also a pro-life advocate, I see my identity and beliefs belittled with surprising frequency. But would I sug-

gest that hostile anti-religionists or pro-choice advocates be silenced? Never. If they are silenced by the state, I soon will be, too.

Even though I have been offended and my feelings have been hurt by things said or published, I do care about the people who live in my community and my country.

I want to know what they believe and why they believe it. And when I'm passionate enough about the

issue in question, I'll take opportunities such as these to respectfully engage in discussion with them. I may challenge their beliefs, but they'll challenge mine as well.

This is both the difficulty and the simplicity of living in a free society. We don't agree on every issue, and we don't have to.

But hopefully we can agree on at least one thing: that the right to free expression is a right worth defending.

Postmedia Breaking News

March 20, 2013 Wednesday

PERSONAL FINANCE

Federal budget wish list - and a couple of pipe dreams

You can't always get what you want but maybe you can get a little what of what you need in Thursday's federal budget.

The real estate community might be a bit angry at Jim Flaherty, the finance minister, over his moves to squash discounting of mortgages, not to mention his tougher borrowing rules.

But there's some hope out there he'll give the sector little boost by eliminating capital gains on property donated to charity.

That tax break is at the top of the wish list for Jamie Golombek, managing director of tax and estate planning with CIBC Private Wealth Management.

Mr. Golombek would like to see "the elimination of capital gains tax on donations of appreciated real estate to registered charities."

That would be good news for anybody with a family cottage that has gone way up in value over the years, who doesn't want to face the tax hit and is ready to sell and make a large do-

nation.

Phil Soper, chief executive of Brookfield Realty Service, which has 17,000 brokers and agents, said the focus has to be on supporting small business.

"They produce the biggest bang for the buck," says Mr. Soper, adding incentives like insurance tax credits help create jobs.

Related

Flaherty budget to target tax loopholes, spare provincial transfers

Jonathan Kay: Our federal budgets have become yawners - and that's a good thing

Kelly McParland: Jim Flaherty recreates himself as nanny-state finance minister

Harper government's defence spending cuts raise spectre of another 'decade of darkness'

He also wants positive tax treatment on capital gains on the sale of small businesses to encourage new entrants.

"In general, a focus on government efficiency and general expense reduction is always welcome. Today's deficits are an unfortunate burden passed on to the working people of tomorrow. While they are manageable in today's world of ultra-low interest rates, they will reduce the standard of living of the next generation if not addressed now," says Mr. Soper.

Like many, the CEO wants to see a greater focus on skills training in Canada.

Students want jobs but they also remain worried about their debt which remains at record levels.

"[The government] should focus on dealing with student debt, which will contribute to long-term economic problems for Canada if left unchecked," said Adam Awad, national chairperson of the **Canadian Federation of Students**.

The group has already made a number of recommendations to Ottawa, including increasing the value and number of non-repayable grants available

to students. It wants a post-secondary education act in co-operation with the provinces, modelled after the Canada Health Act, accompanied by a dedicated cash transfer.

Laurie Campbell, executive director of Credit Canada, which deals with people in debt crisis, says tuition fees need to be lowered.

"But the most important thing is to create jobs," says Ms. Campbell.

Doug Porter, the chief economist with Bank of Montreal, agrees its important to refocus efforts on skills training. He also thinks it's time Ottawa eased up on policy constraining growth.

"My realistic wish would be for Ottawa to essentially

stay the course from a big-picture perspective with no major net new tightening in overall policy. Given the downgraded outlook for Canadian economic growth, the last thing we need is additional fiscal tightening loaded on top of the economy," said Mr. Porter.

There is always a gap between what people wish for and what they get but it doesn't mean they can't dream.

"Number one on my wish list would be to see the government transform the federal civil service pension plans into target benefit plans with a maximum employee/employer contribution of 18% of pay. This would level the playing field relative to what most Canadians can do in preparing for retirement,"

says Fred Vettese, chief actuary with Morneau Shepell.

Certified financial planner Ted Rechtshaffen, president of TriDelta Financial, doesn't hold out much hope for his wishes coming true either.

"What I would like to see - they never will do. I would like them to change the CPP formula so that those who contribute their whole life, and are married, don't lose as much as 100% of the CPP if they die young," he says.

"There should be a 50% survivors' benefit that gets paid to the spouse. Today, there is a one-time \$2,500 payment, and if the survivor already gets full CPP, then they receive \$0 more. The CPP essentially disappears."

The Star Phoenix

March 21, 2013 Thursday Final Edition

Saskatoon: NEWS; Pg. A9

Budget reaction

"One can always wish and ask for more. There are other projects that are coming down and we will wait. We got \$98.5 million a few years ago for the Circle Drive south. And if one says we should be No. 1 every year, I think other jurisdictions in the province are anxious for their programs too. And the premier and the government, they have an entire province to look after."

- Don Atchison, Mayor of Saskatoon

"Saskatchewan residents should be very concerned about the privatization agenda announced today through the budget that will see our hospitals, highways and schools privatized."

- Tom Graham, president, Canadian union of public employees Saskatchewan

"Overall, the budget seems to have found a balance between increasing specific capital expenditures and maintaining fiscal prudence on operational spending, and we expect that any of the min-

istries that are impacted by lower than normal increases in funding will be able to find new efficiencies, similar to how efficiencies must be found in the private sector during lean times."

- Saskatchewan chamber of commerce CEO Steve Mclellan

"The budget was much ado about nothing. Based on this budget, we're not clear how they will meet the goals of their 2020 plan. This does not advance the system towards that."

- Colin Keess, president, Saskatchewan teachers' federation

"The government, politically, was very astute. They ran these ads on the radio telling people, 'You won't get everything you want.' They basically sent a message it's not a Santa Claus budget ...

It's about framing. You tell people they won't get everything they want, but in the end, it's hard to identify big losers who are hit

hard."

- Daniel Béland, U of S Canada research chair in public policy

"In highways, parks, information technology services and other areas, we have seen government contracting out work to private businesses. Costs will be higher because companies need to make a profit to stay in business, and it's Saskatchewan families who are paying the price."

- Sgeu president Bobby Moen

"Achieving a balanced budget and continuing on a path towards a productivity agenda is remarkable compared to other Canadian provinces."

- Christian Braid, president, greater Saskatoon chamber of commerce

"What puzzles me is when you look at recent research analysis, Saskatchewan has higher poverty rates for persons under the age of 18 than the Canadian average, yet

we are considered a 'have' province."

- Barbara Cape, Service employees' International union-west president

"The Saskatchewan government's initiatives encourage sustainable growth and continue previous effective investments in the future of the province."

- Alan Thomarat , president and CEO, Canadian home builders' association - Saskatchewan

"Brad Wall's budget continues his government's policy of underfunding our universities, which leads to skyrocketing tuition fees and record student debt." - Kent Peterson, Canadian

- Kent Peterson, **Canadian federation of students**, Saskatchewan representative

"We keep hearing reports from our government that we are in a boom, yet the budget is showing a very different story."

- Janice Platzke, Service employees' International union west treasurer

"Close to \$4 billion in highways/infrastructure spending has occurred over the past six years, something that bodes well for all drivers in the province. This government sees highway infrastructure as an investment in our future, rather than a liability."

- Al Rosseker, Executive

Director, Saskatchewan Trucking association

"Today's budget announcement shows the government is listening. Infrastructure investment tops the list of public priorities."

- Shan Tellipp, Saskatchewan heavy construction association president

"Cheap cigarettes encourage young people to start smoking and discourage smokers from quitting. Today's tobacco tax increase is significant and one of the most effective ways the government can reduce smoking."

- Lynn Greaves, Saskatchewan Coalition for Tobacco Reduction

National Post

March 21, 2013 Thursday National Edition

FINANCIAL POST; Garry Marr; Pg. FP1

Jim, this is what we want

Garry Marr, Financial Post

You can't always get what you want, but maybe you can get a little of what you need in Thursday's federal budget.

The real estate community might be a bit angry at Jim Flaherty, the finance minister, over his moves to quash discounting of mortgages, not to mention his tougher borrowing rules.

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GRAPHIC: / Finance Minister Jim Flaherty buys traditional pre-budget new shoes.

The Toronto Star

March 23, 2013 Saturday

NEWS; Pg. A10

Poll finds support for tying tuition hikes to inflation

As Queen's Park prepares to reveal its long-overdue plan for tuition "in the near future" - possibly as soon as next week - a student group poll shows 71 per cent of Ontarians believe post-secondary fees should not rise faster than inflation.

Moreover, some 60 per cent of 500 people surveyed for the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA) said they believe the province should freeze tuition - at \$7,180, the highest in Canada - and boost government funding to universities despite the deficit.

"And 70 per cent said they thought the government should tie any future increases to inflation, which is what we've been calling for," said Rylan Kinnon, president of OUSA which commissioned the survey by Nanos Research.

That same 70 per cent disagree with letting universities continue to raise tuition by 5 per cent per year, which has been the cap for nearly seven years.

Colleges and universities have urged the

province to keep letting them hike fees by 5 per cent a year to make up for government's dwindling education support. However, OUSA and the College Student Alliance have called for a freeze, followed by raises linked to inflation, and the **Canadian Federation of Students**-Ontario wants fees cut by 30 per cent over three years.

In an interview earlier this month with the Star, MPP Brad Duguid, minister of training, colleges and universities, hinted he was not inclined to allow colleges and universities to continue to raise tuition 5 per cent per year.

Government sources have said the new multi-year tuition "framework" should be ready by the end of March so schools can notify students of the fees due this fall.

Duguid's press secretary Emily Hedges said, "We are in final discussions with our partners in post-secondary education, stakeholders and student groups and will be releasing something in the near future."

The Daily Gleaner

March 23, 2013 Saturday

New Brunswick: MAIN; Pg. A4

Student leaders pan budget

The president of the University of New Brunswick student union says the federal budget doesn't address problems of accessibility and affordability facing students in Canada's post-secondary education system - and he's concerned next week's provincial budget won't, either.

Andrew Martel said while the budget, tabled by Finance Minister Jim Flaherty on Thursday afternoon, includes items such as a commitment of \$70 million over three years to help pay for internships for 5,000 graduates and the creation of the Canada Job Grant, aimed at bringing training more in line with skills employers need, those measures will only help a small portion of Canada's 1.7 million students.

"It's a very small niche," he said.

"It's a start for that, but could that money have been used for better things is the overall question. Jobs are a priority, so I'm glad to see they're going

toward that; however, I would have liked to see a better laid-out plan so the funding could be used to help the most people possible. That money could have been put toward affordability or accessibility to have a better-educated population."

Martel's criticisms of the budget echoed those put forward by both the **Canadian Federation of Students** and the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, two national student lobby groups.

Adam Awad, the national chairman for the **Canadian Federation of Students**, said student debt is expected to surpass \$19 billion before 2016.

At the same time, the federal government has written off more than \$700 million in unpaid student loans in the last three years. The 2013 budget contains no new student financial assistance measures to address the increasing student debt loads burdening students and their families.

"Continuing to download the cost of post-secondary education onto students is a short-sighted policy that will harm Canada's economic recovery," he said.

"The 2013 budget is not an economic action plan for students and recent graduates?...?Canada should be addressing skills shortages by reducing the up-front costs of post-secondary education and training programs. Reallocating wasteful investments in tax credits and savings schemes into up-front grants for students would greatly improve Canada's labour market by increasing access to the skills training required for global competitiveness."

Zachary Dayler, the national director of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, also took issue with the government's plan to put \$70 million over three years into supporting paid internships for 5,000 graduates.

More than one million students across Canada are enrolled in university, and approximately 700,000 are

attending college. Dayler said while the measure will provide valuable experience that will help ease the challenge of employment instability, it will help only a small number of new graduates.

"This budget offers support for employers to hire new graduates as interns after graduation," he said.

"Unfortunately, it does little to support those individuals who struggle to access post-secondary, which would help more people get a foot in the door of the labour market."

Dayler said it would have been more beneficial to focus on making financial assistance more accessible for students because that would encourage more students to go to university or college.

"Increasing the pool of highly educated, highly trained graduates will improve the adaptability of the labour force, and that will improve flexibility within the labour market," he said.

"It is clear that these

measures do more to help employers than youth."

With the provincial budget coming next week, Martel said, he's concerned it also won't be positive for the post-secondary education sector.

"What we want to see more money invested in post-secondary education?...?The government came out with the whole \$80 million pledge over five years toward innovation. They're really pushing for that, which is great. I understand they want more knowledge-based employment and knowledge-based jobs and to really build that," he said.

"However, the universities do about 75 per cent of the research and development in the province of New Brunswick, with 60 per cent coming from UNB. When you're talking innovation, we do that. The universities do that, and the only way you're going to do that is if you properly invest in the universities, which will then allow for more students, and we can maintain our quality of education."

But Martel said while he's trying to be optimistic about the budget and he's been encouraged by some recent actions, such as the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour's commitment to review the province's student financial aid program, he knows he could see a scenario that involves staff cuts at the universities while tuition goes up for students.

"It doesn't make sense. It's like if Tim Hortons says you're paying a dollar extra for your coffee but it's half the size. That makes no sense. What is this coffee made of? That's the concern we have right now," he said.

"The scary thing is we're slowly starting to see that we're no longer in the throne speeches or budget speeches as much. It's been happening over the course of two years where it's starting to come to light. It's worrisome. We're starting to notice there's no interest there. It's not a priority."

The Toronto Star

March 28, 2013 Thursday

BUSINESS; Pg. S15

BMO warns parents about rising tuition **Post-secondary fees for child born today could be \$140,000**

A child born in Canada today could pay more than \$140,000 for a four-year university degree, according to a new Bank of Montreal report.

The report shows that tuition costs have been rising faster than inflation at times.

In the early 1990s, average undergraduate fees in Canada were \$1,464.

Today, they are \$5,581.

And while inflation was only 1.3 per cent in 2012, tuition fees increased 4.3 per cent.

The bank reached the \$140,000 estimate using its education savings calculator, which takes into account province, school, housing costs and inflation.

"It could be a very shocking sticker price if (parents) haven't saved for their child's education," said Chris Buttigieg, senior manager of wealth planning strategy at BMO and an author of the report.

"They may find they will have

to dip into other savings that are earmarked for other goals, such as retirement."

Canadian university graduates are already struggling with an average debt load of \$27,000, according to the **Canadian Federation of Students**. A four-year degree currently costs about \$60,000.

The vast majority - 83 per cent - of parents surveyed by BMO say they expect to pay for their child's university education. Forty-four per cent say they also expect their child to contribute.

However, three-quarters of parents have not made a detailed estimate of how much a degree will cost and only half have set up a Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP).

"It's important to begin with the end in mind. Know what the costs of post-secondary education will be in order to give (your children) that promising future," Buttigieg said.

Even though many parents feel they cannot afford to save for their child's education, it pays to start small and start early, he said.

For example, if parents contribute \$2,500 per year to an RESP for 12 years starting when their child is born, compounding returns will result in a balance of \$55,992.

But if parents start an RESP when their child is 12 and contribute \$5,000 per year for six years, the balance will only be \$35,391.

Further, only about a third of parents are taking advantage of the available government grant. Only a fifth was aware of the Canada Education Savings Grant, which matches 20 per cent of the first \$2,500 contributed annually to a maximum of \$500 a year.

The report, by the bank's new Wealth Institute and titled "Student tuition and debt on the rise: RESPs and beyond," is based primarily on a survey of 1,400 Canadian parents in February 2013.

Postmedia Breaking News

March 28, 2013 Thursday

ONLINE

Ontario lowers cap on university tuition hikes by 2 per cent

OTTAWA - The Ontario government is lowering the amount by which universities and colleges can raise tuition fees each year.

In an announcement Thursday, tuition hikes will be capped for the next four years at an average of 3 per cent annually, down from 5 per cent.

Fee increases for graduate and professional programs were dropped to 5 per cent from 8 per cent.

In a statement Thursday, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities Brad Duguid said the new fee structure strives to "ensure that students have access to higher education," no matter their financial means.

"This new tuition policy strikes a balance," said Duguid. "We are increasing fairness and affordability for students and their families while providing institutions with the long-term financial stability needed to provide a high-quality education for our students."

However, the announcement met with immediate criticism from student groups.

"This is not a win for students," said **Canadian Federation of Students** Ontario chairperson Sarah Jayne King.

"Students are disappointed to see the government increase fees yet again," she said. "I find it very concerning that the government is presenting this as a savings for students."

Among all the provinces, tuition in Ontario is most expensive at an average annual cost of \$7,180 for a university undergraduate program in 2012-13. (The national average is \$5,581.)

The new cap is one percentage point above Ontario's average rate of inflation over the past decade.

More to come.

With files from the Canadian Press.

The Mississauga News

March 28, 2013 Thursday Final Edition

NEWS; Pg. 1

Liberals cap tuition hikes

Torostar Network

QUEEN'S PARK - The Ontario government will cap tuition hikes at 3 per cent on average over the next four years, down from the 5 per cent cap that had made them the fastest-growing in the country. The new guidelines apply to undergraduates, while graduate students and those in professional schools will face increases of an average of 5 per cent - down from 8 per cent over the past seven years. The new rates are lower than universities and colleges had said they needed to fund a top quality system, but higher than student groups said was affordable.

However MPP Brad Duguid, minister of training, colleges and universities, said the new cap is meant to be roughly 1 per cent above the rate of inflation, which has averaged about 2 per cent over the past decade. Duguid said the lower tuition fees will save the average undergraduate about \$1,200 over four years. He also said the government will move to tackle the practice of "flat fees," in which institutions charge full tuition for students whether or not they take a full course load - sometimes even those who are taking just 60 per cent of a full load. Students have called this unfair, and Duguid said

the government should find an appropriate solution by the fall of 2014. "We recognize there will be an impact on institutions (with any loss of revenue from flat fees) so we'll begin this summer to engage in discussions as to what would be appropriate," he said. Overall Duguid admitted the lower tuition rates will pose a challenge for institutions. "It won't be easy, and we're challenging our institutions but we'll work together with them to offset the impact and I know they're up to the challenge," said Duguid. Duguid also said the government will change payment timelines so students who have to wait for their student loans to come in are not charged such financial penalties for late payment. With an average undergraduate arts and science tuition of about \$7,180, Ontario's university fees are the highest in Canada. While community college fees are not as high compared to other provinces, college students had been asking for a two-year freeze and then a cap at the rate of inflation. For universities, the **Canadian Federation of Students** in Ontario had been asking Queen's Park to drop tuition by 30 per cent over three years, and the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance had asked for a one-year freeze and then the cap at the rate of inflation.

The Hamilton Spectator

March 28, 2013 Thursday First Edition

BUSINESS; Pg. A18

BMO report warns of rising tuition costs **Child born today could pay \$140,000 in post-secondary fees**

Laura Kane
Torstar News

A child born in Canada today could pay more than \$140,000 for a four-year university degree, a new Bank of Montreal report says.

The report shows that tuition costs have been rising faster than inflation at times. In the early 1990s, average undergraduate fees in Canada were \$1,464. Today, they are \$5,581.

And while inflation was only 1.3 per cent in 2012, tuition fees increased 4.3 per cent.

The bank reached the \$140,000 estimate using its education savings calculator, which takes into account province, school, housing costs and inflation.

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"They may find they will have to dip into other savings that are earmarked for other goals, such as retirement."

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However, three-quarters of parents have not made a detailed estimate of how much a degree will cost and only half have set up a registered education savings account (RESP).

"It's important to begin with the end in mind. Know what the costs of post-secondary education will be in order to give (your children) a promising future," said Buttigieg.

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Canadian Press

March 28, 2013 Thursday

Students, schools unhappy with reduced Ontario cap on annual tuition fee hikes; Ontario reduces cap on annual tuition hikes

Diana Mehta, The Canadian Press

TORONTO - In a move aimed at striking a balance between the needs of students and public post-secondary institutions, the Ontario government announced Thursday it is lowering the cap on average tuition fee increases over the next four years.

But the news didn't appear to satisfy either student advocates or representatives for colleges and universities.

Under a new framework announced by the governing Liberals, annual tuition fee increases will be capped at an average of three per cent. Previously, colleges and universities were allowed to hike tuition by an average of five per cent.

"We've had to arrive at what I call a balanced solution," said Brad Duguid, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

"We want to make sure that while we're reducing the future burden for students when it comes to future tuition increases, we also have to balance that off with ensuring we continue to have a globally competitive post-secondary education system."

Duguid acknowledged the new cap - which is one percentage point above Ontario's average rate of inflation over the past decade - will be tough for colleges and universities, which will now be receiving less revenue.

"We're going to work with them to overcome that," he said. "It's a balance between quality and affordability."

The province says the fee system can still be flexible - with some programs increasing more and some less as long as an institution's tuition increases average three per cent a year overall.

Tuition for professional and graduate university programs and high-demand college programs may be increased by up to five per cent, down from eight per cent previously.

The details didn't impress the Ontario branch of the **Canadian Federation of Students**, which had presented the province with its own recommendations for a tuition fee framework last month.

"Lowering the cap is ensuring that tuition fees will increase and continue to increase over the next four years," said chairperson Sarah Jayne King, whose group had suggested a 30 per cent tuition fee reduction over the next three years.

"It's very disappointing to see the government not responding to the needs of students and turning their backs on Ontario families in the future."

According to CFS Ontario, which said it represents over 300,000 students province-wide, tuition fees have increased by as much as 71 per cent since 2006.

"Students don't really see this as striking a balance. Striking a balance would be seeing investment in our post secondary education sector. Universities and colleges are calling for increases to make up for funds that they're not getting from the government," said King.

"Simply lowering the amount of increases does not ensure that funding will be adequate to our institutions."

Meanwhile, the Council of Ontario Universities called the government's reduction of allowable tuition fee increases a "challenge."

Saying it acknowledged the province's budget deficit and goal of balancing interests, the COU pointed out that tuition counts for 44 per cent of universities' operating revenue on average.

"While it won't be easy to absorb this reduction to tuition revenue on top of government funding cuts announced in the last provincial budget, Ontario universities will continue to put the needs of students first," said COU chair Alastair Summerlee, who is also the president of the University of Guelph.

"Maintaining quality of the learning experience will remain our priority."

Focusing on that quality of education is something the province needs to address while trying to lower ballooning costs, said former professor and Progressive Conservative education critic Rob Leone.

"Tuition has gone up over the last number of years astronomically, at the same time class sizes have gone up and the number of full time professors teaching our students has gone down. We think we have to address that concern," he said.

The Toronto Star

March 29, 2013 Friday

NEWS; Pg. A2

Cap lowered on tuition hikes Liberals draw praise, criticism for 3-per-cent jump over four years

In a move that has drawn both praise and fire from all sides, the Ontario government has lowered the cap on tuition hikes to 3 per cent annually for the next four years, down from the 5-per-cent rate that had made them the highest in the country.

To universities already grappling with the lowest per-student grants in Canada, it means a loss of more than \$1 billion in revenue over four years, warned Bonnie Patterson, president of the Council of Ontario Universities, and could lead to larger classes, fewer courses and more part-time teachers.

"It won't be business as usual going forward," she noted.

But for students, allowing any more raises at all is "frustrating," said Sarah Jayne King, chairwoman of the **Canadian Federation of Students**-Ontario, which had wanted tuition to be cut by 30 per cent over three years.

"With food bank use on campus on the rise and untold numbers of youth being shut out of education, these increases will put college and university education further out of reach," said King.

However, MPP Brad Duguid, minister of training, colleges and universities, called the new cap

"a balance" that will save the average university student about \$1,200 over the next four years and represents about 1 per cent more than the inflation rate, which has averaged 2 per cent over the past decade.

Duguid admitted the lower tuition increases will pose a challenge for institutions, which already receive the lowest per-student grants in the country.

"It won't be easy, and we're challenging our institutions but we'll work together with them to offset the impact," said Duguid, citing the 30-per-cent Ontario tuition grant for students whose family income is not more than \$160,000.

The new 3-per-cent cap applies to undergraduates, while graduate and professional programs face increases of an average of 5 per cent - down from 8 per cent over the past seven years.

Community colleges were disappointed at the lower cap; with an average tuition of \$2,400 a year - among the lowest in Canada - they have been squeezed by provincial funding cuts and per-student grants that are lower than those for university or high school, said Linda Franklin, president of Colleges Ontario.

"This new restriction on tuition

makes it even more difficult for colleges to deliver quality programs to students," she said.

With an average undergraduate arts and science tuition of about \$7,180, Ontario's university fees are the highest in Canada. While community college fees are not as high compared to other provinces, college students had been asking for a two-year freeze and then a cap at the rate of inflation.

Duguid noted the government also will move to tackle the practice of "flat fees," in which most community colleges and about half of universities charge full tuition for students whether or not they take a full load - sometimes those taking just 60 per cent of a full load. University students have called this unfair, and Duguid said the government should find an appropriate solution by the fall of 2014.

However, community college students are used to the system and it actually is more affordable than paying the pricier course-by-course cost, said Tyler Epp, of the College Student Alliance.

GRAPHIC: Minister Brad Duguid says the move will save the average university student about \$1,200 over four years.

Ottawa Citizen

March 29, 2013 Friday Final Edition

CITY; Pg. C1

Tuition increases capped at 3% a year

New limits lower than before, but students say fees should be cut

John Stoesser,
Ottawa Citizen
With Files From
The Canadian Press

The Ontario government is lowering the amount by which universities and colleges can raise tuition fees each year.

The government announced Thursday that tuition hikes will be capped for the next four years at an average of three per cent annually, down from five per cent. Fee increases for graduate and professional programs were dropped to five per cent from eight per cent.

The news didn't seem to satisfy either student advocates or representatives for colleges and universities.

In a statement, Brad Du-guid, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, said the new fee structure strives to "ensure that students have access to higher education," no matter their financial means.

"This new tuition policy

strikes a balance," said Du-guid. "We are increasing fairness and affordability for students and their families while providing institutions with the long-term financial stability needed to provide a high-quality education for our students."

However, the announcement met with immediate criticism from student groups.

"This is not a win for students," said **Canadian Federation of Students** Ontario chairperson Sarah Jayne King. "Students are disappointed to see the government increase fees yet again. I find it very concerning that the government is presenting this as a savings for students."

King's group, which said it represents more than 300,000 students province-wide, suggested a 30-per-cent reduction in tuitions over the next three years.

Among all the provinces, tuition in Ontario is highest, an annual average of

\$7,180 for a university undergraduate program in 2012-13. (The national average is \$5,581.)

The president of Carleton University, Roseann O'Reilly Runte, said the lack of provincial funding to institutions is one reason tuition is higher in Ontario than other provinces.

"I'm pleased the government is looking at this in a four-year time frame," said Runte of the announcement. "Planning for the future is important for both students and the university." She said the university wasn't sure whether there would be cuts to services at Carleton due to the tuition increase cap.

"I think the province and the university has done their best to keep post-secondary education affordable," said Runte.

The president of the student association at Algonquin College, David Corson, voiced concern about the increasing debt students are accumulating to accommodate the rising

fees.

"When you're creating a debt economy, you're strapping (the students) to a point where it's not to anyone's benefit, not the students and not their future employers," said Corson.

"You can increase the amount they can borrow, but this doesn't increase their opportunities. Where does the money go? Back in the coffers. It doesn't go to new labs, technology or services for the students."

Corson also said this an-

nouncement didn't leave the college much time to meet its deadline in two weeks to set tuition for upcoming semesters.

The Council for Ontario Universities pointed out that tuition accounts for 44 per cent of universities' operating revenue on average, but also acknowledged the province's deficit and goal of balancing interest.

Runte admitted this is a hard time for both students and the province but that education should be a priority.

"Education is extremely important and one of the best investments (students) can make for their future," she said.

The new cap is one percentage point above Ontario's average rate of inflation over the past decade.

GRAPHIC: Tyler Anderson, National Post; Brad Duguid, Ontario's minister of training, colleges and universities, says the higher tuitions strike a fair balance.

The Toronto Star

April 5, 2013 Friday

OPINION; Pg. A19

Opinion online **Ontario's expensive schools**

The new tuition fee framework for Ontario colleges and universities continues to allow fees to increase and will ensure Ontario maintains its title as the most expensive place to study in Canada. All told, by

the end of this tuition framework, fees in Ontario will have doubled under the Liberal government's watch. Sarah Jayne King of the **Canadian Federation of Students** comments at thestar.com/opinion.

Windsor Star

April 9, 2013 Tuesday Final Edition

NEWS; Pg. A3

Tuition limit to cost U of W \$20 million Not enough relief, say students

Don Lajoie,
The Windsor Star

A three per cent ceiling on tuition increases set by the province will cost the University of Windsor \$20 million over the next four years and force immediate additional spending constraints on the cash-squeezed institution.

That was the analysis offered Monday by university president Alan Wildeman.

Wildeman was responding to an announcement by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities that the current four-year framework for tuition increases, which allowed institutions to hike fees by five per cent overall each year, will be replaced with a formula limiting those increases to three per cent annually.

Wildeman said the announcement will result in an approximate loss of \$2 million in expected revenue for 2013-14.

He said it comes at a time when the university is also

faced with another \$1 million cut in provincial operating grants for the next school year as its share of the government's "efficiency reductions" to provincial institutions.

A similar grant cut is also expected in 2014-15, he said.

"We will certainly have to adjust and adapt and we will," Wildeman said. "We will need to take the steps necessary on our operating budgets to get back in balance and I'm confident we can do it."

How the university will make up the shortfall is unclear. Wildeman said while it is too early to speculate on the possibility of staff and faculty layoffs, the next round of collective bargaining may see the administration looking at wage and benefit concessions. Seven contracts will expire during 2013, with the faculty contract ending in June 2014.

"I want (the unions) to be aware of the constraints we face," he said.

"We're not approaching bargaining with a lot of options ... It will have to be part of the dialogue."

Wildeman said while the tuition free restriction is "good news for students" it presents a challenge to universities.

"This will necessitate new levels of cost restraints to bring it back into balance," Wildeman said.

"I know that faculty and staff will not welcome this news. I will be encouraging everyone to collectively find ways of adapting to the new reality."

Salaries make up 78 per cent of the university's \$260 million operating budget.

Brian E. Brown, president of the Windsor University Faculty Association, said his members would not be happy with layoffs or cuts.

He said more needs to be invested in post secondary education in the province to ensure Ontario is able

to attract "the best and brightest" faculty and students.

Brown said he understands that universities continually look to tuition hikes to solve their budget problems but said that must end.

Rather, he said, the problem lies with government grants. He said the cash-strapped province needs to wring more money from the federal government.

"The government needs to consult with faculty and students on a new funding framework to make it affordable," he said. "But it doesn't look like that's going to happen ... We're not sure how much more cut-

ting we can take."

Student representatives said the lowered fee ceiling doesn't go far enough.

"Most students are pretty upset there was no reduction or a freeze," said Mohammad Akbar, vice-president of university affairs for the University of Windsor Student Alliance. "Because it has gone up so much under the last framework ... I really think students were really looking for more, especially with the new government" under Liberal Premier Kathleen Wynne.

He said the **Canadian Federation of Students** has been lobbying for reductions and has offered

workable alternatives.

Though the ceiling is lower, students will "still see an increase."

Akbar said that the constant struggle to balance the books has led to "stagnation" in the classroom at the University of Windsor.

Wildeman agreed that students are shouldering an unfair share of operating costs. Tuition at the university ranges from about \$6,000 for most arts and sciences programs to \$15,000 for law students although that "is still the lowest in the province for law."

The Globe and Mail

April 15, 2013 Monday

GLOBE LIFE; SEXUAL ASSAULT; Pg. L3

No means no - but does yes mean yes?

With so many young people unsure when it's okay to have sex, some educators are reframing the issue around 'enthusiastic consent'

ERIN ANDERSSON

'Is it okay to bring younger girls alcohol and have them back to my place?' a male student recently asked educator Blake Spence, during a workshop he was leading for the Calgary Sexual Health Centre. And when Caiti Barendregt-Brown, another sex educator in London, Ont., finishes her high-school session, it's mostly the boys who line up with questions: "I'm really confused," one told her, "if a girl wears a short skirt and a low-cut top to a party, it looks like she wants sex." In Atlanta, teacher Abby Norman blogged about a conversation she had with students following the sexual-assault convictions in Steubenville, Ohio. "Some of my kids were genuinely confused," she wrote. "How can she be raped?" they asked, "She wasn't awake to say no."

It's been nearly two decades since the **Canadian Federation of Students** created the "No means No" campaign. And even after years of Take Back the Night marches, and sexual-assault awareness campaigns, the confusion over what consent means is as unresolved as ever. If anything, a tell-all society satu-

rated with porn has increased the potential harm to victims, as gossip and insults spread quickly and mercilessly. Are we waiting too long to teach the concept of consent to our kids?

Consider the discourse of the past year: In Steubenville, a pair of celebrated football players - and their watching friends - made a game of raping an unconscious girl, and their defence attorney argued she'd given permission by getting drunk. A U.S politician observed that some women "rape easy." This winter, a student leader at Queen's suggested publicly that victims have to take some responsibility for an assault. A California middle school recently called an all-girl assembly to tell their female students to stop wearing yoga pants because it was "distracting the boys."

And now, Canadians are reeling over the tragic death of Nova Scotia teenager Rehtaeh Parsons, who killed herself after two years of bullying, when a graphic picture was distributed online following an alleged gang rape at a friend's house. (The police have reopened the case after initially finding there was not

enough evidence to lay charges.)

"We are setting up a perfect storm for sexual violence to occur and then we are shocked when it does," says Barendregt-Brown, the coordinator of public education at London's Sexual Assault Centre. Ask a teenager what they remember from the sex talk at health class, and they'll likely say the condom demonstration or the STD video. But schools, experts says, struggle to speak frankly about the realities of teenage life today, including the connection between alcohol and sex, and how to navigate intimacy in general.

Barendregt-Brown points out that anti-bullying programs tend to overlook the role that sexual assault and harassment play in cases of cyber-bullying and abuse, missing another opportunity to talk about consent. The focus is still on advising young women how to avoid being raped. But there's little evidence to suggest these interventions have worked.

Charlene Senn, a psychologist at the University of Windsor who is studying a new campus initiative to empower

bystanders, says that in 30 years, survey after survey suggests that the rate of rape or attempted rape on North American campuses has held steady at between 18 per cent and 24 per cent. Add in harassment, groping and sexual coercion, and the percentage of female students who say in surveys that they experience this behaviour during their college years rises to 60 per cent.

More recently, sex educators have tried to tackle the persistent myths about rape and aggressive pop culture messages around sex, by shifting the onus away from the person avoiding the assault or turning down an advance, to promoting the idea of "enthusiastic consent." In that discussion, the focus shifts from how to say "no," to making sure there's a genuine "yes."

Barendregt-Brown uses this analogy: "When kids are little, we don't teach them how not to get hit, we teach them not to hit. And then all of a sudden, you go to university and your parents are like, don't leave your drink unattended, walk in pairs, bring your cell phone. Why aren't we having a conversation with our teen-

agers that asks: Are you paying attention? Are you sure your partner wants to have sex?"

Michelle, a Grade 12 student in Ottawa, says the message about consent that she recalls from health class amounted to "wait until you're ready; and you are allowed to say no." The notion of enthusiastic consent is new to her. If her friends are going drinking, she says, they make lists of boys they "consent" to have sex with, and rely on the designated driver to intervene if it looks like they might go too far with someone not on the list.

She is surprised to learn that Canadian law says someone who is intoxicated can't give consent. When a friend lost her virginity to an older boyfriend "because he kept asking for it, and she wanted to make him happy," and she felt later as if she'd been forced into it, Michelle was conflicted: 'She didn't say no.' And she wonders about girls who dress in skimpy skirts and tops and then are harassed. "That's the way guys are," she says, "they automatically think, 'oh, she's showing it off, she wants me

to touch it.' "

In Calgary, Blake Spence runs a 10-week program for Grade 9 boys called Wise Guyz, which covers the traditional topic of anatomy, but also explores respect and communication in relationships, as well as cultural influences on masculinity. A big part of their discussion involves understanding enthusiastic consent, how they should interpret hesitant body language, and why their partner might not overtly say no, even if she wants to.

A further complication is that for today's youth culture, group socializing has replaced many dating rituals of the past. Tony, a Grade 12 Toronto student, suggests that in a house party where everyone is drinking and hook-ups are common, the risks of assault are even higher. "It can be hard to recognize when consent is an issue." But for him there's no confusion around the abuse that Rehteah Parsons endured. "People said stuff that made it seem like it was her fault. It wasn't her fault." That's a safe-sex conversation every teenager still needs to hear.

Postmedia Breaking News

April 17, 2013 Wednesday

Adrian Dix says NDP would bring back student grants to deal with skills shortage

An NDP government would tackle a looming skills shortage in B.C. by bringing back student grants, adding more training spaces and setting up a new scholarship fund for post-secondary students, leader Adrian Dix said today.

Dix said the NDP would invest \$50 million in the non-repayable grants program this year and increase that to \$100 million in 2014-15.

The Liberals, who scrapped the previous student grants program in 2004, were quick to pan the NDP's promises as reckless and unaffordable.

But the NDP said investing in people and education is the best way to ensure future prosperity and offer a "ladder of opportunity" to young people regardless of their background.

Read more election news [HERE](#)

"We know that we're going to face a skills shortage and we know that we need to ensure that people are getting trained up now," said Carole James, who is

seeking re-election for the NDP in Victoria-Beacon Hill. "The best tool the government has to be able to address growing an economy is to have a well-trained, skilled workforce."

The B.C. Labour Mark Outlook 2010-2020 shows a skills deficit emerging in 2016 and worsening in future years.

By 2020, there will be 18,800 jobs requiring university, college or trades training and no workers to fill them, the report says.

The Research Universities' Council of B.C. cited the skills shortage last year in calling for increased investment in post-secondary education. The council, which represents the University of Victoria, Royal Roads University and four other major research schools, urged more spaces and added financial aid to students in need.

Dix, who has been promising to bring back student grants program since his NDP leadership campaign in 2011, plans to pay for the program by reinstating a three-per-cent tax on

banks.

The non-repayable grants would vary in size depending on need, but a student receiving the maximum B.C. student loan would receive a lump sum of at least \$1,500, the NDP said.

Dix also promised to boost spending on skills training by \$15 million this year.

The money would be used to create more training spaces, buy additional equipment and set up programs to attract women and First Nations to trades training.

A new scholarship fund would be established this year at a cost of \$20 million. Private and community partners would be encouraged to match that money.

Saanich South Liberal candidate Rishi Sharma, a former ministerial assistant in the Ministry of Advanced Education, questioned the cost of the NDP's plans.

"We're concerned that they're making all these promises without showing

how they're going to pay for it," he said. "When we have more money, maybe we can have these conversations. But right now, I think we have a very balanced system."

Sharma noted that 40 of the most popular textbooks will be free online, while StudentAid B.C.'s loan forgiveness program repays students in medicine or nursing if they agree to work in underserved areas. He cited the case of one nurse from the Lower Mainland who had a

\$47,000 debt erased after working in Merritt for three years.

"These are great programs," he said. "We've increased the spaces for doctors, we've increased the spaces for nurses. When [the NDP] were in, they froze the system completely."

The B.C. branch of the **Canadian Federation of Students**, however, welcomed the possible return of a grants program under an NDP government.

"A student grants program in BC would go a long way in addressing high student debt," the federation said in a statement.

The Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation reported in 2009 that undergraduate student debt in B.C. had grown by 14 per cent in the previous nine years, the highest increase anywhere in Canada. In that year, 54 per cent of B.C. graduates reported an average debt of \$26,738.

Times Colonist

April 18, 2013 Thursday Final Edition

Victoria, British Columbia: NEWS; Pg. A4

NDP promises to revive student grants Dix plans to tackle looming skills shortage in B.C

Lindsay Kines,
Times Colonist

An NDP government would tackle a looming skills shortage in B.C. by bringing back student grants, adding more training spaces and setting up a new scholarship fund for post-secondary students, leader Adrian Dix said Wednesday.

Dix said the NDP would invest \$50 million in a non-repayable grants program this year and increase that to \$100 million in 2014-15.

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GRAPHIC: Darryl Dyck, The Canadian Press; NDP leader Adrian Dix takes a spin on a mock-up of a drag racing car in an automotive class during a campaign stop at the University of the Fraser Valley in Chilliwack on Wednesday.