



Canadian Association of University Teachers
Association canadienne des professeures et professeurs d'université

Memorandum 20:22

Date: April 30, 2020

To: Presidents and Administrative Officers
Local, Federated and Provincial Associations

From: David Robinson, Executive Director

Re: **Federal Advocacy in the Time of Covid-19**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an immediate impact on the lives of our members and students, and is generating uncertainty for the coming weeks and months. It has also shone a spotlight on the long-standing weaknesses in our post-secondary education system – the two-tiered workforce, public under-funding, the reliance on exploitative international student fees, and problems with collegial governance, to name a few.

CAUT's federal advocacy efforts in this time of COVID-19 are focused on winning immediate support for the sector and on building a recovery plan that recognizes the importance of a stronger, more sustainable, public post-secondary education system.

There has been some success in recent weeks. The [Canada Emergency Response Benefit](#) was adapted to include workers like contract academic staff who have had income reduced, not only eliminated. The federal government also reacted to calls to provide post-secondary students, facing grim job prospects, with income support by announcing [\\$9 billion in assistance](#).

Institutions, however, may still face serious financial challenges in September if physical distancing measures remain in place and student enrolments – including international student enrolments, are affected. CAUT is encouraging the federal government to expand the eligibility for the wage subsidy program to include universities and colleges, increase federal transfers to the provinces for post-secondary education, and boost enrolments by providing direct grants to institutions to fund tuition waivers. Please see the attached letter to the Prime Minister outlining our priorities.

We will need to raise our collective voices to advance a renewed vision for post-secondary education in a post-COVID Canada. In the weeks ahead, we will be calling on all of you to join us in our advocacy for a better future for post-secondary education.