Scarborough Campus Students’ Union
2015-2016 Priorities and Recommendations

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Preamble

The Scarborough Campus Students' Union is committed to tackling issues that systematically impact the lives of students. This document comprises a few of several concerns expressed by our members, followed by creative recommendations that would improve the lives of many students. This is the first of many avenues in which we will explore presenting these recommendations throughout the year.

Tuition Fees

For the last six years, Ontario has been ranked as the most expensive province in Canada in which to pursue post-secondary education. Between 2010-2014, average tuition in Ontario for full-time undergraduate students has increased by 20%. Tuition fees remain the most significant barrier that students face when trying to access post-secondary education. High tuition fees compounded with lower incomes, higher rates of poverty and other systemic factors have a discriminatory impact on marginalized students who must pay more, incur more debt, and get less out of their education. Full-time study is also associated with many different pressures and responsibilities, with students having to juggle work and school with mounting debt. These have paramounting effects on mental health, which impacts academic achievement.

Domestic students are not the only ones affected by increasing tuition. Tuition fees for international students remain unregulated and are often four to five times more expensive than domestic rates. Low and middle-income students - particularly students from developing countries - face tremendous obstacles in accessing post-secondary education. In fact, international tuition fees at Canadian universities are usually more than the annual wage of most families in developing countries.

At the University of Toronto, Scarborough, average tuition for domestic undergraduate students in an Arts & Science program has increased 14% between 2011 and 2015. For international students, this number has increased overwhelmingly by 49% in the same time period for the same program (Table 1). These numbers do not include deregulated programs such as management and computer science, where students are paying up to triple the arts and science program fees. The University of Toronto has fostered incredible and important international relationships. We rank one of the highest in international rankings, we are one of the most competitive universities in the country for both domestic and international students, and we have very strong international student enrolment. However, this prestige is used as an excuse for inflated tuition fees, and sets the standard that only students who have the financial resources are admitted, and is not based on educational or experiential background.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Domestic ($)</th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>International ($)</th>
<th>Increase</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>5,450</td>
<td></td>
<td>25,826</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>5,695</td>
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<td>28,409</td>
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<td>2013-2014</td>
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<td>32,075</td>
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<td>2014-2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>6,220</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>38,460</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>14%</td>
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<td>49%</td>
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Table 1. Year 1 Entry Tuition Increases for Arts & Science Domestic and International Undergraduate Students at the University of Toronto, Scarborough.

**Recommendations:**

1. University of Toronto Scarborough administration encourage Governing Council and the Ontario Government to implement a tuition freeze for the University of Toronto for the 2015-2015 academic year.
2. University of Toronto Scarborough administration sign a letter in partnership with the SCSU to support better post-secondary education funding in Ontario to the provincial government.

**Key Players:** Andrew Arifuzzaman, Desmond Pouyat

**Sexual Assault Policy**

Post-secondary students are disproportionately affected by sexual assault and sexual violence as compared to the general population, therefore, it is no understatement that sexual assault continues to be a very serious issue on campuses across the country. Unfortunately, universities have remained largely inactive around the issue of sexual assault, whereas students have been at the forefront of combatting sexual assault in post-secondary institutions. Through decades of research, lobbying, and awareness through campaigns such as *No Means No*, we were finally heard by Premiere Kathleen Wynne, who rigorously consulted student unions, including the Scarborough Campus Students’ Union, to implement updated sexual assault policies on campuses province-wide.

**Recommendations:**

The Scarborough Campus Students’ Union demands a preventative, proactive and survivor-centric sexual assault policy at the University of Toronto, with a focus on the following recommendations:

1. Survivor-centred and campus-wide consultation in developing University of Toronto’s sexual assault policy.
2. Sexual assault response training for campus health providers, responders, and campus police.
3. Recourse for students who do not receive adequate aid through the University. This would be through an external body (eg. government office) that holds the university accountable.
4. Updated student code of conduct to include sexual assault and harassment.
5. Amnesty for survivors who were in violation of other school policies when assaulted (eg. consuming alcohol or drugs).

Key Players: Andrew Arifuzzaman, Desmond Pouyat, Rick Halpern

**OHIP for International Students**

In 1994, the Ontario government eliminated coverage for international students from the Ontario Health Insurance Program (OHIP). International university students are now covered by the University Health Insurance Plan (UHIP), a for-profit health insurance plan that provides limited health coverage and is not accepted universally by physicians, hospitals and clinics in Ontario.

International students play an integral part of our campus community, pay sales and income taxes, and often remain in the province once they graduate and continue to participate in the economy and their local communities.

**Recommendation:**

1. University of Toronto, Scarborough and Central administration to support initiatives that encourage the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to re-integrate international students into OHIP with no premium and a maximum three-month waiting period, as is consistent with all new Ontario residents.

Key Players: Bruce Kidd, Desmond Pouyat

**Equity Course Breadth Requirement at UTSC**

Equity matters are critical in all facets of life and areas of scholarship and this should be reflected in course offerings. Students in every department, whether it be the Natural Sciences, Business, Humanities or Social Sciences need the experience of thinking critically about equity matters in and around their selected fields.

Introducing an equity course not only promotes respect and understanding between different communities, but responds to the fact that we live in an intersectional society that requires understanding of cultural differences and concepts. It will put University of Toronto at the forefront of social change and economic justice.

**Recommendation:**

1. University of Toronto, Scarborough administration explore the implementation of an equity course as a breadth requirement for program/degree completion.

Key Players: Rick Halpern, Bruce Kidd, Desmond Pouyat
Communication Between Students and Administration

The Scarborough Campus Students’ Union acts as a conduit for student issues to be presented to the University of Toronto administration, however, communication and consultation is often lacking between administration and the student population. We have seen this issue in several cases, from lack of student involvement in visioning frameworks (President Gertler’s 3 Priorities Towards 2030) and lack of communication with Departmental Student Associations in academic policy changes.

Recommendation:

1. Proactive communication and consultation with students, especially student leaders (eg. student union and Departmental Student Association executives) when developing new policies or long term visioning that directly impact students.

Key Players: All

Ethical Investment

Fossil fuels are the largest greenhouse gas emitters in the world, contributing ¾ of all carbon, methane, and other greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, the fossil fuel industry contributes to the increase in global mean temperature, which is quickening the possibility of widespread ecological and ice-sheet collapse. As of December 2013, University of Toronto Asset Management Corporation (UTAM) has over 200 share holdings in companies actively involved in the fossil fuel industry, including, but not limited to Chevron Corp, Exxon Mobil Corp, Suncor Energy Inc, Eni Spa, Canadian Natural Resources, Valero Energy Corp, Conocophilips, Whiting Petroleum Corp, and Imperial Oil Ltd.

Secondly, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has caused the death of over 6,890 Palestinians and roughly 1,091 Israelis from Second Intifada to July 7th, 2014. Among these deaths, 6,835 Palestinians were killed by Israeli Security Forces, while 347 Security Force Personnel were killed by Palestinians. As such, Israeli Security Forces are guilty of violating Geneva Conventions by exercising disproportionate use of force. UTAM has share holdings in corporate entities that contribute to the conflict, including but not limited to BAE Systems, Northrop Grumman, Lockheed Martin and Hewlett Packard. To prevent widespread ecological destruction, private investors, corporations, and governments, need to make a commitment to divesting from the fossil fuel industry; Stanford University, 3 ranks higher than University of Toronto, has already committed to sell their investments. In terms of divesting from companies which violate international law, University of Toronto has previously divested their pension funds from companies involved with committing war crimes during the South African Apartheid in 1990.
**Recommendation:**

In alignment with past precedence, The Scarborough Campus Students’ Union demands that the University of Toronto divest from companies involved in unethical practices, and engage in morally responsible spending patterns. We recommend the following:

1. University of Toronto commit to divest from the fossil fuel industry.
2. University of Toronto also commit to divest from companies involved with killing innocent people during the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
3. Make more socially conscious investments in companies, specifically those which work to strengthen disadvantaged communities.

**Key Players:** Andrew Arifuzzaman

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**Centralized Resource Directory**

Many bodies on this campus offer many services and support resources necessary and beneficial to the experiences of all students from UTSC. From the SCSU, to DSAs, Student Clubs, the AA and CC, ISC and more, support services are offered to our students. However, these resources have become lost across campus. Students need a centralized directory that has all of these resources to ensure that students have an accessible space to find as many options as they can for the support they need.

A centralized directory will not exist as a support resource in itself that will ease the experience of a student but will allow the administration and the bodies that organize these resources where there is duplication and most importantly discrepancies. By being able to see the discrepancies, we will be able to see where to add resources to ensure our students are as successful as they can be.

**Recommendation:**

The University of Toronto Scarborough administration work with the SCSU and other organizing bodies to compile their services and resources and to explore various channels to display this directory.

**Key Players:** Desmond Pouyat
References


De Mello, T. (2015). Equity breadth requirement proposal Unpublished manuscript, University of Toronto, Scarborough, ON.


