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Instead of “putting things right” Budget 2015 makes things worse for students

Edmonton, Alberta – The Government of Alberta’s five year plan to reduce the reliance of post-secondary institutions on government funding sets the stage for a future of massive tuition increases for students.

“While Budget 2015 did not explicitly remove the tuition cap, as was hinted at last month as one of the many pre-budget trial balloons, today’s budget opens the door to the possibility massive tuition hikes,” said Navneet Khinda, Chair of the Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS). “Alberta students already pay the fourth highest in total tuition and fees across Canada.”

Budget 2015 introduces changes to student aid that correct some of the problems with the completion grant incentive, however, overall students will now have less access to grants and bursaries at the same time as they are about to face massive increases to tuition. Overall, \$18 million has been cut from grants and bursaries in Budget 2015 when compared to Budget 2014.

“Students are disappointed in a string of broken promises made to them by the government,” explained Khinda. “Post-secondary funding was cut by 7.2% two years ago and is now facing a further 4% cut over two years. The effects of further cuts to our institutions will no doubt be felt by students all across the province.”

The 1.4% cut to universities’ operating grants in 2015/16 and a planned continuation of a cut by 2.7% in 2016/17 comes following a 7.2% cut in 2013, and a promise by Premier Prentice to restore that funding during his campaign for leader of the Progressive Conservative Party.

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The Council of Alberta University Students (CAUS) represents the interests of students at MacEwan University, Mount Royal University, the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary, and the University of Lethbridge

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