



For Immediate Release
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Ontario Students to Provincial Premiers and Prime Minister: Canada's Future Depends on Higher Education

TORONTO, ON - Student representatives from the College Student Alliance (CSA), Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA), and the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance (OUSA) came together today at Queen's Park to release "The Education Generation: a Blueprint for an Economically Competitive and Socially Just Canada." Representatives from partner provincial student organizations also released this report in similar fashion across Canada.

The report, directed at the Council of the Federation and Prime Minister Stephen Harper, argues that a well-funded and accessible higher education system is the key to strengthening Canada's future economic and social health.

"We've come together to send a clear message to Canada's premiers and the prime minister: inter-jurisdictional haggling must come to an end," said Paris Meilleur, President of the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance. "A coherent national vision for post-secondary education is urgently needed to secure Canada's future social and economic success."

To achieve the goal of a national vision for post-secondary education, the report identifies three priorities requiring urgent action:

- Provincial premiers, territorial leaders, and the prime minister must dedicate a First Minister's Conference to post-secondary education. Involving post-secondary stakeholders, the outcome of the conference must be an accord that articulates a vision, goals and objectives at the national level.

"Provincial premiers and territorial leaders started down the path to a national strategy last February at the landmark Competing for Tomorrow summit," said Phillippe Ouellette, National Director of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations. "Unfortunately, their leadership has stalled in recent months. We ask that they regain the momentum by insisting upon a First Minister's conference focused on post-secondary education."

- Institute a dedicated Federal investment in post-secondary education. An initial funding level of at least \$4 billion in annual cash transfers is urgently needed to match funding levels from 1992/1993, adjusted to inflation and demographic growth.

"Our provinces and territories have been starved of federal funds for post-secondary education for the past fifteen years," said Meilleur. "To achieve broad national objectives for learning, the federal government must become a full partner in funding post-secondary education."

- Student assistance must be reformed to improve access and affordability. The review must be pan-Canadian in scope, and must examine federal and provincial student loans, grants, tax-incentives, savings programs, and the soon-to-expire Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation.

"The financial aid system in Canada is a Byzantine mix of tax credits, saving incentives, loans and grants," said Tyler Charlebois, Director of Advocacy of the College Student Alliance. "Simply put, student assistance isn't effectively or efficiently meeting the needs of students." For a copy of the report, please visit www.ousa.ca, www.casa.ca, www.csaontario.org

We are a collective of eight provincial and national student organizations representing approximately 600,000 post-secondary students from across the country. Our collective includes the Alliance of Nova Scotia Student Associations, the Alberta College and Technical Institute Student Executive Council, the Council of Alberta University Students, the College Student Alliance, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, the Graduate Students' Alliance of Canada, the New Brunswick Student Alliance, and the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance.

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