

MEDIA RELEASE

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CAP ON INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS EXPOSES FORD GOVERNMENT UNDERFUNDING OF UNIVERSITIES

TORONTO, ON — Today, the federal government announced a 50 per cent reduction in the number of international post-secondary students that Ontario is allowed to accept for the next two years. In response to the federal announcement, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO) is calling attention to the root cause of the issue, which is the Ford government's continued shortchanging of post-secondary education.

"It is grossly inaccurate and harmful to blame international students for the serious issues that the Ford government has manufactured in the post-secondary sector," stated OSSTF/FEESO President Karen Littlewood. "When it comes to funding universities and colleges, Ontario is dead last. Ford has deliberately underfunded post-secondary education in Ontario for years, creating a situation where universities and colleges were forced to become over reliant on international tuition fees as a significant source of revenue."

Among all provinces, Ontario is last in public funding per student at the post-secondary level. Institutions have been forced to increase their acceptance of international students to make up for the rapidly growing funding gap created by the Ford government.

Said President Littlewood, "Ford continues to speak out of both sides of his mouth. He loves to claim he's focused on growing the economy and investing in Ontario's future, yet he is starving public universities of the investment needed to provide the educational opportunities Ontario students need to thrive in a changing economy."

"Students are going without the services and resources they need, the housing market is under increasing pressure, and world-renowned universities in Ontario are in financial distress. It's students who are ultimately paying the price for the Ford government's failures in the form of cuts to student services and programs," added President Littlewood.

"Under Premier Ford's watch, Ontario universities have been put in financial desperation as they scramble to make up the shortfall in public funding through private sources, such as tuition fees," concluded Littlewood.

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“With the federal government capping the number of international students allowed to study in the province, it’s absolutely critical that the Ford government create a strategy to boost public investment in post-secondary by 20 per cent next year and then matched to inflation to lift Ontario out of last place and deliver the quality education Ontario students need in order to reach their potential.”

OSSTF/FEESO represents approximately 3000 support staff at six universities across the province and works closely with partners in the post-secondary sector, including the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) and the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), to advocate for better working and learning conditions in Ontario’s universities and colleges.

OSSTF/FEESO, founded in 1919, has over 60,000 members across Ontario. They include public high school teachers, occasional teachers, educational assistants, continuing education teachers and instructors, early childhood educators, psychologists, secretaries, speech-language pathologists, social workers, plant support personnel, university support staff, and many others in education.

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Contact: Caitlin Reid
Media and Communications Advisor
Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation
Caitlin.Reid@osstf.ca
416-576-8346