

Students' Union of St. Thomas University Inc.

Policy Manual

A policy respecting internal and external advocacy.

This policy may be referred to as the "Advocacy Policy".

COST OF EDUCATION

Tuition Fees and Government Funding:

- The Union opposes all increases to tuition fees, and will advocate for decreases to tuition fees through increased funding to university operating grants from the provincial and federal government.
- The Union supports zero tuition as a long term goal, and shall advocate for adequate government funding to achieve this end.
- The Union supports the reduction of international student tuition fees, with the long term goal of eliminating the international student differential fee.
- The Union opposes the implementation of out-of-province differential fees.
- The Union supports the inclusion of student representation during negotiation of government and university funding agreements, such as the four-year Memorandum of Understanding.

Up-Front Grants:

- The Union supports up-front, non-repayable grants as the preferred form of student financial aid over programs like loans and back-ended tax credits.
- The Union supports the creation of a provincial system of up-front grants that will be administered through the province's student loans program.
- The Union supports any increases to the amount of funding allotted for the Canada Student Grants Program.

Student Loan Interest:

- The Union supports any reductions to the interest rates on provincial and federal student loans, with the long term goal of eliminating interest rates on student loans.

Timely Completion Benefit:

- The Union supports the transformation of the New Brunswick Timely Completion Benefit into a system of up-front grants.

Tuition Tax Rebate:

- The Union supports the transformation of the New Brunswick Tuition Tax Rebate into a system of up-front grants.

Student Financial Aid:

- The Union supports the simplification and streamlining of student financial aid programs.

Post-Secondary Education Act:

- The Union supports the implementation of a national Post-Secondary Education Act that will work to increase federal funding for post-secondary education, lower the cost of education for students and their families, and put into place legislation that will ensure accountability and transparency from the provinces in regards to post-secondary education spending (i.e., following the same legal framework as the Canada Health Act).

Ancillary Fees:

- The Union supports a freeze on ancillary fees.
- The Union supports a system of student control through Students' Union-run referendum over the implementation of new ancillary fees.

Fair Funding for St. Thomas University:

- The Union supports adjusting current provincial funding levels to ensure that St. Thomas University is funded at a minimum of 90% of the provincial average per weighted FTE.
- The Union opposes increases to funding for St. Thomas University that will come at the expense of funding for other post-secondary institutions, and will rather advocate for increases to the overall funding transferred to the universities from the government.

ACCOUNTABILITY WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY:

Student Representation:

- The Union supports the inclusion of elected student representation on departmental committees from ratified student academic societies.

Confidentiality of the University's Board of Governors:

- The Students' Union opposes blanket confidentiality of the University's Board of Governors' meetings, as well as any associated documentation of these meetings.
- The Students' Union supports any move towards opening up these meetings and documents to the general university population.

ACCESSIBILITY ON CAMPUS:

Childcare:

- The Union supports the creation of on campus childcare facilities at St. Thomas University.
- The Union supports the implementation of a national childcare program.

Students with Disabilities:

- The Union supports increased government funding to grants and programs meant to help students with disabilities.
- The Union will ensure that all new buildings built on campus will be wheelchair accessible, and will advocate to increase the overall accessibility of campus for those with physical disabilities.

Gender Neutral Washrooms:

- The Union supports the creation of gender neutral washrooms in every building on campus.
- The Union will advocate for gender neutral washrooms to be placed in any new buildings being constructed on campus.

University Residences and the Residential Tenancies Act:

- The Union support the inclusion of university residences in the New Brunswick Residential Tenancies Act.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY:

Bike Lanes:

- The Union support the creation of bike lanes on campus, as well as more bike lanes in the community.

Inter-City Bus Service:

- The Union supports a system of inter-city bus service that is responsive to the needs of students.

Fredericton Transit

- The Union supports a public transportation system, and advocates for its expansion.

Bottled Water:

- Considering the environmental and social impacts of bottled water, the Students' Union advocate that the University phase out the sale of bottled water on campus. (As voted in during a referendum in February 2010.)
- The Union supports the expansion of water infrastructure on campus (e.g., water fountains, water bottle refilling stations, etc.).

University Environmental Policy

- The Union shall encourage the University to invest in and participate in an accredited environmental audit, in which the Union shall participate; and
- The Union shall pressure the University to follow and enforce its environmental policy by identifying areas of noncompliance as well as by engaging in mutually beneficial campaigns, projects, and promotions (February 9, 2005).

QUALITY ACADEMIC RESEARCH:

Copyright:

- The Students' Union supports changes to the Canadian Copyright Act that extend fair dealing rights for the purpose of education.
- The Union opposes any changes to the Canadian Copyright Act that give unlimited power to copyright holders to impose anti-circumvention devices (i.e., "digital locks"), particularly when these anti-circumvention devices can be used to impede on rights already outlined in the fair dealing provisions of the legislation.

Public Census Data:

- The Union opposes changing the federal long-form census from being mandatory to voluntary.