



Public Support for Post-Secondary Education

Halifax – A recent poll shows that 95% of Nova Scotians think post-secondary education (PSE) should be a high priority for the Nova Scotian provincial government.

“This is the fourth poll we’ve conducted in ten years,” says Scott Stewart, president of the Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers (ANSUT), “and the people of Nova Scotia consistently tell us that they want PSE to be a high priority for our government. Unfortunately, that has not been reflected in provincial budgets, where PSE funding has decreased by over \$22 million since 2010.”

The poll also shows that 90% of the respondents would support measures to improve the accountability of universities’ administrations for the way they spend the funding they receive. “Unfortunately, as universities have become increasingly corporate, they have vested more and more power in the hands of a few; namely, top level administrators and business folks on Boards of Governors,” says Stewart. “Regrettably, that leads to universities serving a much narrower interest, often business related, instead of acting for the many and serving the general good.”

Other highlights in the poll include serious public concern regarding the affordability and accessibility of post-secondary education, out-migration of university graduates, and an overwhelming need for accessible health and mental health services on campus. Stewart says 88% of those polled support reducing tuition fees for students, providing yet another reason for the provincial government to improve PSE in Nova Scotia.

This is the fourth poll conducted for the Post-secondary Education Coalition (PSEC). Past polls, conducted in 2007, 2010 and 2013, have showed sustained or growing support for increased funding to our universities and colleges, replacing provincial student loans with non-repayable student grants, and reducing tuition fees.

The full report is available at ansut.ca or cfs-ns.ca. The current poll was conducted by Nielsen Opinion Quest. 800 Nova Scotians were interviewed over 14 days in November 2017. The poll has an accuracy rate of +/- 3%, nineteen times out of twenty.



The Post-Secondary Education Coalition, formed in 2005, is comprised of the Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers (ANSUT), the Canadian Federation of Students-Nova Scotia (CFS-NS), and the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union (NSGEU). The Coalition brings together faculty, students and staff concerned with the current state of post-secondary education in the province of Nova Scotia.

ANSUT represents over 1,400 full-time faculty, librarians, and contract academic staff in Nova Scotia. ANSUT's vision is to provide its member Associations with the strongest possible voice on Post-Secondary Education issues in the province of Nova Scotia, and to advance its mission by engaging the active participation of its members, both individually and institutionally, to achieve that end.

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