



CSA responds to the 2023 Ontario Budget

March 27, 2023

TORONTO, ON - The 2023 Ontario Budget [Building a Strong Ontario](#) was released last week.

While we welcome any investments into the four major areas we identified to the province in our budget submission, we are left disappointed in the lack of targeted funding that keeps pace with inflation and the current cost of living crisis.

President of OPSEU/SEFPO, JP Hornick, shared their concerns:

“Ontario has a short-staffing crisis, and investing in our public colleges - and college students - is key to fixing it. But, instead of investing in our public colleges and providing support for students who are facing astronomical housing costs, food insecurity, high tuition fees and worsening mental health, the Ford government continues to put private interests, and shareholder profits, ahead of people. Last week’s budget saw hundreds of millions of dollars in tax cuts for manufacturing. That’s a huge gift to wealthy insiders, while draining the public coffers – and it comes at a steep cost to our public services and the people who depend on them, including students. Enough is enough! We must work together to tackle the cost-of-living crisis and make life better for all students and workers. Ontario college students can count on support and solidarity from OPSEU/SEFPO to achieve it.”

We at the CSA are pleased to share OPSEU/SEFPO’s position and appreciate their solidarity and steadfast support of college students.

We were pleased to see the government is investing an additional \$5 million to launch a second round of the Ontario Micro-credentials Challenge Fund to support the creation of more micro-credential projects.

The historic investment in Guelph University’s new collaborative Doctor of Veterinary medicine program with Lakehead University is a great example of innovative ways investing in post-secondary can improve Ontario’s economic recovery by boosting the number of practicing veterinarians in under-service communities and promoting growth in the agri-food sector.

CSA will continue to advocate and ask the Ontario Government to prioritize post-secondary students by:

- 1) Improving students’ **mental health** by:
 - a. Providing multi-year funding to Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health (CICMH)
 - b. Reinstating the Postsecondary Mental Health Innovation Fund

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- 2) Improving access to **affordable housing** for students by increasing infrastructure grants for affordable on-campus and off-campus co-op housing developments through grass roots partnerships.
- 3) Addressing the growing **food insecurity** crisis by providing emergency funding aid for campus and community food banks.
- 4) Addressing tuition freezes that disproportionately affect **international students** by increasing OSAP operating grants for colleges and supplementing education costs for domestic students.

Our 2022 [cost of living survey](#) found that students were spending \$1200 more each month than they were earning. The [liv.rent 2023 report](#) found that there was an average \$400 increase in monthly rent in the GTA, which would increase the monthly income deficit of the average student to a whopping \$1600, greatly adding to the debt burden on students.

We urge the provincial government to listen to the unified voices of Ontario College students and take action by increasing funding and resources in these areas to best target the needs of, not just post-secondary students, but Ontarians as a whole.

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About College Student Alliance:

College Student Alliance (CSA) advocates on behalf of Ontario college students in partnership with student leaders. Through our member student associations, CSA represents the collective voice of Ontario's college students.

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