

Report

Letter to Members

Over the last couple of years, a global recession has resulted in public concern over the health of the Canadian economy and their own long-term financial stability. This has created a challenging environment to advocate for increases to publicly funded services, including funding for post-secondary education and research.

These new pressures along with recurring issues arising from labour hostilities, government intervention into the academic research environment, and graduate expansion policies exacerbate the standing problems of under-funding of curiosity-driven, independent university research and graduate student education.

Graduate students will need to be united and creative in addressing the challenges facing students, universities, and graduate studies across Canada. Our challenge is to effectively explain why adequate public funding for graduate students is necessary in the current context of austerity budgets.

The National Graduate Caucus enables graduate students to address current issues transforming universities across Canada, including commercialization initiatives that threaten the independence of curiosity-driven research, restricting changes to copyright law and internet regulation and proposals on graduate skills development from the granting councils. The Caucus monitors and responds to these changes at the national level and then communicates these changes to member locals allowing local students' unions and our members to effect positive change for graduate education in Canada.

Graduate students' unions are generally smaller than our undergraduate students' union counterparts. As such, we often face particular challenges in providing the resources and continuous infrastructure to service our members' needs. It is through collaboration within the Federation's structure that graduate students' unions of all sizes are able to access and provide more affordable services through economies of scale that directly benefit our members.

At the Caucus' Annual General Meetings representatives from graduate students' unions across the country are brought together to discuss common experiences and best-practices, as well as build strategy for campaigns on key issues facing graduate students. This meeting is our opportunity to develop and shape our national campaigns, address issues unique to graduate studies, and discuss improvements to the services we provide to our members.

In solidarity,

The National Graduate Caucus Executive

Introduction

The National Graduate Caucus unites over 75,000 graduate students, across over thirty student unions, with over one-half million public post-secondary students across Canada. The primary objective of the Caucus is to promote the interests of graduate students nationally while working within the larger student movement to improve access to high-quality public post-secondary education.

The issues facing graduate students in Canada are both unique from, and intertwined with, those of college and undergraduate students. It is through the Caucus that graduate students can discuss details of issues unique to graduate students and it is through the larger Federation that we gain the power to effectively lobby the government and the solidarity to provide quality services to our members.

The National Graduate Caucus was formed by its members to champion graduate studies, teaching, and university research. Between meetings, the Caucus Executive oversees the day-to-day work of the Caucus.

Campaigns and Government Relations

Submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance

The Caucus submitted a brief for the public consultations of the Standing Committee on Finance. The Caucus' submission identified the following priorities: increased federal funding for graduate students by increasing both the proportion and amount of basic research funding to granting councils, by both doubling the number of Canada Graduate Scholarships available, and allowing graduate students to access grants under Canada Student Grants Program. In addition, the Caucus outlined the necessity for establishing a post-secondary education cash transfer to the provinces, guided by a federal post-secondary education act, for the purpose of reducing tuition fees and improving research infrastructure at universities and colleges.

Recommendation #1

Return the \$148 million cut from the granting councils in the 2009 budget and increase, in both proportion and amount, basic research funding for graduate students through the granting councils, with greater funds asymmetrically allocated through SSHRC, to support innovation in graduate student research.

Recommendation #2

Increase direct funding for graduate students by:

a. Increasing the number of Canada Graduate Scholarships by 500 – consistent with average growth in the program since 2003 – with an investment of an additional \$25 million, to be distributed proportionally among the research councils according to enrolment figures, and

b. Allowing graduate students to qualify for grants under the Canada Student Grants Program.

Recommendation #3

The federal government should, in cooperation with the provinces, implement a federal Post-Secondary Education Act modelled after the principles of the Canada Health Act, accompanied by a dedicated cash transfer payment that restores federal funding for post-secondary education to 1992 levels.

This year, there was a reduction in the number of invites to present submissions to the Standing Committee on Finance. As such, the Caucus, along with most organizations representing the academic research communities, did not get a chance to present this submission. However, graduate student issues were brought up by Federation representatives during their presentation to the committee.

White Paper on Restructuring of Post-Secondary Education and the Effects of Commercialization of University Research Policies

The Caucus has hired a graduate researcher, Eric Newstadt, to prepare a detailed evaluation of the current and planned restructuring of Canadian universities and the impacts such restructuring has for research and graduate studies. The impetus for the white paper has come from the lack of concrete analysis on the impacts on of the proposed restructuring outlined by 'Academic Transformation: The Forces Reshaping Higher Education in Ontario' authored by Clark, Moran, Skolnik, and Trick and commissioned by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO).

The book outlines a model of post-secondary education that follows a similar structure as that proposed by the Bologna Process put forward by many European countries. The model is based on an education system that separates undergraduates along either an employment or academic program.

The White Paper examines both the theory and the application of such a system here in Canada. Specifically, the paper will take a critical approach to the application of certain measures of "quality" and "productivity" the authors of 'Academic Transformation' are using to inform their policy proposals. The report is in a final version and is in the process of being copy-edited and formatted for publication.

Campaign for Fair Copyright

The Copyright Act has been undergoing review for new digital technology. The review of the Act is largely a consequence of digital technology and the availability of copyrighted works on the internet. Through the Canadian Recording Industry Association (CRIA), large movie and music labels have participated in an aggressive campaign to protect their profit interests by lobbying

behind closed doors for increased restrictions and surveillance of internet activities with the use of technological protection measures (TPMs).

As part of its campaign to win new restrictive measures to curb access to the internet, CRIA has targeted students as culprits of unlawful file-sharing. In response, the Federation has been opposing revisions to the Act that overly favour the interests of the recording industry to the exclusion of the rights and needs of students. The Federation has drafted a fact sheet that explains some of the key issues of concern to students including educational access to copyrighted works (fair dealing), opposing technologies that restrict access to the internet and infringe privacy (digital rights management), and that impose new fees on students (internet licensing). The Federation argues that the internet offers new opportunities to share public knowledge and thus any revisions to copyright legislation need to ensure reasonable public access to the internet. New legislation has been on the verge of being tabled, but instability of the federal government has meant it has never reached a vote. Previous versions were withdrawn at the last minute after a successful online campaign.

With growing pressure from commercial interests to change copyright policy, it is imperative for students that the Canadian Copyright Act remains fair and balanced, allowing for protection against unjust appropriation without restricting reasonable access to, and use of, informational resources. The Caucus maintains the need for the inclusion of a broad definition of Fair Dealing clause within the Copyright Act. A broad definition of fair dealing would allow the use of a work for the purpose of research or private study and would render any educational exceptions within the Act unnecessary.

On February 1, 2011, the Federation submitted a formal response to Bill C-32, the Copyright Modernization Act, and the Caucus continues to work within the Federation to undermine the misrepresentation that a educational fair dealings clause would amount to a major loss of revenue for creators. As a result of the Caucus' submission, the federal committee reviewing Bill C-32 invited representatives of the Caucus to present their submission to the committee.

Access Copyright

✂ In 2010, Access Copyright – an organization that licenses literary works to businesses and public institutions – would infringe privacy rights and unilaterally impose a new tariff and licensing regime that would increase the per student cost from \$3.38 to \$45.

In response to these Access Copyright 's proposed tariff to Canada's Copyright Board, the Federation and the CAUT, filed a joint objection to the Copyright Board. The Caucus continues to respond to question on what this recent Access Copyright expansion entails and how such expansion will impact students at the local level. ✂

Whistleblowers Campaign

As research institutions have become more reliant on private sector funding, private corporations have come to influence both the direction and the reported

results of research. Researchers who have been unwilling to tailor their work to the needs of private sponsors have become the targets of academic censorship and, in some cases, reprisals and public smear campaigns. Students are particularly vulnerable when trying to uphold research integrity because they lack the protection of mechanisms such as collective agreements. The Caucus' whistleblowers campaign supports the work of those who stand up for public research by speaking out against corporate interference in research.

The Caucus also lobbied for federal whistleblower legislation to protect university researchers from reprisals when they attempt to expose research misconduct. The Caucus maintains a website located at www.graduatestudents.ca that includes background information on the issues of public/private partnerships in university research and academic freedom. The Caucus has also developed and distributed a poster encouraging graduate students to contact the Caucus if their industry sponsor has overstepped appropriate involvement in their research.

The Caucus continues to work with coalition partners, including the CAUT and federal unions, in developing a strategy for whistleblower protection at the federal level. Moreover, the Caucus is coordinating efforts with the Ontario Graduate Caucus, as many member locals have been initiating campaign for whistleblower protection on their campuses and through provincial legislation.

Intellectual Property Rights

Given that information about intellectual property rights on Canadian campuses is disparate, the Caucus is in the process of collecting and compiling data regarding IP policies at member local campuses. Once collected, this information will be standardised so that a comparative assessment of current IP policy at Canadian universities can be made. Tools developed by the Caucus include media releases, sample op-ed pieces, a list of speakers, and strategies that may assist member locals in conducting effective campaigns on their campuses, a research guide, and a poster. A motion encouraging member locals to submit information on their campuses' IP policies and whistleblower protection to the Caucus Executive was passed at the Caucus General meeting. Work progresses on the Intellectual Property (IP) scorecard, though the National Graduate Caucus executive continues to wait for this information from several member locals.

The Caucus has prepared a poster on the dangers of not understanding your intellectual property as a graduate student. The poster has a question with three parts that asks if the graduate student knows their IP rights on their campus and if they do not directs them to visit their student association's office.

Open Access to Research

The production, dissemination, and preservation of knowledge is fundamental to all fields of research. Scholarly publishing, in the form of journal articles, conference proceedings, and monographs, is a primary means by which knowledge is distributed to professors, researchers, graduate students, and the public.

Since the majority of published research is funded by the public through government granting agencies, it is unreasonable for the public to pay again, through user fees, to gain access to this research. User fees not only reduce access to information, they increase costs and slow the dissemination of research findings. Combined, this impedes research progress and innovation. When research papers are submitted for publication, the copyrights are generally transferred to the journal's publisher, rather than remaining with the authors. The increasing costs of journal subscriptions are largely the result of commercial publishers leveraging their ownership of copyright to raise prices.

A fair model of distributing academic findings would both maximize access and minimise costs to the public. With the new forms of publication available online, it is now possible to have academic information openly available at minimal cost. "Open Access" refers to a way of making material available on the internet for anyone to read and use free of charge. For example, using Creative Commons licenses, Open Access repositories and distributors allow access to scholarly materials without a user fee.

On July 7, 2009, the Caucus signed a Student Statement on the Right to Research issued by the USA-based Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC). The Statement mirrors the Caucus' position on scholarly publishing and access to research. The statement calls on Canadian and USA research that is funded or produced by the government to be released to the public free of charge.

From July 31 to August 1, 2009, a Caucus representative attended a student summit in Washington, DC. The summit was held by SPARC with to goal of discussing means of expanding student awareness and involvement in the Open Access movement.

During the meeting the content of an upcoming website on Open Access specifically targeting students, as well as other promotional material produced by SPARC were reviewed. All of the materials will be made available to student organisations under a Creative Commons license. It was decided that the organisations present would form a

Student Steering Committee to share information through a listserv and periodic teleconferences to discuss the most effective ways of promoting Open Access to research on campuses. All the attendees agreed to encourage their respective members to sign the Statement.

Since the conference, four other associations have signed the Statement including the United States Students Association. Open Access legislation continues to move forward within the United States.

Open Access Week Fliers, Posters and Buttons

Open Access Week, which occurred this year from October 18-24, promoted Open Access as a new norm in scholarship and research publishing. The Caucus has endorsed the worldwide campaign and has produced a two-sided flier that compares traditional proprietary publishing models with the Open

Access publishing model and promotes Open Access as an alternative to closed journals.

Graduate member locals hosted Open Access Week events on their campuses across the country and the Caucus produced a poster, handbill, and bookmark identifying different versions of less-restrictive copyright licences. In addition the Caucus developed and produced an Open Access button for graduate members to wear to express their support for Open Access publishing.

Graduate Student Principles for Intellectual Property Policy Negotiations

At the May National Annual General Meeting, the Caucus adopted Guiding Principles for Intellectual Property Policy Negotiations. Intellectual Property policies are being developed at member local campuses in response to the more aggressive commercialization of university research policies of the government of Canada and the institutions themselves. The Caucus formatted the Principles into a final publication for and distributed this publication to member local associations for the new school year.

Lobby Weeks

From October 4th to 8th, 2011, members of the Caucus executive participated in the Federation's Federal Lobby Weeks on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. Meeting with over 200 Members of Parliament, student union leaders presented our national vision for post-secondary education in the form of the submission, Public Education for the Public Good. The main recommendations include: to develop and implement a national vision for a high quality and affordable system of post-secondary education; to create a system to track success and measure results; to reduce overall student debt; calling on the government to recognize it's obligations to fund Aboriginal education and to foster innovation by funding research and graduate studies.

Campaign Material Packages

The Caucus updated and re-issued its campaign material to grad member locals. The packaged material included letters on SSHRC funding and Copyright, editorials on the Commercialization of Research and Copyright, and the Caucus' submission to the Copyright Consultations. Should member locals require more material, they are encouraged to contact the Caucus to order more.

Website

Using the Federation website service the Caucus has created a new standalone website at www.graduatelstudents.ca and www.cndt.ca. Information and resources regarding our campaigns, collaborative initiatives and media communications are all available on the website.

Coalition Work

Post-doctoral Fellow Job Security

In response to the worsening working conditions of post-doctoral fellows and the proliferation of post-docs on campus working for sub-standard wages and no benefits, the Caucus coordinated a joint press release that included labour unions that represent post-doctoral fellows in Canada.

The news release called upon the university administrations and the different levels of government to fully recognize post-doctoral fellows as academic employees and was signed by the Federation, the Canadian Association of University Teachers, the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3902 (have made an application to the labour relations board to represent post-docs at the University of Toronto, the University of Toronto Post-doctoral Association (representing over 2,000 post-docs), and the Public Service Alliance of Canada (representing post-docs across Canada including at the first post-doctoral union at University of Western Ontario).

OCUFA Conference

The Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations is the voice of 15,000 university faculty and academic librarians across Ontario. OCUFA represents 26 member faculty associations through on-campus support and public advocacy. OCUFA held its 2011 conference, *"The Race to Globalize Higher Education in Canada"* from January 21- 22 in Toronto. Caucus Chairperson Kimalee Phillip participated on one of the panels where she spoke to the internationalization agenda of post-secondary education from an international student's perspective.

Study on Teaching-Stream Faculty in Ontario Universities

Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) has sponsored a project to which the purpose of the study is to conduct a critical impact analysis of the creation of a faculty stream in Ontario universities who would focus nearly exclusively on teaching and learning. Caucus Chairperson Kimalee Phillip was interviewed for the study and presented feedback on what some of the possible implications would be if universities were to press more towards teaching-stream faculty options.

Federation – OCUFA Poll

According to the results of a new study conducted regarding post-secondary education by the OCUFA and the Federation, 55 per cent of respondents think tuition fees have risen to unacceptable levels, while 65 per cent of those polled believe that the current government has not performed any better than the

previous Harris Conservative government in terms of the higher education system. On Jan. 27th, both the Federation and OCUFA held a press conference on Parliament Hill to release the results from the poll.

Canadian Consortium for Research

The Canadian Consortium for Research (CCR) brings together researchers, students, and practitioners from fifteen national scholarly and professional organisations to discuss federal research policy. From time to time, Consortium representatives meet with federal policy-makers in order to advance the interests of publicly-funded research in Canada.

In 2008, the Consortium moved its website over to the Federation's server and has re-built its site using the Students' Union Website Service. Membership email lists are also maintained by the Federation as in-kind support to the Consortium's secretariat.

The Consortium has responded negatively to the 2009 budget cuts to the granting councils, political interference in the granting councils allocation of funding, directed Canada Graduate Scholarships, and the appointment of pharmaceutical representatives to the board of Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Recent actions to address these issues included an ad in the Hill Times outlining the Consortium's positions, a report to the Budget 2010 consultations, and representatives, including representatives from the Caucus, met with members of parliament including the Minister of Finance, Jim Flaherty to outline the concerns of the research community.

The CCR continues to monitor and lobby for issues relating to the larger research community. A letter was sent to CCR members to encourage individual members of societies to write the federal government to address concerns regarding their research agenda.

The Canadian Research Integrity Committee

The Canadian Research Integrity Committee (CRIC) is a newly formed coalition of academic institutions, research granting councils, and other parties involved within the research community. CRIC is coordinated through Health Canada's Office of the Chief

Scientist and its current membership includes national umbrella research organisations (such as the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences) and several health research groups.

The Caucus continues to work other CRIC members to conduct a national survey that will allow for the development of an accurate picture of research misconduct in Canada.

Canadian Association of University Teachers

The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) is the national voice for academic staff, representing over 65 000 teachers, librarians, researchers, and contingent academic staff. CAUT is one of the Federation's closest allies in the fight for quality, accessible, public post-secondary education.

On July 28, National Chairperson, Dave Molenhuis, National Deputy Chairperson, Shelley Melanson and National Researcher, Graham Cox, met with representatives David Robinson and Robert Johnson of the Canadian Association of University Teachers. The purpose of the meeting was to exchange information on national campaigns of the National Graduate Caucus including workplace health and safety, opposition to the recent changes to the long-form census, the effect of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement on post-secondary education, and anti-corporatisation of university campuses campaigns.

Conseil national des cycles supérieurs (CNCS) de la Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec

The CNCS is the graduate and post-graduate student wing of la Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec (FEUQ), which currently represents seventeen member associations and about 145,000 students in Québec. The CNCS is an important coalition partner interested in addressing many of the same concerns raised by the Caucus, particularly those related to graduate program restructuring, and student representation at the Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS). Ongoing communication with the CNCS executive has been frequent and productive. Discussions focused on a range of issues, most notably, on the lobby efforts for a graduate student seat on the federal funding agencies' councils.

Canadian Association for Graduate Studies

The Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS) is a not-for-profit organisation mandated to promote graduate studies in Canada and whose membership consists primarily of deans of graduate studies. Membership in CAGS is open to all institutions with graduate programs, as well as to organisations with related interests, including research librarians and graduate-students' unions. The National Graduate Caucus has been a member of the CAGS since membership was extended to stakeholder groups beyond graduate schools.

CAGS held their annual conference and general meeting in Toronto, Ontario, from November 2 to 6. Unfortunately the meeting was held at the Delta Chelsea Hotel, which was under a boycott notice by UNITE HERE Local 75, which was on strike at Delta-owned hotels across Toronto. Efforts were made to convince the CAGS Executive Board to move the location of the CAGS meeting or delay the meeting until after a settlement had been reached by explaining that many delegates would not cross picket-lines. However, the CAGS Executive Board voted not to move the meeting with the graduate student representative being the

only dissenting vote. Further, the board voted to not refund registration fees to those that elected not to cross the Local 75 picket line.

The Caucus organised the two student-only meetings of CAGS to be held off-site at Ryerson University so that all graduate student representatives that had come to the meeting could meet without crossing the picket line. In addition, print-outs of the presentations that Federation and Caucus representatives were to make at CAGS were distributed at the picket line to the attendees with letters attached explaining why graduate students were not inside the conference.

Representatives and staff from the Federation, students from Toronto member locals, and members of other associations that had moved their meetings from the hotel, including the Crown Attorney's Association, Canadian Union of Public Employees, the Ontario Association of Consultants, Councillors, Psychometrists and Psychotherapists, and other labour groups walked the picket line with Local 75 during the CAGS conference. Former Local 94 representative Federico Carvajal held the student seat on the CAGS Board of Directors from 2008 until this meeting where the position was rotated to Laurent Viau, a representative of the Conseil national des cycles supérieurs (CNCS) of the Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec (FEUQ). The CNCS is the only other student organisation to have a voting position within CAGS. The representative from CNCS will hold the position for two years in accordance with the CAGS bylaws.