

AMS FEDERAL LOBBY TRIP



Our Partners

For our federal lobbying, we are a part of the Undergraduates of Canadian Research-Intensive Universities (UCRU).

This is an informal coalition of student associations from the U15 schools who advocate for students to the federal government on our shared priorities and goals. We currently are made up of 9/15 of the U15 schools we represented over 250,000 students across Canada. This year, Cristina was elected as Chair.



Our Recommendations:

1. Reallocate the tuition tax credit to student grants
2. Fast-tracking international students into the Canadian workforce
3. Supporting Indigenous students
4. Expand Canadian undergraduate research

Our Opportunities

- Build a more established presence with returning executives, strong transition
- Follow up from meetings
- First post-election budget
- Minority Government

Reallocating the Tuition Tax Credit

- The Government of Canada should eliminate the tuition tax credit and reallocate the \$1.8 billion used to needs-based up-front grants through the Canada Student Loan Program.
 - Claims are decreasing, the PBO says the program is inefficient
 - Families from the highest-income quintiles are the ones benefiting the most from tuition tax credits on a yearly basis
 - Often used by spouses, parents - not students
 - Can't pay tuition with a tax credit

Supporting International Students

- Fast-Tracking International Students into the Canadian Workforce by modifying the Canadian Experience Class Express Entry (CECEE) program to count university job experience.
 - Canada has become a destination for a high quality university degree for international students, but international students are facing hurdles when obtaining Permanent Residency.
 - With a small legislative modification, the CECEE program would be able to count skilled university work experiences (co-op, work learn and research posts) when applying through this program.
- Further, the federal government should use funding from the new IES Targeted Digital Marketing Strategy to support the expansion of programs like Nova Scotia's Study and Stay, that informs and supports international students on the processes surrounding studying and working in Canada

Supporting Indigenous Students

- Increase funding for the Post-Secondary Student Support Program and initiate a broad consultation with Indigenous students, communities and organizations over how the Government can best implement the program.
 - PSSSP is currently underfunded at \$65.5 million a year from the federal government
 - The AFN estimates \$90 million a year will be necessary to close the attainment gap
- Ensure funding is equally accessible to students both on and off reserve and publish an annual report on progress in this area. (TRC Calls to Action 8 & 9)
- Commit to fostering programs that include Indigenous Language revitalization projects; call for more Indigenous language offerings in post-secondary institutions (TRC Call to Action 16)
- Focus on developing more opportunities for Indigenous knowledge practices to make their way into classrooms by providing funding and resources to postsecondary institutions to establish and improve Indigenous Studies Departments (TRC Call to Action 65)

Expand Canadian Undergraduate Research

- Strengthen the Undergraduate Student Research Awards (USRA) program by increasing funding and expanding the eligibility to include health science, social sciences and the humanities.
 - Current program restricted to NSERC
 - Reimbursed to \$9.38/hour for a 35-hour work week
 - Amount has not been increased since the PBO recommended it be
 - \$35.1 million in new funding per year will increase wages and begin expansion to SSHRC and CIHR

Outcomes

Had over 75 meetings with MPs, Ministers, Department heads, as well as other important staffers and partners.

- Met with Liberal, Conservative, NDP, and Green party MPs from provinces in every region.
 - The leader of the NDP, multiple ministers and ministerial staff in offices governing almost all of our major asks, as well as multiple members of Finance Committee.
 - Employment and Social Development, and Indigenous Services.
- Multiple members planned to speak at caucus and to forward our materials onto members on Finance Committee.
- Hopeful for some favourable additions in Budget 2020.
 - With minority government, we saw a lot of opportunity for cross-party collaboration.



Opportunities

We need to seriously think and plan for what we want the future of our lobbying with UCRU to look like.

- Formalizing UCRU, building capacity, and considering other partnerships
 - Creating a long-term plan
 - Applying to be a federal not-for-profit corporation
 - Hiring a staffperson in Ottawa
- Fixing gaps in our federal advocacy for graduate students
 - Considering potential partnerships
 - Explore expanding UCRU to graduate student societies



Any questions?