



POLICY PAPER

Ancillary Fees

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ABOUT OUSA

OUSA represents the interests of over 140,000 professional and undergraduate, full-time and part-time university students at eight student associations across Ontario. Our vision is for an accessible, affordable, accountable, and high quality post-secondary education in Ontario. To achieve this vision we've come together to develop solutions to challenges facing higher education, build broad consensus for our policy options, and lobby government to implement them.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ontario's undergraduate students have been asked to shoulder the burden of rapidly rising tuition and associated costs of attending university. One of the most common means of providing new funds for building maintenance, capital projects, and student services has been through ancillary fees.¹ Ancillary fees in Ontario have been rapidly increasing—by over 20% since 2010—and they comprise, on average, about 16% of the total fees paid by students in all university Arts and Science programs.² As universities scramble to subsidize their operations, students are unfairly being tasked with paying ever increasing ancillary fees. This places increased financial burdens on Ontario's students, and raising serious concerns about the transparency, accountability, and fair cost sharing principles that students feel should permeate throughout the sector.

Ancillary fees require a distinct, clear, and robust policy separate from the existing tuition framework. Establishing a standalone protocol will improve the transparency and accountability of ancillary fees levied upon students. It should also mandate student control and student union autonomy in regards to changes in ancillary fees at each institution, and effectively implement a fair cost sharing structure consistent throughout the province.

THE PROBLEM

Inadequate fee guidelines

The current tuition framework neglects the importance of ancillary fees. Given the steady increase of ancillary fees it is essential that the province mandate a consistent protocol to ensure a transparent, accountable, and equitable post-secondary sector.

Opaque and unaccountable frameworks

The administration, origin, and definition of ancillary fees should be fully transparent to the general student population. However, the purposes or origins of ancillary fees are often poorly communicated to students, and the provincial term 'compulsory non-tuition-related ancillary fee' is not used consistently at every Ontario university. It is also unclear whether fees are being charged on a per-term or flat fee basis and the payment of ancillary fees is sometimes done in an inconsistent manner.

There must always be a clear protocol for the establishment or increase of ancillary fees that can be easily accessed by all members of a university community, and these fees should be regularly reviewed to ensure their relevance. Unfortunately, ancillary fee protocol structures and review practices do not always lend themselves to systems of transparency and accountability. This is partly due to the fact that the province does not currently mandate that every institution create and enforce an ancillary fee protocol agreement.

Obscure fee types

All of the costs borne by students for academic evaluation and instruction should be paid for through tuition fees only, and mandatory courses should not have financial barriers in place. Nevertheless, students are being asked to purchase digital online evaluation packages in compulsory courses either as part of a textbook bundle or as a standalone product. High and unregulated prices for textbooks, courseware, and publications in compulsory courses also place significant financial pressures on students. Furthermore, mandatory field trip fees for compulsory courses can create inequities in accessing mandatory courses.

¹ Michelle Jeong, "Universities loading extra fees on top of tuition: 'They are unfair'," National Post (September 11, 2014), <http://business.financialpost.com/personal-finance/canada-tuition-fees>

² Council of Ontario Universities, "Operating Revenue – General Expendable Funds by Source of Fund, 2005-06 – 2014-15," accessed October 21, 2016, <http://cou.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Table-3-Operating-Revenue-General-Funds-by-Source-of-Funding.pdf>

All willing and qualified students should be able to benefit from work-integrated learning opportunities during their university career without facing significant financial burdens. The current exemption in the provincial *Ancillary Fee Guidelines* for work placement fees allows institutions to charge high amounts for placement services, creating an inequity for students wishing to partake in work-integrated learning.

System-wide and vendor fees are exempt from the current ancillary fee protocol requirements, and are often implemented without student approval or consultation. As such, system-wide and vendor fees represent a method for universities to unfairly skirt student approval of compulsory ancillary fees.

Limited student union autonomy and oversight

Student unions should have complete control over their own operations and be solely accountable to their members. They should also have the ability to set their own fee structures in accordance with Ontario legislation, and have their fees collected by the university on their behalf. However, student unions have had fees withheld by university administrations as a method to shape the actions of the organizations, and some universities charge ‘administrative fees’ for the collection of ancillary fees.

Students should have oversight and control over the ancillary fees they pay, and should also have complete authority over whether or not a new institutional ancillary fee is implemented. However, not all Ontario universities allow majority student oversight on ancillary fees, and the current provincial *Ancillary Fee Guidelines* permit all ancillary fees levied prior to the 1993-94 academic year to be exempt from review.

Disproportionate cost sharing

Students should not have to disproportionately cover the costs of operational funding or funding for ancillary services in universities. All groups accessing services funded through ancillary fees should contribute comparable amounts to the service. However, undergraduate students are unfairly burdened with financing services and goods that benefit the entire university community.

Student-focused capital projects should not be exempt from standards of responsible cost sharing at any Ontario university. If students choose to contribute to a capital project, they should have the ability to have their concerns and priorities heard with respect to the management of the space. Upon completion, students often have little to no oversight of projects paid for, despite being disproportionately responsible for financing campus buildings and enhancements that benefit the entire university.

Essential student services, including mental health counselling, sexual violence centres, and support services, and offices for students with disabilities, should demonstrate a system of responsible cost sharing. Unfortunately, these services are often funded in part by or solely by student ancillary fees at several institutions in Ontario. Ancillary student services that support student development have become nearly completely dependent on ancillary fees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Establish a standalone ancillary fee protocol

In order to develop a more standardized ancillary fee structure across all Ontario universities, the province must develop a separate and distinct standalone ancillary fee protocol. This would help to better articulate the definitions and exceptions for each specific type of ancillary fee, as well as ensure that each university is mandated to comply with this protocol. Since university administrators and student government representatives are equally impacted by this protocol, it is essential that both parties have equal say in the consultation and drafting phases.

Mandate public disclosure of all ancillary fees

Through a standalone ancillary fee protocol, it should be mandated that all fiscal material,

including budgets, audits, and explanatory breakdowns of ancillary fees be publicly disclosed in a way that is readily available to students. It must also be mandated that institutions levy and collect all ancillary fees, including tuition and non-tuition related ancillary fees, through a centralized online system. It is also pertinent that all ancillary fees be regularly reviewed by each institution every five years.

Outline and articulate policies surrounding diverse fee types

The province should eliminate the exemption for digital learning materials, such as test/assessment tools – as well as system-wide and vendor fees – in the existing *Ancillary Fee Guidelines*. Investments into open educational resources and textbooks as options for instructors would also prevent continued misuse of course-related fees. Clarity from the province regarding which fees are allowable is also needed in order to prevent institutions from charging students mandatory fees for any field trips in compulsory courses. Furthermore, government investment into work-integrated learning services on campus would reduce dependency on student ancillary fees.

Entrench student union autonomy and oversight

Students recommend that the government pass legislation recognizing student union autonomy and that this autonomy can only be limited through direct intervention by a neutral third party in the event of gross financial irregularities and/or bylaw violations. An essential aspect of this legislation would also restrict institutions from charging administrative fees for collecting ancillary fees on behalf of student unions. Furthermore, all institutions should have an oversight committee consisting of at least 51% student representation responsible for the review of all ancillary fees regardless of the date they were initially implemented.

Implement fair cost sharing structures

The province must increase operational funding such that operational funding is not disproportionately reliant on ancillary fees. The province should create priority funding for projects that enhance student development such as student centres, health centres, and athletic facilities. The province must prioritize investment in essential student services and supports, which include mental health counseling services and sexual violence centres, to reduce institutional reliance on ancillary fees and demonstrate a system of responsible cost sharing.

INTRODUCTION

Ontario's undergraduate students have been asked to shoulder the burden of rapidly rising tuition and associated costs of attending university. Tuition regulation, though still allowing tuition to increase beyond inflation, has led universities to look for alternative revenue sources to meet their financial obligations. One of the most common means of providing new funds for building maintenance, capital projects, and student services has been through ancillary fees.³

According to the Ontario government, ancillary fees are defined as any “fee imposed or administered by a given institution, or one of its constituent parts or its federated or affiliated institutions, in addition to regular tuition fees, which a student pays for a service or product”.⁴ Compulsory non-tuition related ancillary fees come in many forms, and the provincial government does not regulate them. Rather, ancillary fee protocols are implemented at each institution and are done through collective agreements between university administrations and their respective student associations.⁵ The breakdown of ancillary fees can be categorized under a variety of headings: student activity fees (program-specific societies and/or student union services and operations), athletic fees (fitness facilities, recreational and intramural programs, and operations), housing fees (placement for housing on or off campus), health insurance fees (mandatory alternative coverage for basic health, vision, and dental claims), transportation/parking fees (municipal/regional public transit), student centre fees (operations and maintenance of student space), and other miscellaneous fees (capital projects, access copyright, sustainability, student services, etc.).

Ancillary fees in Ontario have been rapidly increasing; in fact, fees have increased by over 20% since 2010, and they comprise, on average, about 16% of the total fees paid by students in all university Arts and Science programs.⁶ As universities scramble to subsidize their operations, students are unfairly being tasked with paying increasingly large amounts – and increasingly varied types – of ancillary fees in Ontario. These increases have far surpassed the province's inflation rate of roughly 9% since 2010.⁷ This is placing increased financial burdens on Ontario's undergraduate students, and raising serious concerns about the transparency, accountability, and fair cost sharing principles that students feel should permeate throughout the sector.

The purpose of this policy paper is to capture students' concerns about the current and future state of ancillary fees, as well as provide solutions that seek to maintain fairness in a system of fees that continue to limit the overall accessibility, affordability, and accountability of the Ontario university sector.

This paper will offer a series of recommendations that are representative of the principles and concerns of Ontario undergraduate students. These recommendations will be aimed at the Ontario government, with a respect for evidence-based policy maintained throughout. This paper will highlight and advocate for the following overarching goals: improving the overall transparency and accountability of ancillary fees levied upon undergraduate students, mandating student control and student governance autonomy in regards to changes in ancillary fees, and effectively implementing a fair cost sharing structure at a provincial level.

³ Michelle Jeong, “Universities loading extra fees on top of tuition: ‘They are unfair’,” *National Post* (September 11, 2014), <http://business.financialpost.com/personal-finance/canada-tuition-fees>

⁴ Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, *The Ontario Operating Funds Distribution Manual*, (Toronto: ON, 2009), 67.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Council of Ontario Universities, “Operating Revenue – General Expendable Funds by Source of Fund, 2005-06 – 2014-15,” accessed October 21, 2016, <http://cou.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Table-3-Operating-Revenue-General-Funds-by-Source-of-Funding.pdf>

⁷ *Ibid.*

It is our hope that these evidence-based policy recommendations are seriously considered by the provincial government and that we can work together to improve the accessibility, affordability, quality, and accountability of the university sector for students across Ontario.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are the same definitions as outlined in the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities' *Tuition Fee Framework and Ancillary Fee Guidelines for Publicly-Assisted Universities, 2013-14 to 2016-17*:

Ancillary Fee:

An ancillary fee is defined as a fee imposed or administered by a given institution, or one of its constituent parts or its federated or affiliated institutions, in addition to regular tuition fees, which a student pays for a service or product. This is the definition used in the legislation, but OUSA considers ancillary fees to also encompass fees for student clubs and organizations.

Compulsory Ancillary Fee:

A compulsory ancillary fee is defined as a fee imposed or administered by a given institution, or one of its constituent parts or its federated or affiliated institutions, in addition to regular tuition fees, which a student is required to pay in order to enrol in, or successfully complete, any credit course.

Compulsory Course:

A compulsory course is defined, by the Ministry, as one that a student is required to take in order to fulfill the requirements of his or her program or degree.

Student Governments:

The term student governments is defined as the minimum number of student organizations which have both elected leadership and by-laws setting out their methods of operation and which, when viewed in combination at an individual institution, represent all students who are eligible to be represented by a student organization.

Student Government Representatives:

The term student government representatives are defined as one or more representatives from each of the student governments as defined above.

Compulsory Tuition-Related Ancillary Fees:

This term refers to fees that are levied to cover the costs of items that are normally paid for out of operating or capital revenue. Institutions are not allowed to charge compulsory tuition-related ancillary fees. This includes any fee related to the confirmation of credential completion and any fee for providing a graduation certificate.

Compulsory Non-Tuition-Related Ancillary Fees:

This term refers to fees that are levied to cover the costs of items that are not normally paid for out of operating or capital revenue. All compulsory non-tuition-related ancillary fees levied by a university or related institution must:

- be approved by the governing body; and
- be announced prior to collection through the institution's calendar and/or published fee schedule(s).

The fee announcement must provide a breakdown of all compulsory non-tuition-related ancillary fees. The announcement must explain the purpose(s) of the fee sufficiently to allow students to understand the materials, services or facilities that have been rendered through payment of the fee(s).

When introducing a new fee or modifying an existing fee, institutions must:

- Provide a full rationale for each fee, including the reasons for its compulsory nature, any information necessary for student governments and governing bodies to understand the purpose of the fee, the costs included in calculating the fee level, the students for whom the fee will be compulsory, the total revenue available from the fee and the process used for developing the fee; and

- Respond with a full explanation to inquiries made by student governments in connection with concerns about any ancillary fee.

Compulsory non-tuition-related ancillary fees can neither be increased nor expanded to include new fees except through the implementation of an ancillary fee protocol. Introduction of new or increases to existing compulsory non-tuition-related ancillary fees can only be implemented as provided for in an ancillary fee protocol or through an exemption to an ancillary fee protocol.

Ancillary Fee Protocol:

A formal agreement between the institution's administration and student government representatives which set out the means by which students will be involved in decisions to introduce a new or modify an existing compulsory non-tuition related ancillary fee.

System Wide Fees:

System-wide fees are those where, through a formal agreement, the students affected at all Ontario universities pay a comparable fee for a comparable service.

Vendor Fees:

This term refers to fees for materials or services where the institution acts as broker. These are fees paid by students to the university that do not produce net revenue for the institution, but instead are set and levied through an agreement with a vendor. In these cases, the institution is neither the manufacturer nor supplier of the material or service being purchased. Similarly structured fees, where student governments serve in the "broker" role, are considered student government fees.

The following definitions are specific to this paper and are not based on the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities' *Tuition Fee Framework and Ancillary Fee Guidelines for Publicly-Assisted Universities 2013-14 to 2016-17*:

Essential Student Services:

OUSA defines essential student services as services and programs that are necessary to the success of an individual student in need. Further, essential student services are services or programs that cannot be accessed in the community without presenting insufficient resources or financial barriers.

Examples of essential student services include mental health counselling, sexual violence centres, and offices for students with disabilities.

Non-Essential Student Services:

OUSA defines non-essential student services as services and programs that are not necessary to the success of an individual student, but rather contribute the student experience and benefit students academically, recreationally, socially, or emotionally.

Examples of non-essential student services include campus recreation, student success offices, writing centres, and career services.

Third Party Fees:

OUSA defines third party fees as ancillary fees that fund third party organizations, such as a public interest research group or student publications.

STANDALONE ANCILLARY FEE PROTOCOL

Principle: Ancillary fees require a distinct, clear, and robust policy separate from the tuition framework.

Concern: The current Tuition Framework and Ancillary Fee Guidelines predominantly focuses on tuition, neglecting the importance of ancillary fees.

Recommendation: The province should separate the Ancillary Fee Guidelines from the Tuition Fee Framework, creating a standalone ancillary protocol.

Students are concerned about the lack of emphasis placed on the ancillary guidelines within the *Tuition Fee Framework and Ancillary Fee Guidelines for Publicly-Assisted Universities 2013-14 to 2016-17*. Universities and the province have placed a focus on discussing aspects of the tuition framework; however, this framework neglects to discuss some of the evident gaps within the ancillary fee guidelines. With ancillary fees composing increasingly larger proportions of university operating budgets, there should be widespread consultation on the guidelines governing these fees. The province should separate the ancillary fee guidelines from the tuition fee framework, forcing universities to work alongside the province and student groups to ensure that any issues or gaps related to ancillary fees do not go unnoticed.

In order to develop a more standardized ancillary fee structure across all Ontario universities, the provincial government must develop a separate and distinct standalone ancillary fee protocol. This would help to better articulate the definitions and exceptions for each specific type of ancillary fee, as well as ensure that each university is mandated to comply with this protocol. Since university administrators and student government representatives are equally impacted by this protocol, it is essential that both parties have equal say in the consultation and drafting phases. This will ensure that such a protocol is implemented on shared terms and with the support of the provincial government.

TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

TRANSPARENCY

Principle: The administration, origin, and definition of any and all ancillary fees should be fully transparent to the general student population.

Concern: The purposes or origins of ancillary fees are often poorly communicated to students, limiting transparency and institutional accountability.

Concern: The provincial term ‘compulsory non-tuition-related ancillary fee’ is not used consistently at every Ontario university, which contributes to a lack of transparency.

Concern: It is often unclear whether fees are being charged on a per-term or flat fee basis.

Concern: Inconsistent use of the term “ancillary fees” within the sector has resulted in confusion and inaccurate use.

Concern: The payment of ancillary fees is sometimes done in an inconsistent manner through many different offices and payment forms, contributing to a lack of transparency and accountability.

Recommendation: The provincial government should establish a standalone ancillary fee protocol, distinct from the tuition fee guidelines and framework, in consultation with university administrators and student government representatives.

Recommendation: The province should mandate – through a standalone ancillary fee protocol – that all fiscal material, including budgets, audits, and explanatory breakdowns of ancillary fees be publicly disclosed in a way that is readily available to students.

Recommendation: The province should – through a standalone ancillary fee protocol – mandate that institutions must levy and collect all ancillary fees, including tuition and non-tuition related ancillary fees, through a centralized online system.

If student dollars are funding campus buildings and services, it only makes sense that students should have complete access to information about how their money is being used. This should be presented on an ongoing basis, particularly upon passage of these fees. As students are voting on new or modified fees, budget information should be readily accessible while voting to enable a more informed decision. This is true whether this is at decision-making committees, like the ‘Council on Student Services’ at the University of Toronto, or during referendums, such as those that take place at Queen’s and McMaster.⁸ Even when fees are not up for review, updated financial information should continually be made available to encourage transparency and accountability, whether this information is sent out to students, or posted on a readily available public forum.

A strong example of clear budget breakdowns being made public and accessible is at the University of Toronto (U of T). U of T has published an operating plan and budget breakdown of their Student Life Programs and Services. This information can be accessed on their student life website, and is up to date with the budgets of each year. The 2016/2017 budget breaks down how Health and Wellness and the Career Centre breakdown their budgets, including information of

⁸ University of Toronto Governing Council, “Long-Term Protocol on the Increase or Introduction of Compulsory Non-Tuition-Related Fees,” *University of Toronto*, (October 24, 1996), <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppoct241996.pdf>

what is student-fee funded, and what is non-student fee funded. This will clarify exactly what fees are being used for, so inconsistent terminology does not inhibit transparency and accountability.

At Wilfrid Laurier University non-tuition related ancillary fees are referred to as 'incidental fees', making it difficult for students to understand what exactly they are paying for. Should budget breakdowns be published, this inconsistent use of terminology becomes less of an issue.

The McMaster protocol establishes a requirement that student organizations publicly disclose year-end financial statements. Organizations with budgets greater than \$100,000 have their finances reviewed by an Independent Public Accountant at the end of the fiscal year.⁹ This provides an important mechanism for ensuring accountability among organizations that receive a substantial amount of student dollars. Should this information be accessible to the public, this could provide an exceptional model for the province, and other institutions to examine.

Also contributing to a lack of transparency and accountability is inconsistent practices surrounding the collection of ancillary fees. Decentralized collection and payment methods of fees makes it difficult to track how much students are actually paying in ancillary fees, and what the fees are being levied for. A single, centralized method of collection for all fees through a secure online portal can eliminate these concerns.

ENDOWMENT FUNDS

Principle: Student-sponsored endowment funds should be used only for non-tuition related projects that improve student life.

Concern: Student-sponsored endowment funds are sometimes used to cover expenses that ought to be covered by tuition.

Concern: The administration of student-sponsored endowment funds is often opaque and information is not readily available to contributors.

Concern: Most student-sponsored endowment funds are funded by automatically assessed fees, which many students do not know are refundable.

Recommendation: Student-sponsored endowment funds should be considered non-essential fees and thus subject to the same approval mechanisms as stipulated in the standalone ancillary fee protocol.

Recommendation: The province should - through a standalone ancillary fee protocol - mandate that independent student-sponsored endowment funds must publish the financial information and a list of sponsored projects in a way that is readily available to students that contribute to it.

Endowment funds are common across Ontario universities. Some are sponsored by external donors and administered by the university, while others are semi-independent funds administered by students. The latter are typically sponsored by a "voluntary donation" in the form of a term-based or yearly opt-out fee levied to all full-time students, and are administered by independent boards of directors elected from among the contributors. The mission of these funds is to provide funding for student initiatives that improve non-academic experiences on campus.

Student-sponsored endowment fund boards often operate with minimal accountability to their membership. For example, the Waterloo Engineering Endowment Fund does not publish its

⁹ Assistant Vice-President Administration & CFO, "Financial Accountability Policy for Student Organizations that receive Fee Remittances from the University," *McMaster University*, (November, 2013), http://www.mcmaster.ca/bms/pdf/stu_org.pdf

sponsored projects in and format accessible format. Furthermore, its bylaws do not stipulate a quorum for its AGM. Consequently, AGMs could be held with little more than the directors in attendance, making it extremely difficult for students to hold the Fund to account for its spending. Other student-sponsored endowment funds operate similarly, collecting fees upwards of \$50 from each student. Forcing student-sponsored endowment fund boards to disclose their funding projects publicly will allow students to have a better understanding regarding the use of their student fees.

ANCILLARY FEE PROTOCOLS

Principle: There must always be a clear protocol for the establishment or increase of ancillary fees that can be easily accessed by all members of a university community.

Principle: Ancillary fees should be regularly reviewed to ensure they are still relevant and necessary.

Concern: Ancillary fee protocol structures and review practices do not always lend themselves to systems of transparency and accountability.

Concern: The province does not currently mandate that every institution create and enforce an ancillary fee protocol agreement.

Recommendation: The province must mandate – through a standalone ancillary fee protocol – that all post-secondary institutions be required to regularly review their ancillary fees at a minimum of once every five years.

Recommendation: The province should – through a standalone ancillary fee protocol – develop an ancillary fee protocol structure that can be provided as a best practice example for institutions, providing examples of high levels of student involvement.

Section 6.B of the Tuition Fee Framework and Ancillary Fee Guidelines stipulates that “[a]n Ancillary Fee protocol is a formal agreement...which set out the means by which students will be involved in decisions to introduce a new or modify an existing compulsory non-tuition-related ancillary fee.” There is currently no section of the framework mandating that fees be reviewed at all, let alone within a certain time period, but instead one line in section 6.B.1 that states that an “Ancillary Fee protocol may provide the opportunity for a review process.”¹⁰ Reviewing ancillary fees should not be an ‘option’. Students should continually provide their consent for the ancillary fees they are paying, whether this is annually, tri-annually, etc. Regular review ensures that fees are relevant and effective, but how this review is conducted will change between institutions and depending on the fee. This could include review by a committee of student government representatives, or review via referendum.

For example, at Queen’s University, the Alma Mater Society (AMS) is responsible for establishing and reviewing all student activity fees. According to AMS policy, all student activity fees, other than those designated as non-reviewable mandatory fees, are subject to triennial review.¹¹ This means no fee can be charged beyond three years unless it has been re-approved within three years via referendum. This ensures that fees being charged are relevant, and approved by the students currently paying them. This is not to say that by ‘reviewing’ an ancillary fee it must go through referendum, this is simply one way of doing so. Another strong example is the Protocol

¹⁰ Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities, *Tuition Fee Framework Guidelines for Publicly-Assisted Universities 2013-2014 to 2016-2017*, accessed October 21, 2016, <http://www.planningandbudget.utoronto.ca/Assets/Academic+Operations+Digital+Assets/Planning+!26+Budget/2013-14+Guidelines+for+Tuition+Fee+Framework+Implementation.pdf>

¹¹ Alma Mater Society, “AMS Policy on Student Activity Fees,” Alma Mater Society, accessed October 21, 2016, <https://myams.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Student-Fee-Policy-for-website-2015.pdf>

Agreement on Non-Tuition Fees at Wilfrid Laurier University. The agreement stipulates that the University must provide a list at the end of each year to the committee on non-tuition fees assessment, which has representatives from the University, and the undergraduate and graduate student governments. This committee has to review all proposed fees in order to ensure that they are compliant with all policy and legislation before they can be sent to referendum or to the Board of Governors to be implemented.¹² Mandatory review of ancillary fees should be included in every ancillary fee protocol.

As demonstrated above, some universities have taken it upon themselves to establish fee protocol agreements that are more comprehensive than mandated by the Tuition Framework and Ancillary Fee Guidelines. The agreements operating at Wilfrid Laurier University and Queen's University offer strong examples of protocols with meaningful student engagement. Should the provincial government offer a best-practice model like these, the standard for student engagement would be set much higher for all institutions, and there would be strong examples when protocols are being renewed or restructured. The protocols used as examples undoubtedly also have room to improve, but they do provide a good model of student control.

TEXTBOOKS, COURSEWARE, AND DIGITAL LEARNING MATERIALS

Principle: All of the costs borne by students for academic evaluation and instruction should be paid for through tuition fees only.

Concern: Students are being asked to purchase digital online evaluation packages in compulsory courses, either as part of a textbook bundle or as a standalone product, putting significant financial pressures on students.

Concern: High and unregulated prices for textbooks, courseware, and publications in compulsory courses place significant financial pressures on students.

Concern: Courseware for compulsory courses often change on an annual basis, causing high-cost courseware to lose resale value for students.

Concern: The exemption in Ancillary Fee Guidelines for digital learning materials that are property of the student, and which can include test/assessment tools, allows institutions to require digital online evaluation packages in compulsory courses.

Recommendation: The province should mandate that institutions establish a formal and easily accessible complaint mechanism for students who are being charged fees they suspect to be illegal.

Recommendation: The provincial government should eliminate the [exemption for] “digital learning materials that are property of the student and which can include test/assessment tools” in the Ancillary Fee Guidelines.

Recommendation: The provincial government should invest in open educational resources and textbooks as an option for instructors.

Undergraduate students in Ontario pay the highest tuition, on average, compared to their counterparts in other provinces of the country.¹³ In 2014-15, student fees represented the largest contributor to operating revenue of Ontario institutions at 44%, compared to the government's

¹²“Protocol Agreement on Non-Tuition Fees,” *Wilfrid Laurier University*, accessed October 21, 2016, file:///C:/Users/aac/Downloads/WLU%20&%20WLUSU%20&%20WLUGSA%20effective%20May%201%252c%202013%20(fully%20executed).pdf

¹³ Statistics Canada, “University Tuition Fees, 2015/2016,” (September 9, 2015), <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150909/dq150909b-eng.htm>

contribution of 41%.¹⁴ Despite the drastic increases in tuition costs, students are also increasingly asked to pay additional compulsory ancillary fees for the purposes of academic instruction. These fees are often presented to students in the form of tools necessary for learning and evaluation in compulsory courses.

Due to a widespread lack of faculty education on ancillary fee legislation, students are often charged fees that do not comply with current ancillary fee guidelines. Many of these fees are charged without the institution's knowledge.¹⁵ In these cases, the onus falls on the student to bring forth complaints about fees they believe are being unfairly or illegally charged. Because of the intricacies of each institution, this mandate should be open-ended so that universities may create mechanisms that best suit their existing infrastructure and landscapes. This process may include institutional ombudsmen, registrars, or other appropriate bodies. This process should be made readily available to students.

Students believe that tuition fees should cover the costs of academic instruction, including any and all tools necessary for learning and evaluation. In addition, students feel that it is particularly unfair to require additional purchases in compulsory courses. When compulsory courses require expensive assessment tools or learning materials, an inequity is created in which some low-income students are unable to complete compulsory courses. As well, these types of fees are often not well-communicated to students, making it difficult for students to budget appropriately for necessary costs.

In OUSA's biennial survey of its student members, 50% reported that they had to pay a fee to access mandatory tests, assignments, or other evaluations. Tables 1 and 2 below show this information by institution and by program.

Table 1: OPSSS 2015 Findings of Students Paying Mandatory Course Fees, by institution

Responses	Queen's	Laurier	Waterloo	McMaster	Brock	Trent
Yes	53%	51%	51%	50%	47%	20%
No	44%	43%	44%	45%	48%	71%
Don't know	4%	5%	5%	6%	5%	9%

Table 2: OPSSS 2015 Findings of Students Paying Mandatory Course Fees, by faculty

	Business	Parks, Rec & Leisure	Life Sciences	Health Sciences	Agriculture & Enviro. Sci.	Fine Arts	Engineering & Architecture	Math & Computer Sci.	Law	Interdisciplinary Studies	Humanities & Social Science	Education
Yes	73%	63%	61%	60%	52%	50%	43%	43%	40%	39%	35%	33%
No	24%	32%	36%	36%	44%	42%	52%	52%	56%	59%	59%	61%
Don't know	3%	5%	4%	4%	4%	8%	5%	5%	5%	3%	6%	6%

Students acknowledge that these formative evaluation tools can often contribute greatly to student learning and outcomes.¹⁶ However, students do not agree that the cost for these programs

¹⁴ Council of Ontario Universities, "Operating Revenue – General Expendable Funds by Source of Fund, 2005-06 – 2014-15."

¹⁵ Vipasha Shaikh and Sheena Singh, "Students charged 'illegal' fees," *The Varsity*, (February 11, 2013), <http://thevarsity.ca/2013/02/11/students-charged-illegal-fees/>

¹⁶ Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, *Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Policy Framework: Tuition and Ancillary Fees*, <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/documents/TuitionandAncillaryFees.pdf>

should be paid for by students. For instance, at Western University, a general first year Chemistry course (Chem 1301A), mandatory for many programs, includes the following evaluation structure:

Component	Method 1	Method 2
Quiz	1%	1%
Laboratory	15%	15%
Sapling Assignments	5%	0%
Midterm	29%	34%
Final	50%	50%

Although students are given the opportunity to opt-out of Sapling assignments, they are penalized with a higher-weighted midterm evaluation, and are also denied the opportunity to engage in formative assessment, which has been shown to have positive effects on student learning.¹⁷ The costs of these tools should be borne by the institution rather than students. In the current framework under the exemption for "[f]ees for digital learning materials that are the property of the student and which can include test/assessment tools", it stipulates that:

"The Ministry considers the payment of tuition as supporting the costs of instruction and assessment. Where a course or program relies substantially on assessments that are included with a learning resource, such as an online textbook, the Ministry expects universities to have a policy with respect to their students' interests in these situations. Such a policy could include a rebate to students of a portion of their textbook fees where bundled assessments represent a substantial portion of a student's mark for a course."¹⁸

Despite the expectation that institutions have a policy including rebates to students, these policies could not be found at any institution. Students believe that in order to truly ensure that the payment of tuition is solely supporting costs of instruction and assessment, the exemption for "[f]ees for digital learning materials that are the property of the student and which can include test/assessment tools" must be eliminated.

Additionally, likely the most well-used and most-expensive required learning materials that undergraduate students purchase are textbooks. Research has shown recently that the cost for textbooks in Canada has risen at 2.44 times the rate of inflation since 2008.¹⁹ The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development estimates that students will spend about \$1,000 for books, representing a large financial barrier to post-secondary education for many low-income students. As a result of this significant financial barrier, many students opt not to purchase textbooks for courses, thus lowering the quality of their education. In fact, when surveyed in 2015, 48% of students from OUSA member schools replied that they did not purchase all required textbooks and course packs in the previous academic year.²⁰

Students believe that the government should proactively prevent the rising costs of textbooks by instituting maximum costs for textbooks, courseware, and publications by course. In this way, not only will courses become more financially accessible, but fees will also be more easily communicated to students in a transparent manner, allowing students to budget appropriately for costs.

¹⁷ Alison Rushton, "Formative assessment: a key to deep learning?" *Medical Teacher* 27, no. 6 (2005): 510.

¹⁸ Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, *Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Policy Framework: Tuition and Ancillary Fees*.

¹⁹ Postsecondary Education Partners' Gateway, "What It Will Cost: What Does it Cost to Go to College or University?" Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, accessed October 21, 2016, http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/audiences/colleges/costs_coll.html

²⁰ Unpublished survey results from the 2015 Ontario Post-Secondary Student Survey, conducted by the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, administered by CCI Research Inc., November 2015.

Students also believe that dependence on high-cost physical textbooks is not the only option. The Province of British Columbia has developed an open-access textbook resource that is available for students for no fee. The Open Textbook Project, mandated by BCcampus, aims to "provide flexible and affordable access to higher education resources in B.C. by making available openly-licensed textbooks in the highest-enrolled academic subject areas".²¹

Open textbooks are textbooks "licensed under an open copyright license, and made available online to be freely used by students, teachers, and members of the public. They are available for free as online versions, and as low-cost printed versions, should students opt for these".²² The project originally targeted the most in-demand forty post-secondary courses in British Columbia, and has since expanded to include a total of 163 open textbooks. As of 2016, 31 institutions participated in the Open Textbook Project, including 684 textbooks adopted into classrooms. With approximately 19,840 students now using open textbooks, the project estimates that \$1,988,150 - \$2,563,837 student dollars were saved since the inception of the project. Students believe that the Government of Ontario should create its own Open Textbook Project to establish an open-access textbook resource for Ontario universities.

FIELD TRIPS

Principle: Students should have access to compulsory courses and not encounter financial barriers through mandatory course fees.

Concern: Mandatory field trip fees for compulsory courses place significant financial pressures on students, creating an inequity in accessing mandatory courses.

Recommendation: The provincial government should mandate that institutions cannot charge mandatory fees for any field trips in compulsory courses.

Field trip fees are listed as an exemption in the Ancillary Fee Guidelines from the government of Ontario. As stipulated, field trip fees may cover the reasonable, direct costs of travel and accommodation for students on compulsory field trips. However, high-cost field trip fees for compulsory courses can create a financial barrier for students. Students recognize that field trips are a valuable learning tool that add to quality of education, and do not wish to see a decrease in mandatory field trips for compulsory courses. However, students also recognize that mandatory field trips fees in compulsory courses are fundamentally related to the confirmation of credential completion, and are thus compulsory tuition-related ancillary fees, which the province recognizes as illegal. Therefore students believe that mandatory field trip fees for compulsory courses should not be charged to students, and should instead be included in tuition fees.

Under the current field trip fee exemption in the Ancillary Fee guidelines, it is stated that institutions are prohibited to charge compulsory ancillary fees for any component of an out-of-province compulsory field trip in a compulsory course. In a situation where a student has the opportunity to choose between multiple course listings of which one has a mandatory field trip, the option should not be removed, but rather institutions should ensure that courses being taught for a required credit should be designed to achieve equal pedagogical value while in a different focus. Students believe that stricter guidelines should be put into place, mandating that institutions cannot charge compulsory ancillary fees for any component of *any* compulsory field trip in a compulsory course, regardless of location. Students also believe that needs-based bursaries for field trips at institutions could be a positive initiative to improve accessibility to field trips in courses.

²¹ "Open Textbook Project," *BCCampus*, accessed October 21, 2016, <https://bccampus.ca/open-textbook-project/>

²² *Ibid.*

PHYSICAL LEARNING MATERIALS

Principle: Students should not be required to purchase learning materials and clothing necessary for academic evaluation in compulsory courses.

Concern: Students are being asked to purchase learning materials and clothing for compulsory courses, placing significant financial pressure on students.

Recommendation: The provincial government should mandate that institutions provide an alternative rentable option when compulsory courses require students to purchase learning materials and/or clothing.

Outside of textbooks, digital learning materials, and field trips, students are also asked to pay additional fees for the sake of learning via iClickers, art supplies, lab coats, lab manuals, and more. These supplies are exempt from inclusion in a compulsory ancillary fee protocol as they are an exemption in the provincial guidelines for ancillary fees. The rationale for asking students to pay for said materials is that the student retains them after a course has ended. However, high costs for such materials are an additional unpredictable financial barrier that students face.

Students believe that in lieu of requiring all students to purchase high-cost, limited-use materials that they will later retain, the provincial government should mandate institutions to provide a rentable option of said materials. For instance, in compulsory courses that require iClickers, students should have the option to rent an iClicker from the institution at no cost. Institutions should not be permitted to require learning materials retained by the student without providing a no-cost alternative.

Students also recognize that rentable materials are only effective when materials remain unchanged over the rental period. For instance, using an iClicker over the course of a semester will not cause the iClicker to inherently charge or lose value. On the other hand, materials that will be essentially consumed (dental kits, paint materials, architecture materials) are not “rentable”. In this case, students recognize that including a rentable option will not overcome this financial barrier. Students recommend that alternative options for bursaries be explored when non-renewable materials are required for compulsory courses.

WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING FEES

Principle: All willing and qualified students should be able to benefit from work-integrated learning opportunities during their university career.

Principle: Students should not be unduly charged for pursuing some form of work-integrated learning within a particular program or institution.

Concern: The exemption in the provincial ancillary fees framework for work placement fees allows institutions to charge high amounts for placement services, creating an inequity for students wishing to partake in work-integrated learning.

Recommendation: The provincial government should invest into work-integrated learning services on campus to reduce dependency on student ancillary fees.

Recommendation: The province must mandate – through a standalone ancillary fee protocol – that students in work-integrated learning programs be given a detailed explanation of how these fees are used.

Recommendation: The provincial government should eliminate the work placement fees exemption in the ancillary fee protocol.

Availability and accessibility of work-integrated learning opportunities are increasingly a priority for students, institutions, employers, and the province of Ontario. Benefits of work-integrated learning opportunities include improved educational experience,²³ increased likelihood of employment post-graduation, and higher rates of pay after graduation.²⁴

In *Building the Workforce of Tomorrow: A Shared Responsibility*, a report by the Premier's Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel written in June 2016, a series of recommendations were presented to the government on developing an integrated strategy to help the province's current and future workforce adapt to the demands of a technology-driven knowledge economy. One recommendation, in pursuit of such a strategy, was that Ontario commit to ensuring that "every student has at least one experiential learning opportunity by the end of secondary school and at least one by the time they graduate from post-secondary education".²⁵ In response to this report, the government committed to expanding opportunities in work-integrated learning by funding more placements, guaranteeing experiential learning to all post-secondary students in the province.

The goal of providing work-integrated learning opportunities for all is something that students applaud. However, one must consider the barriers that students currently face to accessing such opportunities at their institutions. While funding to ensure that more placement opportunities are available is important, just as imperative is eliminating financial inaccessibility for students who cannot afford high-cost work-integrated learning placement fees. Fees for various forms of work-integrated learning at member institutions vary from \$315 (Laurentian University) to \$2,065.33 (Western University).

Table 3: Co-op placement fees by institution²⁶

Institution	<i>McMaster</i>	<i>Western</i>	<i>Laurentian</i>	<i>Laurier</i>	<i>Waterloo</i>
Cost	\$1,300	\$2,065.33	\$315 - \$630.00 (program-dependent)	\$344.71 - \$1411.94 (program-dependent)	\$676

These high fees could deter students from accessing work-integrated learning opportunities. As well, students are generally unaware and not privy to what these work-integrated learning fees revenue is used for. Students recommend that the province eliminate the "work placement fees" exemption in the Ancillary Fee Guidelines. By eliminating this exemption, students can have autonomy over the costs of work-integrated learning fees, similar to any ancillary fee for a student service (health services, career services, etc.).

Students also believe that if the province wishes to mandate all students in post-secondary to partake in a work-integrated learning opportunity before graduation, then work-integrated learning services should become an academic instruction related fee. As such, they should not be funded through student ancillary fees. As the province takes steps to increase work-integrated learning opportunities, investment in these services to reduce and eventually eliminate reliance on student ancillary fees is crucial.

²³ Unpublished survey results from the 2015 Ontario Post-Secondary Student Survey, conducted by the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, administered by CCI Research Inc., November 2015.

²⁴ Peters, Sattler, and Kelland. "Work-Integrated Learning in Ontario's Postsecondary Sector: The Pathways of Recent College and University Graduates." *Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario*, (2014). Accessed October 21, 2016, http://www.heqco.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/WIL_Grad%20Follow-up%20ENG.pdf

²⁵ The Premier's Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel, "Building the Workforce of Tomorrow: A Shared Responsibility." (June, 2016), <https://www.ontario.ca/page/building-workforce-tomorrow-shared-responsibility>

²⁶ Co-op fees collected from each institution's website.

SYSTEM-WIDE AND VENDOR FEES

Principle: Students should have complete authority over whether or not a new ancillary fee is implemented.

Principle: Ancillary fees, regardless of the way they are negotiated or the number of institutions involved, should follow consistent guidelines without exemption.

Concern: System-wide and vendor fees are exempt from the current ancillary fee protocol requirements, and are often implemented without student approval or consultation.

Concern: System-wide and vendor fees represent a method for universities to unfairly skirt student approval of compulsory ancillary fees.

Recommendation: The provincial government should eliminate both the system-wide and vendor exemptions from the ancillary fee protocol.

Recommendation: The provincial government should mandate – through a standalone ancillary fee protocol – that any system-wide fee established at a given institution should follow the same guidelines as all other ancillary fees.

The Ontario Operating Funds Distribution Manual’s ancillary fee protocol defines system-wide as “fees where, through a formal agreement, the students at all Ontario universities pay a comparable fee for a comparable service”.²⁷ The protocol also states, “in the case of provincial-based system-wide fees established in the future, the Ministry hopes that students can be involved in the determination of these fees”. This is essentially a disclaimer that if an institution chooses to collectively negotiate a fee, they could charge students without having to consult or seek approval for this fee. This is concerning when you extrapolate the implications of this type of fee being implemented to shore up consistent deficiencies in non-academic units of institutional budgets across the sector. While there is no example of this being used in such a way, with government grants representing increasingly less as a percentage of the overall revenue of the university, it highlights a concern.²⁸

Another exemption that allows institutions to avoid seeking approval is “for materials and services where the institution has acted as a vendor for the student,” otherwise known as vendor fees.²⁹ This exemption is not used in any known current case in Ontario, however it was implemented largely for the purpose of university health and dental plans whereby, in 1993/1994, the majority of university health plans were negotiated and organized by the institutions themselves. Since then, student associations have been responsible for organizing these plans such that not a single health and dental plan in Ontario is negotiated by a university, thus making the exemption essentially useless.

System-wide fees are not bad in principle. If students across the province believed in a cause or support mechanism that was necessary beyond institutional boundary, there is merit in asking for student consent for this fee. However, a system-wide fee cannot be justified without student consent. The current exemption as it stands should be eliminated as it allows for institutions to move forward with fees without student approval. Since the inception of the protocol, ancillary fees have risen, thus demonstrating that students will choose to control and raise fees if sufficient value is demonstrated appropriately. As such, there is no reason this principle should not be applied to system-wide fees.

²⁷ Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. The Ontario Operating Funds Distribution Manual. (Toronto: Government of Ontario, 2009).

²⁸ Audit of Provincial Grants for University Operating Budgets as a percentage of the overall institutional budget.

²⁹ Ibid.

Just as system-wide fees are not bad in principle, vendor fees are not inherently bad either. Student associations regularly exercise this method of student control for student health plans, dental plans, and transit passes. The exemption that currently exists for vendor fees allows institutions to charge students without their consent when acting as a broker for purchased goods or services. While students have no issue with a university taking on the role of a broker or vendor should the value proposition be beneficial, they ultimately should always receive student approval to do so.

Finally, it is important that ambiguity with respect to system wide and vendor fees be clarified. In 2011, Western University negotiated an independent arrangement with access copyright at a rate of \$27.50 per student instead of the original fee of \$3.38. Considering this was not negotiated on a system wide basis nor did it align with the spirit of any exemption to student control of the ancillary fees protocol, the university was informed by OUSA through the University Students Council that they could be circumventing the protocol and ministry regulations. Western University cited that they believed that they were acting as a vendor for the students at this time. This level of ambiguity and lack of student control is concerning to students. The nature of the word “vendor” in this circumstance is even misleading as the principle of a vendor-buyer relationship is that the buyer has agreed to purchase goods sold by the vendor, where in this instance students did nothing of the sort. It is a dangerous precedent to assume that universities can act as a vendor on behalf of students for their protection without their consent. Universities use copyright protection, as relevant to this example, for academic use, research, administration and advocacy. Considering that the entire university community benefits from the copyright protection, the vendor exemption doesn’t consider that, in this circumstance, students are not the only buyer present and therefore should not be footing the entirety of the bill.

The most concerning component of the system-wide and vendor exemptions to the ancillary protocol is the potential for abuse. The vendor exemption could theoretically be used if any student service was privatized in order to, without student consent, create new student service fees at any given time. Considering the significant cost pressure that student services could have on operating budgets as demand increases, this could become an attractive option to allow private providers to administer key services. The concerning part for students is that, under this model, a private provider could charge any fee they want as long as the university consented to it under the vendor exemption. While there is no documented case of this being used in this way, unless the exemption is removed, the risk remains.

STUDENT CONTROL

STUDENT UNION AUTONOMY

Principle: Student unions should possess complete control over their own operations and be solely accountable to their members.

Principle: Student unions should have the ability to set their own fee structures in accordance with Ontario legislation.

Principle: Universities have a responsibility to collect fees on behalf of student unions.

Concern: Student unions in Ontario have had fees withheld by university administrations as a method to shape the actions of the organizations.

Concern: Some universities have charged ‘administrative fees’ for the collection of ancillary fees.

Recommendation: The provincial government should pass legislation that recognizes student union autonomy and specifically outlines the sole cases that this autonomy can be limited, namely through direct intervention by a neutral third party in the event of gross financial irregularities and/or bylaw violation.

Recommendation: The provincial government should introduce legislation recognizing the autonomy of student unions at post-secondary institutions, allowing student unions to levy their fees in a manner decided by their membership in accordance with provincial legislation.

Recommendation: The provincial government should mandate – through a standalone ancillary fee protocol – that universities can no longer charge administrative fees for collecting ancillary fees on behalf of student unions.

Student unions in Ontario provide a mechanism for students from various backgrounds to voice their concerns. As not-for-profit organizations, student unions have a dual accountability to their membership, as well as to the provincial legislation. As such, they should hold full authority over any changes made within their own organizations, and not be subject to the authority of universities.

Student unions will only be able to remain accountable to their membership and to provincial legislation so long as they are able to operate appropriately. There have been instances in the past where universities have tried to interfere and shape the actions of student unions by withholding ancillary fees levied by those organizations. In 2012, the McMaster Association of Part-Time Students (MAPS) had the collection of their fees suspended following a recommendation by their university administration.³⁰ McMaster University withheld the fees due to the belief that the university’s financial model would serve the organization better than the model MAPS currently utilized. They raised concerns about the financial practices of MAPS’ business practices, and therefore limited the release of the organization’s funds. Additionally, in 2013, the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) and Durham College also withheld fees from the Student Association at Durham College & UOIT due to the Student Association neglecting to provide the university and college with their audited financial statements.³¹ In both of these instances, the

³⁰ Sam Colbert, “University withholding part-time students association fees during investigation,” *The Silhouette*, (December 22, 2012), <https://www.thesil.ca/statements-released-on-universitys-investigation-of-part-time-students-association>

³¹ Kristen Calis, “Durham College, UOIT Student Association threatens legal action,” *Oshawa This Week*, (November 14, 2013), <http://www.durhamregion.com/news-story/4219184-durham-college-uoit-student-association-threatens-legal-action/-v1/>

university administrations infringed on the autonomy of these separately incorporated student unions, and directly interfered with the operation of autonomous organization.

Releasing fees to student unions is not enough. Student unions, as separate entities, are entitled to the entirety of the fees their members authorized them to collect. Unfortunately, due to processes at various universities, student unions in Ontario do not always receive all of their funds. For example, at McMaster University the university charges the McMaster Students Union a 1% administrative charge for the collection and remittance of student fees. This practice directly impacts student union operations by reducing the amount of student dollars each student union receives. The province, in a standalone ancillary fee protocol, should ensure that all fees collected by universities on behalf of student unions be remitted, without any administrative costs.

The Ontario government should adopt legislation - mirroring the Post-Secondary Learning Act of Alberta³² - that enshrines and affirms the autonomy of student associations. Under such legislation, student associations should be recognized as the official representatives of their student members, the main channel of communication with its members, and the primary administrators of student affairs on campus. Additionally, this legislation should outline the limited conditions and measures whereby intervention in the governing affairs of student associations is permissible. Namely, student associations should be required to produce timely audited financial statements, and should any irregularities be discovered or the association be found in noncompliance with any other aspect of its own bylaws, the provincial government ought to have the ability to appoint an administrator or investigator to assume management of the association.

Student associations have a duty of care to their members, who deserve assurance that their fees are being managed responsibly. Moreover, students recognize that there have been rare cases of serious mismanagement of student associations in Ontario. However, it is inappropriate for the affairs of student associations to be subject to the approval of institutions, which may have divergent interests. As such, institutions should never be permitted to unilaterally withhold fees it has collected on behalf of student associations. Instead, under legislation such as that described above, the government would have the ability to investigate and intervene in cases where such action is legitimately required.

STUDENT OVERSIGHT

Principle: Students should have oversight and control over the ancillary fees that they pay.

Principle: Students should have complete authority over whether or not a new institutional ancillary fee is implemented.

Concern: Not all Ontario universities allow majority student oversight on ancillary fees.

Concern: All ancillary fees levied prior to the 1993-94 academic year are exempt from the provincial guidelines.

Recommendation: The province should mandate – through a standalone ancillary fee protocol – that all institutions have an oversight committee consisting of at least 51% student representation responsible for the review of all ancillary fees, regardless of the date they were initially implemented.

Recommendation: The provincial government should mandate – through a standalone ancillary fee protocol – that the students should have the opportunity to sit on the governing bodies of university services funded by ancillary fees where applicable.

³² Province of Alberta, *Post-Secondary Learning Act, Statutes of Alberta*, 2003, Chapter P-19.5, <http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/p19p5.pdf>

Recommendation: The province should mandate – through a standalone ancillary fee protocol – that any introduction or modification (above CPI) of compulsory non-tuition-related ancillary fees must be approved by students via referendum.

Ancillary fees make up an increasingly proportional amount of university operating budgets. Without these fees, universities would not be able to operate in their current capacity. As such, students play a crucial role in the overall operating of universities. Due to this dependence on student dollars, students are calling for more control over the fees they are required to pay, and the services that they fund.

Currently, not all universities allow students to possess majority oversight relating to institutional ancillary fees. This concern is also shared with student services. Many institutions do not provide students adequate representation on the bodies governing university services, which are often solely funded by ancillary fees. Institutions need to allow for adequate student representation on bodies governing ancillary fees as a whole, as well as the services that they fund.

To address concerns surrounding the governance of institutional ancillary fees, the province should legislate that all institutions have an ancillary fee oversight committee whose membership consists of majority student representation. An example of this structure can be found at Wilfrid Laurier University, where the university has struck the Committee on Non-Tuition Fee Assessment in conjunction with the Wilfrid Laurier University Graduate Student Association (WLUGSA) and the Wilfrid Laurier University Students' Union (WLUSU). The committee's membership consists of three undergraduate representatives from WLUSU, and two graduate representatives from WLUGSA. These five students make up the majority of the committee, with four members of the Wilfrid Laurier University administration composing the remainder of the group.³³ The committee is responsible for reviewing and considering "all existing and requested Non-Tuition Fees," and makes recommendations to the university's board of governors for approval.³⁴ All fees, following approval by students in the form of referendum, are sent to this committee for review. However, one restriction is that this oversight does not apply to fees levied prior to the 1993-1994 academic year.

When the province introduced regulations surrounding ancillary fees in 1994, there was no provision created to explain how fees levied prior to 1994 would be governed. This is a concern to students, as many of the fees they pay are left out of their control. All ancillary fees, regardless of their date of implementation, should be subject to the same governance procedures. The province must stipulate, in a standalone ancillary fee protocol, that all fees enacted prior to 1994 become subject to all institutional and legislative protocols and policies governing ancillary fees.

The proposed regulations should also extend to third party themes, such as public interest research groups and student publications. It should be noted that third party financial statements and information is not governed or overseen by the university or the student union, thus requiring that at a minimum they are still subjected to the same rigorous approval and review processes as any other non-tuition related ancillary fee. Further requirements or regulations in regards to the approval processes of third party fees can be included in institutional ancillary fee protocol agreements. These third party fees fully fund various student organizations, and thus should be subject to the same regulations as other ancillary fees.

To address the concerns surrounding the governance of ancillary funded student services, the province should legislate that all institutions must provide students the ability to sit on these governing bodies as well. An example of this can be found at Western University, where the Student Services Committee Protocol outlines the ability of the committee to make recommendations to the President of the university and the Board of Governors on "the direction

³³ "2015/16 Fee Report – Part 1: Tuition and Compulsory Non-Tuition Fees," Wilfrid Laurier University, accessed October 21, 2016, https://legacy.wlu.ca/documents/61073/Sen_Fin_Fee_Report_Part_1_Senate_Apr_15_2015.pdf

³⁴ Ibid.

and scope of student services”, under section 2.04 of the agreement.³⁵ Under section 5.00 the Committee also has the abilities to discuss issues with student services with the Senate Committee on University Planning, and to liaise between student services and the university administration.³⁶ This provides an opportunity for students to have greater oversight into how their fees are actually being used and the governance of the services they fund. While this does not directly place students on the oversight bodies of these services, students are provided with an opportunity to provide meaningful feedback into the governance of services.

Students have expressed their desire to have complete control over the implementation and revision of ancillary fees. To ensure this happens, the province should legislate that the introduction or modification of a compulsory non-tuition-related ancillary fee (above CPI) be approved by students via referendum. This will allow every student, each of whom pays ancillary fees, the ability to decide whether or not they wish to spend their money towards a specific ancillary service. Referendum is the only fair and democratic way to ensure that every student has a voice, and institutions should only implement fees following the majority approval of those students who choose to cast their vote.

³⁵ “Student Services Committee Protocol,” University of Western Ontario, accessed October 21, 2016, http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/board/minutes/2011/r1106pf_ann1.pdf

³⁶ Ibid.

FAIR COST SHARING

OPERATIONAL FUNDING

Principle: All willing and qualified students should be able to access and excel within Ontario's system of post-secondary education.

Principle: Students should not have to disproportionately cover the costs of operational funding or funding for ancillary services for universities.

Principle: All groups accessing services funded through ancillary fees should contribute comparable amounts to the service.

Concern: Compulsory ancillary fees have been used as a source of increased operating revenue by universities in Ontario and have increased substantially above inflation over the past two decades.

Concern: Undergraduate students are unfairly burdened with financing access to services and goods that benefit the entire university community.

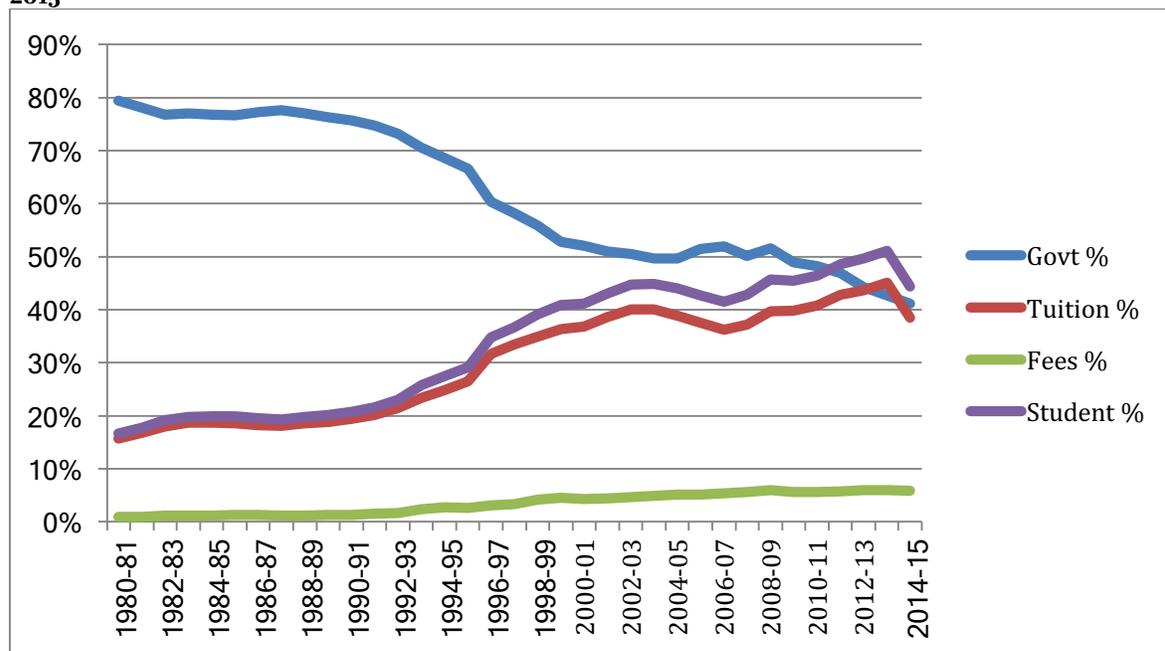
Recommendation: The provincial government must increase operational funding such that operational funding is not disproportionately reliant on ancillary fees.

Access for all willing and qualified students to Ontario's post-secondary education system is the pinnacle of students' beliefs and vision for the province. The largest and most obvious barrier to this access is financial, i.e. the tuition and non-tuition fees that students pay to attend an institution in Ontario. Apart from students, the other largest sources of funding for operating revenue is operating grants distributed by the provincial government. This system of two main contributors – the public and the individual – is known as "cost-sharing", and is based on the belief that given the high rate of return to higher education, it is fair for individuals who benefit from receiving post-secondary education to contribute to the costs associated with providing that education.

Over the past two decades, drastic increases to tuition and ancillary fees have tipped the scales from a model of fair cost-sharing and publicly-funded institutions to an unreasonable burden of costs onto students, ultimately resulting in what are now called "publicly-assisted" institutions. Research conducted by OUSA shows that in 2015-16, students in Ontario were the largest contributor to Ontario's post-secondary institutions, providing 44% of operating costs versus the government's 41%.³⁷ While increases to tuition have caused the lion's share of this inequity, ancillary fees have also risen to an all-time high of 6% of operating revenue, compared to 1% in 1991-92. The graph below demonstrates the changes to student and government contribution to post-secondary institutions in Ontario since 1980.

³⁷ Council of Ontario Universities, "Operating Revenue – General Expendable Funds by Source of Fund, 2005-06 – 2014-15."

Proportion of Student and Government Contributions to Ontario University Operating Budgets, 1980-2015



The steady and steep increase in ancillary fees over the past three decades makes it clear that as government contribution has declined, institutions have been unable to provide services to students, and the costs of those services has been burdened with students themselves. While students recognize that some ancillary fees are for legitimate costs that are fairly charged to students, they do not agree that they should be shouldering such a large burden of operating costs in publicly assisted institutions.

Students also believe that the principle of fair cost sharing should be extended beyond operational funding costs at universities to services provided to the university community. Services such as Ombudsman offices, peer support services, health services, athletics and recreation facilities and programming, and more are generally funded in part or fully by undergraduate students, but enjoyed by the entire university community. Students believe that the principle of fair cost sharing should be applied to services, and that groups accessing services should contribute comparable amounts to said services.

In order to return to a system of fair cost sharing, the province of Ontario must invest in post-secondary institutions by increasing operating grants, thus reducing the reliance of institutions on student fees. It is clear that ancillary fees did not rise in Ontario prior to funding cuts in the 1990s, which reduced the ability of institutions to provide both essential and important student support services. Students believe that a reinvestment in institutions from the province will relieve the burden of fees and eliminate barriers of financial inaccessibility.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

Principle: Student centres, health centres, and athletic centres enhance the student experience and benefit the entire university community.

Principle: Student-focused capital projects should not be exempt from standards of responsible cost sharing at any Ontario university.

Principle: If students choose to contribute to a capital project, they should have the ability to have their concerns and priorities heard with respect to the management of the space.

Concern: Students often have little to no oversight of projects paid for by students.

Concern: There is insufficient funding for student-focused capital projects in the province of Ontario.

Concern: Students are disproportionately responsible for financing campus buildings and enhancements that benefit the entire university.

Recommendation: The province should create priority funding for projects that enhance student development such as student centres, health centres, and athletic facilities.

Recommendation: The province should ensure that required investment into deferred maintenance does not exclude spaces originally funded through student ancillary fees.

Recommendation: The province should mandate that for all student ancillary funded spaces, agreements must be made between institutions and student associations to establish a management structure of the project that takes into consideration student concerns and priorities.

The provincial government finances the majority of academic buildings; however, ‘ancillary facilities’ – buildings that do not support the academic function of the university – are ineligible for provincial government grants. Alternatively, buildings that have an academic or research focus cannot be funded through ancillary fees as they are classified as tuition related and are subsequently prohibited from ancillary funding.³⁸ OUSA believes that student centres, athletic facilities, study spaces, and health centres are an integral component of the student experience, and they contribute to the institutions’ capacities for higher learning through collaborative learning environments³⁹ and healthy students.⁴⁰ Since the vast majority of university administrations cannot or will not find sufficient room in their capital budget to support the construction of new student focused buildings, the burden ultimately falls to students to fund these critically important projects through ancillary fees.⁴¹ Student centres, health centres and athletic facilities enhance the student experience and benefit the entire university community through advancement opportunities as well as community and staff relations.

Students across the province deserve the opportunity to study in high quality institutions that support them in all aspects of the university experience and, as such, should not have to fund the capital costs of buildings designed to support them in that pursuit. It is clear that the Ontario government has insufficient funding for student-focused capital projects. Over the past decade, hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent on wellness facilities, student centres, and athletic spaces, yet the only student focused project that received provincial funding was the Ryerson Student Learning Centre (funding \$41,000,000.00 of the expected \$112,000,000.00 project).⁴² In 2012, the province allocated \$111,574,300.00 to capital projects including facilities renewals and major projects of which 0% was allocated to funding student focused projects.⁴³ Institutions and students take on the entire burden in funding projects that consistently are experiencing higher usage and higher demands. A 2015 student space survey conducted by the McMaster Students Union found that 80% of students highlighted athletic facilities and student space as the

³⁸ Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, *The Ontario Operating Funds Distribution Manual*, 67.

³⁹ Hyo-Jeong So and Thomas A. Brush, "Student perceptions of collaborative learning, social presence and satisfaction in a blended learning environment: Relationships and critical factors." *Computers & Education* 51,(2008): 318-336.

⁴⁰ Narro Perez, Murphy, Gill "OUSA Policy Paper, Student Health and Wellness" (2014)

⁴¹ Based upon audit of 2015-2016 university operating budgets.

⁴² Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, "Data Catalogue: Capital grants for colleges and universities," (April 9, 2014), <https://www.ontario.ca/data/capital-grants-colleges-and-universities>

⁴³ Ibid.

top priority for expansion, despite having two capital projects for a student centre and an athletic facility opening in 2002 and 2006 respectively.⁴⁴

Table 4: Capital Project Fees for full-time students per 8-month term of study by institution, 2016-2017⁴⁵

Institution	Annual Fee
Algoma University	\$0
Brock University	Capital Fund: \$12.50
Carleton University	\$0
Lakehead University	Capital Improvements: \$30
Laurentian University	Students Recreation Center Levy: \$75
McMaster University	McMaster Student Union's University Student Centre Building Fee and Athletics & Recreation Building Fee: \$160.80
Nipissing University	\$0
OCAD University	\$0
Queen's University	\$0
Ryerson University	Special Incidental Reserve: \$4.00
Trent University	Student Centre Levy and Athletics Expansion: \$292.14
University of Guelph	Student Space Initiative: \$2
UOIT	Infrastructure and Service Enhancements: \$168.46
University of Ottawa	\$0
University of Toronto	\$0
University of Waterloo	Health Services Building Fee: \$20
University of Western Ontario	Student Rec Centre Fee and Endowment Fund: \$126
University of Windsor	Sports and Rec Capital Fee and University Center Expansion: \$115.10
Wilfrid Laurier University (Brantford Campus)	Enhancement of Student Life Levy and Sustainability Fee: \$51.62
Wilfrid Laurier University (Waterloo Campus)	Enhancement of Student Life Levy and Sustainability Fee: \$100.12
York University	New Student Centre Levy and Old Student Centre Levy: \$54.10

The table above outlines the fees that Ontario undergraduates paid for capital projects in 2016. As can be seen, the average Ontario undergraduate student paid approximately \$80 annually to support construction costs. This becomes more concerning with respect to maintaining a system of responsible cost sharing where on many campuses student fees are the only financial contribution to the construction and operating expenses of these projects. These projects largely focus on supporting community development and advancing provincial objectives such as health and wellness, collaborative learning, community support, and arts and culture. Buildings that foster and promote provincial objectives should not be funded exclusively by student ancillary fees and should be prioritized through provincial investment.

Ancillary facilities contribute significantly to the student experience, providing students a space to meet, work, study, relax and ultimately foster a sense of community and connection to their campus. Athletic and recreation facilities promote the health and fitness of our students, further minimizing impacts on system wide funding strains such as mental health support and health care as fitness concerns compound into long term issues.^{46 47} Accessible and affordable athletic facilities are necessary to providing a holistic student experience that prioritizes student success. Health and wellness centres provide physical and mental health care that are critical in the high-pressure environment of undergraduate studies.

⁴⁴ McMaster Students Union, "Student Space Survey 2015".

⁴⁵ Capital project fees collected from each institution's ancillary fee descriptions and breakdowns.

⁴⁶ C. B. Taylor, J. F. Sallis and Richard Needle, "The relation of physical activity and exercise to mental health," *Public health Reports*, 100 (1985): 195.

⁴⁷ William B. Baun, Edward J. Bemacki and Shan P. Tsai, "A preliminary investigation: effect of a corporate fitness program on absenteeism and health care cost" *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* 28 (1986): 18-22.

The 2009 final report of the then titled, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure's Long-Term Capital Planning Project, stated that "funding should be extended to traditional 'ancillary projects which demonstrate significant contribution to student development". The report noted that "many institutions need ancillary operations that add value to student development, improve retention, and strengthen health and wellness", suggesting ancillary facilities that could receive funding include athletic facilities, wellness centres and student spaces for clubs, student groups and community.⁴⁸ OUSA believes the government of Ontario should prioritize funding for these projects to decrease the reliance on ancillary fees paid for by students. Students in Ontario already pay the highest tuition in Canada, and should expect to receive a quality affordable education without having to pay additional costs for critical pieces of university infrastructure.⁴⁹

The operating and life cycle costs to maintain these facilities, especially with the high degree of student usage, can be both substantial in size and neglected by provincial and institutional funding. Due to the nature of these projects being funded by ancillary fees, there is a perceived ideology by university administrations that the cost to maintain, upgrade and operate these facilities should also be supported by students. These facilities benefit everyone in the university environment and should be recognized as such. Students from across Ontario have identified a consistent trend for universities to seek government funding and private donations for new academic space from the university operating budget, but when it comes to supporting new student space for studying and learning outside the classroom the budget suddenly becomes too tight. The province should pursue options to incentivize universities to pursue funding student centered projects and should ensure that major provincial investment into deferred maintenance does not neglect ancillary funded infrastructure.

As a system of responsible cost sharing, while students may choose to contribute to the capital costs of ancillary facilities, which in principle support their development, the province should mandate an obligation on behalf of universities to assist in this endeavour. If ancillary fees are going to be used for capital projects with the willing consent of students, institutions should be mandated to at minimum match the contribution through the operating budget, government capital funding or through private donations on behalf of university advancement.

Student control and management of these facilities is another critically important issue. While students in many instances pay for capital building construction, upon completion of the project the ownership of these spaces becomes that of the university in many cases. Student management of these buildings is different from institution to institution and can range from major control such as space ownership at the University of Calgary which has resulted in year long disputes between the student association and institution,⁵⁰ to mixed models such as independent corporations being established to recognize joint responsibility on behalf of institutions and student associations with the McMaster University Student Centre.⁵¹ The province should recognize that if students choose to contribute in a substantial way to capital projects, they should have significant control with respect to the management of that space, within limits to uphold the integrity of the institution. Therefore, the province should mandate that agreements between student associations and institutions be struck for any capital project with student ancillary fees contributing to the capital or operating costs of the building to dictate an appropriate management structure.

⁴⁸ Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, *Long-Term Capital Planning Project*, prepared by the Courtyard Group (2009).

⁴⁹ Statistics Canada, "Tuition Fees for Degree Programs, 2016," accessed October 21, 2016, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/160907/dq160907a-eng.htm>

⁵⁰ "U of C Students' Union loses fight to operate MacEwan Student Centre," *Calgary Herald*, (October 7th, 2016), <http://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/u-of-c-students-union-loses-fight-to-operate-macewan-student-centre>

⁵¹ McMaster University Student Centre Incorporated operating agreement as approved by the University Board of Governors and the Student Representative Assembly (2012).

ESSENTIAL STUDENT SERVICES

Principle: Essential student services, including mental health counselling, sexual violence centres and support services, and offices for students with disabilities, should demonstrate a system of responsible cost sharing.

Principle: Non-essential student services that support development and wellbeing such as career services, academic skills services, general health services, and athletics contribute to both student success and the university as a whole.

Concern: Essential student services, such as mental health counselling and sexual violence centres, are often funded in part by or solely by student ancillary fees at several institutions in Ontario.

Concern: Ancillary student services that support student development have become nearly completely dependent on ancillary fees.

Recommendation: The provincial government must prioritize investment in essential student services and supports, which include mental health counselling services and sexual violence centres, to reduce institutional reliance on ancillary fees and demonstrate a system of responsible cost sharing.

Recommendation: Essential student services fees should not have an opt-out capacity, and be passed by referendum to maintain effective service levels operating on a basis of fair cost sharing.

Student services such as mental health counselling, sexual violence centres, and offices for students with disabilities should not be considered ancillary to the student experience at Ontario universities, but rather should be considered essential at all institutions. OUSA defines essential student services as those that are necessary to the success of an individual student in need. Further, essential student services are services or programs that cannot be accessed in the community without presenting insufficient resources or financial barriers. To explain, while a community resource such as local sexual assault centres can provide students with resources to assist in support and potential reconciliation, they cannot provide direct access to ensure effective academic accommodation. Further, while a student could access counselling services at a community resource, OHIP does not cover the cost of mental health counselling and thus would provide a significant financial barrier.

It should not be confused, non-essential student services are absolutely a major priority for students, and it should be noted that the definition simply implies a difference in terms of the level of priority for which they should be funded. While recreation services and career offices play a critical role in campus life, students may choose to contribute to a system of responsible cost sharing by enhancing service levels to whatever they may desire through fee increases. Alternatively, an essential student service needs to provide a minimum level of support to ensure success for the students accessing them, such as mental health counselling and sexual violence centres.

Mental health is a pervasive issue across campuses whereby there is a significantly increasing demand for student support. However, as highlighted by a 2014 joint report from the Canadian Mental Health Association and the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services, there is a lack of investment in resources by institutions or the government into this area.⁵² The psychological and physical health of our student population is of critical importance with respect to student success. Even more so, mental health is becoming an increasingly

⁵² Canadian Mental Health Association & the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services, *Post-Secondary Student Mental Health: A Guide to a Systemic Approach*, (Toronto: ON, 2013), <https://healthycampuses.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/The-National-Guide.pdf>

challenging issue for university campuses to deal with. Health and wellness centres continue to cite a lack of staffing resources as the most significant challenge in providing care and support to growing student populations.⁵³ In principle, these increased costs should not be funded through student ancillary fees and should be funded through specifically designated grants.

Student services fees or health centre fees are common across universities whereby student health services are funded primarily through ancillary fees and are feeling the strain of incredibly long wait times. In 2010, following four student suicides over the course of 14 months, Queen's University struck a commission, which subsequently identified that more students than ever are entering university with a pre-existing diagnosis of mental illness, and there's less stigma attached to getting help.⁵⁴ There are a variety of reasons identified in the report as to why students are grappling with mental health problems: everything from the stress of moving away from home, to academic demands, social pressures, parents' expectations, and a looming recognition of the tough job market awaiting them.⁵⁵

For more information pertaining to uniquely identified health issues pertaining to student health and wellness refer to the OUSA Policy Paper on Student Health & Wellness.

Health care is the responsibility of the provincial government and accessible conditions for academic learning is a principal priority of the government with respect to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. While offices for students with disabilities do their best to accommodate and provide for the increasingly high demand of their services, the concept that health services and disability support are somehow conceptually different with respect to the "essential" role they play in post-secondary institutions is inaccurate at best. A holistic approach to support recognizes that the needs of students with disabilities are individualized. The expectation that students must contribute to a separate ancillary entity to receive the support and accommodation they need is antithetical to the intention of the undergraduate accessibility grant, which funds offices for students with disabilities.

The stigma associated with accessing health services and accessibility offices is positive, however consequently creates a significant strain with respect to the limited resources allocated to these units. As institutional enrolment has increased over the past decade, support for campus accessibility services and health centres has grown modestly to accommodate increased need. The percentage of students utilizing accessibility offices since 1990 has grown from 1.2 to 3.8 percent of total student enrolments.⁵⁶ Similar relationships have been experienced with respect to health centres on campus, specifically with student mental health and the proliferation of stigma reducing programming, which, while positive, consequently affects wait times significantly. Research shows us that wait times for appointments significantly impact both the efficiency with respect to staff and centre resources as well as the impact it has on the student.⁵⁷ If the province wants to ensure both the efficiency and effectiveness of these programs as well as maintain that they put mental health as a priority, funding needs to be invested into these core services immediately across the province. Advisors in accessibility offices now manage hundreds of students with disabilities,⁵⁸ and while funding has grown from \$12 million to \$41.4 million, this still remains nowhere close to meeting the need that is required.⁵⁹ Accessibility, especially when it has complex cases that involve multiple support structures beyond academic accommodation, including support for survivors of sexual violence and health facilities, are not included in that

⁵³ In-person interviews conducted by OUSA in September and October of 2014.

⁵⁴ Daniel R. Woolf, "Principal's Commission on Mental Health," *Queen's University*, accessed October 21, 2016, <http://www.queensu.ca/principal/planning/initiatives/mentalhealth/commission>

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Michael Condra and Eleanor Condra, *Academic Accommodations: Recommendations for Documentation Standards and Guidelines for Post-Secondary Students with Mental Health Disabilities*, Queen's University and St. Lawrence College Partnership Project: Kingston, ON, 2015.

⁵⁷ Gerard Gallucci, Wayne Swartz, and Florence Hackerman, "Brief Reports: Impact of the Wait for an Initial Appointment on the Rate of Kept Appointments at a Mental Health Center," *Psychiatric Services* 56 (2005): 344.

⁵⁸ Interviews with Office for Students with Disabilities staff, 2012 and 2015.

⁵⁹ Alison Kemper, Kevin Stolarick, James B. Milway, and Jutta Treviranus. *Releasing constraints: projecting the economic impacts of increased accessibility in Ontario*. Martin Prosperity Institute, 2010.

calculation. Sexual violence centres assist students with respect to medical, emotional, and navigational support and the resulting academic accommodations that may be required. Sexual violence centres are a critically important essential student service and should not require students to pay any ancillary fee supporting this work, as this is a core responsibility of the institution.

For more information pertaining to accessibility and student service support for students with disabilities read the OUSA Policy Paper on Students with Disabilities.

Career offices, athletic facilities, and academic skills offices benefit the student experience overall. Career networking, the concept of preparing potential employees with the necessary skillset to succeed, and connecting them to relevant employers, is critically important.⁶⁰ Studies have suggested that social employment programs must evolve to develop a “nexus of information exchange” whereby the outcomes for new adults entering the workforce increases when you bring together students, employers and faculty.⁶¹ While the purpose of university institutions may not be solely driven on labour market outcomes, many students come to university with the intention of leaving with a job or employment prospects. Therefore, employment offices do valuable work to improve student success.

Athletics facilities contribute significantly to the overall health and success of students in university. Athletics and recreation have been shown to reduce the frequency of depression and suicide amongst post-secondary students.⁶² Physical exercise has been proven through research to demonstrate significant benefits including improved self esteem, improved ability to concentrate and memorize, while other studies show that student athletes are able to maintain the same GPAs as peers while also spending less time invested into their studies.^{63 64 65} This is important to note with respect to the complex implications this has on usage for essential student services and the corresponding demand associated with accessing services that may be reactionary. The province of Ontario has an opportunity to contribute to a system of fair cost sharing by sharing the burden for non-essential developmental ancillary fees, which in turn may have a dependent relationship to cost implications for essential health services. The table below outlines the current health centre fees for full-time students attending OUSA member institutions, based on an 8-month term of study.

Table 5: OUSA Member Institutions’ Health-Related Fees (Full Course Load 8 Months)

McMaster University	Student Health Services Fee	\$60.11
	Student Services Fee	\$137.40
Western University	Student Health Services Fee	\$46.48
	Services for Students with Disabilities	\$12.86
Queen’s University	Student Wellness Services Fee	\$58.93

⁶⁰ Donald A. Castella, "Career Networking-The Newest Career Center Paradigm," *Journal of Career Planning and Employment*, 50 (1990): 32-39.

⁶¹ Castella, "Career Networking-The Newest Career Center Paradigm," 32-39.

⁶² David R. Brow, and Curtis J Blanton, "Physical Activity, Sports Participation, and Suicidal Behavior among College Students," *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*, 30 (2002): 1087–1096.

⁶³ Kenneth R. Fox, "The effects of exercise on self-perceptions and self-esteem," *Physical Activity and Psychological Wellbeing*, 13 (2000): 81-118.

⁶⁴ Teru Nabetani and Mikio Tokunaga, "The Effect of Short-Term (10- and 15-Min) Running at Self-Selected Intensity on Mood Alteration," *Journal of Physiological Anthropology and Applied Human Science*, 20 (2001): 233–239.

⁶⁵ Jeanick Brisswalter, Maya Collardeau, and Arcelin René, "Effects of acute physical exercise characteristics on cognitive performance," *Sports Medicine*, 32 (2002): 555-566.

	Sexual Assault Crisis Centre	\$1.00
University of Waterloo	Health Building Fee	\$20.00
	Student Services Fee	\$324.00
Wilfrid Laurier University	Comprehensive Student Services Fee	\$171.60
Brock University	Student Life Fee	\$208.30
	Sexual Violence Support Centre Levy	\$27.80

To create truly accessible campuses in Ontario, students will need to see an increased commitment from the provincial government to ensure that offices for students with disabilities, student health centres, and sexual violence centres receive funding that they require to meet the demand they are experiencing and will experience in the foreseeable future.

POLICY STATEMENT

Ancillary Fees

Whereas: Ancillary fees require a distinct, clear, and robust policy separate from the tuition framework.

Whereas: The administration, origin, and definition of any and all ancillary fees should be fully transparent to the general student population.

Whereas: Student-sponsored endowment funds should be used only for non-tuition related projects that improve student life.

Whereas: There must always be a clear protocol for the establishment or increase of ancillary fees that can be easily accessed by all members of a university community.

Whereas: Ancillary fees should be regularly reviewed to ensure they are still relevant and necessary.

Whereas: All of the costs borne by students for academic evaluation and instruction should be paid for through tuition fees only.

Whereas: Students should have access to compulsory courses and not encounter financial barriers through mandatory course fees.

Whereas: Students should not be required to purchase learning materials and clothing necessary for academic evaluation in compulsory courses.

Whereas: All willing and qualified students should be able to benefit from work-integrated learning opportunities during their university career.

Whereas: Students should not be unduly charged for pursuing some form of work-integrated learning within a particular program or institution.

Whereas: Students should have complete authority over whether or not a new ancillary fee is implemented.

Whereas: Ancillary fees, regardless of the way they are negotiated or the number of institutions involved, should follow consistent guidelines without exemption.

Whereas: Student unions should possess complete control over their own operations and be solely accountable to their members.

Whereas: Student unions should have the ability to set their own fee structures in accordance with Ontario legislation.

Whereas: Universities have a responsibility to collect fees on behalf of student unions.

Whereas: Students should have oversight and control over the ancillary fees that they pay.

Whereas: Students should have complete authority over whether or not a new institutional ancillary fee is implemented.

Whereas: All willing and qualified students should be able to access and excel within Ontario's system of post-secondary education.

Whereas: Students should not have to disproportionately cover the costs of operational funding or funding for ancillary services for universities.

Whereas: All groups accessing services funded through ancillary fees should contribute comparable amounts to the service.

Whereas: Student centres, health centres, and athletic centres enhance the student experience and benefit the entire university community.

Whereas: Student-focused capital projects should not be exempt from standards of responsible cost sharing at any Ontario university.

Whereas: If students choose to contribute to a capital project, they should have the ability to have their concerns and priorities heard with respect to the management of the space.

Whereas: Essential student services, including mental health counselling, sexual violence centres and support services, and offices for students with disabilities, should demonstrate a system of responsible cost sharing.

Whereas: Non-essential student services that support development and wellbeing such as career services, academic skills services, general health services, and athletics contribute to both student success and the university as a whole.

Be it resolved that: The province should separate the Ancillary Fee Guidelines from the Tuition Fee Framework, creating a standalone ancillary protocol.

Be it further resolved that: The provincial government should establish a standalone ancillary fee protocol, distinct from the tuition fee guidelines and framework, in consultation with university administrators and student government representatives.

BIFRT: The province should mandate – through a standalone ancillary fee protocol – that all fiscal material, including budgets, audits, and explanatory breakdowns of ancillary fees be publicly disclosed in a way that is readily available to students.

BIFRT: The province should – through a standalone ancillary fee protocol – mandate that institutions must levy and collect all ancillary fees, including tuition and non-tuition related ancillary fees through a centralized online system.

BIFRT: Student-sponsored endowment funds should be considered non-essential fees and thus subject to the same approval mechanisms as stipulated in the standalone ancillary fee protocol.

BIFRT: The province should - through a standalone ancillary fee protocol – mandate that independent student-sponsored endowment funds must publish the financial information and a list of sponsored projects in a way that is readily available to students that contribute to it.

BIFRT: The province must mandate – through a standalone ancillary fee protocol – that all post-secondary institutions be required to regularly review their ancillary fees at a minimum of once every five years.

BIFRT: The province should – through a standalone ancillary fee protocol – develop an ancillary fee protocol structure that can be provided as a best practice example for institutions, providing examples of high levels of student involvement.

BIFRT: The province should mandate that institutions establish a formal and easily accessible complaint mechanism for students who are being charged fees they suspect to be illegal.

BIFRT: The provincial government should eliminate the [exemption for] “digital learning materials that are property of the student and which can include test/assessment tools” in the Ancillary Fee Guidelines.

BIFRT: The provincial government should invest in open educational resources and textbooks as an option for instructors.

BIFRT: The provincial government should mandate that institutions cannot charge mandatory fees for any field trips in compulsory courses.

BIFRT: The provincial government should mandate that institutions provide an alternative rentable option when compulsory courses require students to purchase learning materials and/or clothing.

BIFRT: The provincial government should invest into work-integrated learning services on campus to reduce dependency on student ancillary fees.

BIFRT: The province must mandate – through a standalone ancillary fee protocol –that students in work-integrated learning programs be given a detailed explanation of how these fees are used.

BIFRT: The provincial government should eliminate the work placement fees exemption in the ancillary fee protocol.

BIFRT: The provincial government should eliminate both the system-wide and vendor exemptions from the ancillary fee protocol.

BIFRT: The provincial government should mandate – through a standalone ancillary fee protocol – that any system-wide fee established at a given institution should follow the same guidelines as all other ancillary fees.

BIFRT: The provincial government should pass legislation that recognizes student union autonomy and specifically outlines the sole cases that this autonomy can be limited, namely through direct intervention by a neutral third party in the event of gross financial irregularities and/or bylaw violation.

BIFRT: The provincial government should introduce legislation recognizing the autonomy of student unions at post-secondary institutions, allowing student unions to levy their fees in a manner decided by their membership in accordance with provincial legislation.

BIFRT: The provincial government should mandate – through a standalone ancillary fee protocol – that universities can no longer charge administrative fees for collecting ancillary fees on behalf of student unions.

BIFRT: The province should mandate – through a standalone ancillary fee protocol – that all institutions have an oversight committee consisting of at least 51% student representation responsible for the review of all ancillary fees regardless of the date they were initially implemented.

BIFRT: The provincial government should mandate – through a standalone ancillary fee protocol – that the students should have the opportunity to sit on the governing bodies of university services funded by ancillary fees where applicable.

BIFRT: The province should mandate – through a standalone ancillary fee protocol – that any introduction or modification (above CPI) of compulsory non-tuition-related ancillary fees must be approved by students via referendum.

BIFRT: The provincial government must increase operational funding such that operational funding is not disproportionately reliant on ancillary fees.

BIFRT: The province should create priority funding for projects that enhance student development such as student centres, health centres, and athletic facilities.

BIFRT: The province should ensure that required investment into deferred maintenance does not exclude spaces originally funded through student ancillary fees.

BIFRT: The province should mandate that for all student ancillary funded spaces, agreements must be made between institutions and student associations to establish a management structure of the project that takes into consideration student concerns and priorities.

BIFRT: The provincial government must prioritize investment in essential student services and supports, which include mental health counselling services and sexual violence centres, to reduce institutional reliance on ancillary fees and demonstrate a system of responsible cost sharing.

BIFRT: Essential student services fees should not have an opt-out capacity, and be passed by referendum to maintain effective service levels operating on a basis of fair cost sharing.