

## **NDP Response:** Canadian Association of University Teachers

**1. Average undergraduate tuition fees have tripled over the last two decades. Fees for some professional programs have risen even faster. This is putting the promise of a post-secondary education and training beyond the financial reach of more and more Canadians, particularly those from equity-seeking groups.**

**→ What steps or new measures would your party take to make post-secondary education more affordable and accessible?**

Today, thanks to years of Liberal inaction and Conservative cuts, the average student with debt owes \$27,000 at the end of an undergraduate degree. That's not fair, and it's an inequality that sets young people up to fail. New Democrats are committed to ensuring that every Canadian has lifelong access to publicly-funded education. In the long-term, that means working with the provinces and the territories to cap and reduce tuition fees and building towards making post-secondary education part of our public education system so that kids can go from kindergarten to career without the barrier of cost. To make education more affordable right now, and to help recent graduates, an NDP government will begin by eliminating interest rates on student loans because we believe that no government should profit from student debt. We will also forgive up to \$20,000 in student debt and permanently double non-repayable Canada Student Grants.

**2. Fundamental science and research is essential to our collective capacity to solve current and future crises – including pandemics and climate change. While funding has increased for fundamental science and research in recent years, federal support for the conduct of university/college research remains at 40 per cent below levels recommended by the Advisory Panel on Federal Support for Fundamental Science.**

**→ How will your party support science and research?**

As the Naylor report highlighted, Canada has fallen behind our peer countries in fundamental research. An NDP government will fully implement the recommendations of the Naylor report. The pandemic has also made innovative health research more important than ever. New Democrats will work with universities and health professionals to make sure that public health research on critical health issues continues to flourish. Finally, research will be a crucial element of Canada's response to climate change, especially research that will help to develop clean tech solutions that will lower Canada's carbon emissions while providing resources and services that Canadian families depend upon. An NDP government will boost funding for research into clean tech.

**3. Public funding now represents less than half of total university revenue in Canada. Public spending on post-secondary education has not kept pace with enrolment over the past several decades and this creates a negative ripple effect on the post-secondary workforce, on student affordability and generational debt, and on Canada's global ranking as a place for research and innovation. The last federal top-up for post-secondary education through the Canada Social Transfer was in 2008.**

**→ How will your party assist in ensuring a high-quality, affordable and accessible post-secondary education system in Canada?**

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New Democrats are committed to ensuring that every Canadian has lifelong access to publicly-funded education. We will work with the provinces and the territories to cap and reduce tuition fees and build towards making post-secondary education part of our public education system so that kids can go from kindergarten to career without the barrier of cost.

**4. Indigenous peoples have inherent and Treaty rights to education, including post-secondary education. And yet, financial barriers and the legacy of colonialism persists in both the gaps in access and attainment of post-secondary education between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Only 37% of people with Aboriginal identity aged 25-64 have a college diploma or university degree, compared to overall attainment of 54% among Canadians within the same age bracket.**

**→ How would your party close the gap on access and attainment of post-secondary education for Indigenous students?**

Too many Indigenous young people still do not have the opportunity for a quality education. Liberal and Conservative governments have failed to provide core funding for on-reserve education and to provide adequate support for Indigenous post-secondary students. An NDP government will ensure that every child is provided with a safe place to learn, whether on or off reserve. This will ensure that more First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students have the opportunity to complete elementary and secondary education and will be able to pursue post-secondary education.

An NDP government will also bridge the gap to post-secondary education through expanded financial assistance for Indigenous students, as well as expanding distance education options for rural and remote students. We will also implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action 62 and 63, indigenizing the academy, and ensuring that all Canadians are aware of the contributions of Indigenous Peoples to our country.

**5. One-in-three academic staff in Canada are working contract-to-contract, underemployed in the gig economy with some earning less than a living wage. The non-permanence of contract academic staff makes it difficult for them to supervise and mentor students or contribute new knowledge as trained researchers and scientists. We know that women, racialized and marginalised individuals are overrepresented in contract academic work, however, beyond this, there is, however, a shortage of reliable data about these workers in our sector.**

**→ Acknowledging that what gets measured, gets changed, would you commit to collecting better data on workers across sectors? How would you address the rise in precarious work more generally?**

As low-paid, insecure work has grown, the Liberal government has told Canadians they just need to get used to it. New Democrats believe we shouldn't just get use to precarious work. We need to fight for better wages and working conditions for all workers. An NDP government will raise the floor for workers by increasing the federal minimum wage to \$20

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an hour and fighting misclassification of workers so that all workers have access to the benefits they deserve. Our investments will create new, high wage jobs across the country while also raising the bar for workers in caring sectors, such as long-term care and child care. We will also make sure that Statistics Canada is constantly and consistently improving its data collection on precarious forms of employment across sectors.