To: Presidents and All Members

From: Paul Elliott, President

For Action

On November 2, 2016, post-secondary students across Canada are pledging to go ‘All Out’ to protest rising tuition fees at colleges and universities. Public education is a cornerstone of OSSTF/FEESO policies and practices and we are proud to support the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) Day of Action. We know that society benefits when we have universal access to well-funded and affordable public education. In recent years post-secondary education has become an unobtainable goal for some students due to rising tuition costs and mounting student debt. Post-secondary education and tuition fees are publicly regulated, however, according to the CFS, public funding currently accounts for less than 49 percent of university and college operating funds, down from 77 percent just 20 years ago. Students and their families are now making up this shortfall, through higher tuition fees, because governments chose to claw back the public funding for post-secondary education instead of ensuring that our public colleges and universities offer affordable education for every student.

In Canada, average tuition fees have climbed 137 percent since the early 1970’s, taking away the right to universal access to education that Canadians had normally been afforded. Paying the price for these unreachable tuition fees are traditionally marginalized groups: Indigenous, racialized, LGBTQ, disabled, single-parent families and low-income families. This enables only those ‘privileged’ to afford this ‘user fee’ model of education. The CFS reports that an average debt of over $28,000 can be expected after obtaining an undergraduate degree with the amount owed to the Canada Student Loan Program sitting at a whopping $19 billion.

We are asking our leaders and members to join in solidarity to fight for universal access, education justice and public education on behalf of Canadian students. On November 2nd, please join other affiliates and students in your communities to demand that access to affordable, quality public education be a universal right for everyone. Events in your communities are taking place between October 12th and leading up to the Student Day of Action of November 2nd. OSSTF/FEESO encourages you to get involved and support this event. Public Education is for the public good!

You can find events in your area by going to the Canadian Federation of Students website www.cfsontario.ca or the All Out Student Day of Action site www.cfs-fcee.ca/events or you can sign their Pledge to Go ‘All Out on November 2nd’ www.cfs-fcee.ca/take_the_pledge.

For more information, contact Tracey Marshall via email at tracey.marshall@osstf.ca or at Provincial Office at 416-751-8300 or 1-800-267-7867.

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