



NEWS RELEASE

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83% of Nova Scotians support reducing tuition fees

HALIFAX - A vast majority of Nova Scotians believe that tuition fees in the province should be reduced according to a recently conducted public opinion poll. The poll, conducted by Opinion Search Research, for the Nova Scotia Post-Secondary Education Coalition, asked Nova Scotians about a variety of issues facing students and universities including funding and tuition fees, as well as government priorities.

“Nova Scotians clearly believe in the economic and social benefits of funding a quality and affordable system of post-secondary education,” said Gabe Hoogers, Nova Scotia Representative of the Canadian Federation of Students. “In poll after poll, and at consultation after consultation, voters in this province have shown their support for reducing tuition fees and it’s time for the NDP government to follow their lead.”

The poll found that 83% of Nova Scotians support reducing tuition fees and 88% think that post-secondary education should be a high or very high priority for the provincial government. In September, the provincial government released a report written by former Bank of Montreal Executive Vice-President, Tim O’Neill, which recommends policy changes that would allow tuition fees to rise indefinitely and cause massive increases in student debt.

“Consistently, in the three polls, we have conducted in the past several years including 2010, Nova Scotians have said their government is not giving a high enough priority to post-secondary education,” said Joan Jessome, President of the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union. “These results clearly call out for much more comprehensive support than the government has so far chosen to provide.”

In addition, the poll found that two-thirds of Nova Scotians feel that government funding should make up a larger portion of university funding, and nearly 60 percent are willing to pay higher taxes in order to improve affordability at universities in Nova Scotia.

“While the Dexter government has hired a consultant to try to legitimize cuts in funding and increased tuition fees, two thirds of those polled indicated that the government’s priority should be to increase funding, not slash it,” said Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers President, Chris Ferns. “These results make it crystal clear that when it comes to post-secondary education, the government has been consulting the wrong people.”

The Coalition is made up of the Canadian Federation of Students – Nova Scotia, the Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers (ANSUT), and the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union (NSGEU). For its most recent poll, 810 Nova Scotians were interviewed between December 9 and 16, 2010. The poll has an accuracy rate of +/- 3%, nineteen times out of twenty.

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