



## VICTORIA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

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### **RE: Provincial Government Announcement on Post-Secondary Education**

On January 17th, the provincial government announced several changes to post-secondary tuition fees that the Victoria University Students' Administrative Council (VUSAC) is deeply concerned about. In particular, we adamantly oppose the restructuring of the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) and the planned changes to ancillary fees in the 'Student Choice Initiative'.

The effects of these changes would be unacceptable. OSAP would offer fewer grants and burden us with more loans, in effect, increasing already astronomical student debt. The combined removal of the six-month interest-free grace period and the addition of eligibility criteria that reduce the number of students able to access funding only worsens this. The new OSAP structure will likely exclude many low-income students from post-secondary education. In addition, it is likely to pressure universities to increase unregulated international student tuition in order to offset lost revenue from domestic tuition cuts. On the balance, it is clear that these changes will hurt far more students than they will help.

The 'Student Choice Initiative' plans to make all 'non-essential' ancillary fees optional. What the government neglected to communicate is just how important the services funded by these fees are. These fees fund the levies, student organizations, campus publications, student governments, university services, and equity-seeking groups that form the basis of our university experience. Our student governments hold our administration accountable. Our clubs, course unions, and extra-curricular activities enrich the lives of students and build skills that advance future careers. Our students deserve a full, well-rounded education with the supports and opportunities that only a robust campus life can provide.

Education is a right - and it does not only happen inside the classroom. As your elected representatives, we will fight for that right to be expanded, not restricted.

We want to assure the Victoria College community that we are committed to working with student groups and activist organizations across campus to fight these changes; we have been doing so since the announcement was made. We will keep Vic students updated through social media and other channels as more information becomes available and advocate for student interests at every opportunity. If you have any questions about how VUSAC is responding to these issues, please email VUSAC President, Jayde Jones, at [president@vusac.ca](mailto:president@vusac.ca).

In solidarity and service,  
The Victoria University Students' Administrative Council