

A comparison of Party Platforms on post-secondary education

Green Party

Federal Expenditures on PSE:

- Will increase funding directly targeted to PSE expenditure to provinces targeted to student enrollment, with the caveat that tuition fees must be reduced to receive the increased funding. No numbers attached to what this increase will be.

Student Loan System:

- Will replace Millennium Scholarship Foundation with a new system of needs-based loans and bursaries. State will “increase funding.”
- Promise “reasonable” repayment schedules for student loans.
- Will forgive 50% of every student’s loan.

Student Loan Interest Rates:

- Will provide “low interest rates” (not specified)

Other:

- Will restore student summer job program
- Will fund universities (unclear as to how) to create more tenure track teaching positions – “regardless of perceived commercial value of the area of pedagogy”
- Will create a “fund for excellence in post secondary teaching” to reward universities where the student to professor ratio decreases.
- Will “urge” targeted research grants to universities focusing on new technologies in the fields of renewable energy, smart growth and energy conservation.

Liberal Party

Federal Expenditures on PSE:

- No mention of increasing transfers to provinces for PSE.
- Will create an endowment fund worth \$25 billion to disperse grants for 20 years. The fund proposes:
 - o 200,000 needs-based bursaries of up to \$3500 per year
 - o 100,000 access bursaries of up to \$4000 per year – targeted to groups “such as Aboriginal Canadians and persons with disabilities”
 - o Does not include Quebec – additional expenditures alluded to.
- Will eliminate tuition and education credits (no mention of the textbook credit) and replace it with about \$800 worth of grants for every student. Tuition and education credits are currently 15% of tuition paid, plus 15% of \$400 per month of full-time study. For a full time student at SFU for 8 months, these tax credits are worth \$1440 in 2008/09.

Student Loan System:

- Will make every student eligible for a guaranteed student loan of \$5,000, regardless of parental income.
- Will “work with provinces” to design new student loan programs to increase access for Aboriginal Canadians. No details are provided.
- Grace period for repayment extended from 6 months to 2 years, and makes the period interest-free. Will extend the time students have to repay their student loans. (No detail provided on whether that increases their interest or not.)

Student Loan Interest Rates:

- Will make student loan rates prime + 0.5%.

Other:

- Will increase annual CIHR and NSERC funding by \$315 million combined, and increase SSHRC funding \$130 million.
- Will create an interdisciplinary Sustainability Fund of \$100 million, available to researchers and graduate students for projects that reach out of their discipline.

New Democratic Party

Federal Expenditures on PSE:

- Will negotiate with provinces to increase dedicated transfer funding targeted at “keeping tuition fees affordable.”

Student Loan System:

- \$1000 grant to all undergraduate or equivalent students who qualify for student loans, paid at the beginning of the school year.
 - o Does not include Quebec – additional expenditures alluded to.
- Will eliminate forced repayment of student loans if students are still completing their education through internship, co-op or placement programs.

Student Loan Interest Rates:

- Will reform the system to include “interest relief.” (not specified)

Other:

- Will increase university and college research funding. (not specified how much)
- Will introduce a Canada Post-Secondary Education Act to guarantee funding to public institutions, divide the Canada Social Transfer to specifically target funding for post-secondary education, and require public audits of the funds.

Conservative Party

Federal Expenditures on PSE, Student Loans & Interest Rates:

- The words “post-secondary,” “university,” “college,” “student” and “student loan” do not appear in the Conservative Party platform.

Other:

- Will add an additional \$2000 completion bonus for apprentices who completed their training.

All data compiled by the Simon Fraser Student Society.

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