



**For Immediate Release
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McGuinty Government Provides One-Stop Shop on Student Assistance

TORONTO, ON - Today, the McGuinty government unveiled a new Web site that will provide Ontario's students and their families with the necessary information on "how to finance" a postsecondary education in Ontario, says the College Student Alliance (CSA).

"Access to this timely information will assist not only students but their families as they plan for the future," says Matt Jackson, President of the College Student Alliance. "We have been asking the government to make this information available in a one-stop shop environment, so students and their families will be able to get a true reflection of what assistance is actually available across the province."

This new Web site - www.ontario.ca/osap - will provide Ontarians with information on the cost of their chosen program, the amount of government grants and loans available and the contribution their family is expected to make to their education; along with what institutional assistance is available at colleges and universities. Our colleges and universities currently provide over \$496 million to students through bursaries and scholarships annually.

"With the appropriate information now being made available to students and continual investments in student financial assistance by the government all students especially those from under-represented groups like low- and middle-income students, Aboriginal peoples, students with disabilities, and first generation students will have an increased opportunity to make it into our colleges and universities," said Jackson.

Access to what assistance is available could not have come at a better time, as we are seeing that college and college/university students are accumulating more and more debt. The Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation (CMSF) reports that 44 per cent of college students in 2005-06 report borrowing more than \$10,000, this is up from 32 per cent from just three years ago.

"With the re-introduction of grants like the Ontario Access Grant & Millennium-Ontario Access Grant and even more students being made eligible for the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) the government is poised to increase accessibility across the board and tackle the challenges of increasing debt," says Tyler Charlebois, Director of Advocacy. "This new Web site and increased investments are positive signs that the government is listening to students and their concerns."

The College Student Alliance (CSA) is an advocacy and services organization which has been proudly serving Ontario's college and college/university students since 1967. The CSA currently represents 16 colleges and 22 student councils with over 109,000 full-time student members throughout the province.

For further information:

Tyler Charlebois
Director of Advocacy
College Student Alliance
T: (416) 340-1212
C: (416) 346-9951
E: advocacy@collegestudentalliance.ca

372 Richmond Street West, Suite 301 Toronto, ON Canada M5V 1X6
T 416.340.1212 TF 1.800.660.9656 F 647.438.1979 W www.collegestudentalliance.ca