

## **New funding announcement welcome, but still leaves Ontario at the bottom of the heap, increases student debt**

TORONTO, ON – The recent funding announcement from the provincial government is a welcome injection of needed funding to the post-secondary sector, but shifts much financial burden to students, says the Ontario Universities and Colleges Coalition (OUCC).

The announcement from the Ontario Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security (MCURES) to the Ontario post-secondary sector is significant. While this represents progress following years of sustained advocacy across the sector, it does not close Ontario's longstanding funding gap. Even after this increase, Ontario will continue to rank last in per-student funding for colleges and universities, remaining well below the national average.

Unfortunately, the province's announcement shifts more of the financial burden to students. Shifting student aid from a model of up to 85 percent grants and 15 percent loans to one of 25 percent grants and 75 percent loans will significantly increase student debt burdens and transfer more of the cost of higher education onto students and their families.

This policy choice will leave graduates carrying higher levels of debt, constraining their ability to participate fully in the economy at a time when Ontario depends on highly educated workers to drive productivity, innovation, and long-term economic growth.

The OUCC calls on the government to commit to a long-term funding plan that brings Ontario to at least the Canadian average per-student funding while protecting students from escalating debt.

- Rob Kristofferson, President ,OCUFA
- Samia Hashi, Ontario Regional Director, Unifor
- Cyrielle Ngeleka, Chairperson, Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario
- Martha Hradowy, President, OSSTF/FEESO
- JP Hornick, President, Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU/SEFPO)
- Fred Hahn, President, Canadian Union of Public Employees Ontario

*The Ontario Universities and Colleges Coalition (OUCC) represents over 435,000 faculty, staff, and students from every public postsecondary institution in Ontario. It includes members of the Canadian Federation of Students–Ontario (CFS-O), Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA), Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), Ontario Secondary Schools Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO), Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), Unifor, and United Steelworkers (USW).*