

Ending the crisis in post-secondary education

One in a series of election fact sheets from the Ontario Public Service Employees Union

After eight years of Tory government, Ontario's community colleges and universities are in crisis. Tuition fees are up. Funding is down. Enrolments are up. Staffing is down. Aided by Queen's Park, private companies are "buying in" to colleges and universities to boost their own profits – and to influence programs.

It doesn't have to be this way. The next government can improve post-secondary education in Ontario. Here's how:

1. Invest in operating grants

Ontario colleges and universities are strapped for cash. Starved for funding, they've been forced to hike tuition and cozy up to corporate sponsors. This is wrong. Poor students shouldn't be subsidizing rich companies. Colleges and universities need stable, long-term, public funding to hire full-time faculty and support staff and maintain clean, safe spaces that give students room to learn.

2. Make sure there are enough fully-funded spaces

The double cohort is an urgent problem. Our colleges and universities need money to keep pace with higher enrolments. They need to hire more staff, control class sizes, and keep a lid on tuition fees.

3. Reduce and re-regulate tuition fees.

Education is a right that should be based on ability to learn, not ability to pay. High tuition fees block access to education. Out-of-control student debt must be wiped out. Tuition fees should be regulated, frozen and then eliminated.

4. Stop commercializing academic programs

The new private for-profit universities created under Bill 132 should be turned over to the

public sector. All disciplines deserve fair funding, whether or not they have a corporate sponsor.

5. Replace SuperBuild with a publicly-accountable construction fund

Our colleges and universities shouldn't have to look for corporate partners to meet the needs of a growing student population. Governments can borrow money more cheaply than any corporation. Public financing keeps post-secondary education strong enough to work for the public good, not private interests.

6. Stop privatizing education

Privatization takes public dollars out of education and hands them over to private companies. These companies' loyalty is to their shareholders. On the other hand, college and university employees work for all Ontarians. It's time to end the privatization and contracting-out of services at our post-secondary institutions.

7. Respect francophone education rights

The Tories illegally closed the only college serving 165,000 francophones in southwestern and central Ontario. We must re-establish Collège des Grands Lacs to serve francophones in Toronto and the historic Franco-Ontarian communities of Niagara, Huronia and Windsor.

8. Recognize the rights of all college workers

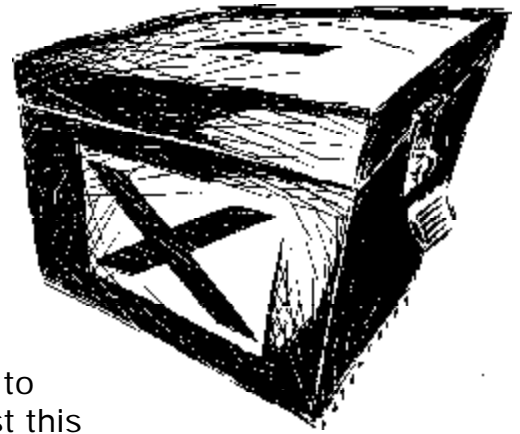
Library, custodial, maintenance, clerical, technical, teaching, and counselling workers are an integral part of our college communities. Yet it is against the law for many college workers to unionize to protect their rights. The *Colleges Collective Bargaining Act* must be changed to allow **all** college workers to join a union.

It's all about
Public
Vote
2003 **Services**

We've got to save our colleges and universities. The ballot box is the place to do it.

Here's how you can help save post-secondary education in Ontario:

1. Vote. Voter turnout in the last Ontario election was just 58.3 per cent of those eligible. Low turnouts mean voting has never been more important – and your vote has never been worth more.
2. Work to defeat your local Tory. If Conservatives were going to help our colleges, they would have done it by now.
3. Help an education-friendly candidate. Call the candidate's campaign office. Offer to take a lawn or window sign. Wear a button. Volunteer to go door-to-door to talk to your neighbours. Sign up for a phone bank. Help out in the campaign office.
4. Urge all your co-workers to help oust this government – and start rebuilding post-secondary education in Ontario.



Talk to your candidates

You've got a right to ask questions of the people who want to represent you. On your doorstep, on the street, or at all-candidates meetings, ask candidates what they will do to strengthen our colleges. Will they:

- invest more money into college and university operating grants?
- make sure there are enough fully-funded spaces in our colleges and universities for qualified students?
- reduce tuition fees and end the deregulation of tuition fees?
- halt and reverse commercialization and corporate influence over academic programs?
- replace SuperBuild with a publicly-financed, accountable construction fund?
- halt and reverse the contracting out of post-secondary education services?
- allow all college workers to unionize?

Take Action Now

The future of post-secondary education in Ontario for years to come will be decided on election day. Play a part in this election. Together, we can make things better.

To find out how to get involved in the OPSEU campaign, check our web site at www.opseu.org.

