



Here Are The Fees You Asked For

We Talk More, Do More

The **Canadian Intercollegiate Think Tank** at the University of Toronto Scarborough (CITT UTSC) is one of three chapters including the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University. We canvas pressing societal matters in today's economy by providing the Canadian youth with a platform to voice their visions and arrive at prospective solutions. As a Think Tank, we publish reports on our findings and discussions, thereby ensuring that our students' opinions and ideas are heard nationwide.



Findings and Discussion

Despite the diversity of the students surveyed, our findings demonstrate one dominant and robust belief that is held almost unanimously by the participants: tuition fees are relatively high, for some they are unmanageable, and at other universities, this level of fee would command a wider range of services.

"Tuition fees are too low!" - said no one ever

As one student humorously puts it, paying \$18,000+ per year for tuition is similar to buying a brand-new car every year! Our findings show that over 60% of the students surveyed pay anywhere between \$8,000-\$12,000 and over 30% pay greater than \$12,000 annually.

We Cannot Buy a Car Every Year

How do students pay? Most students identified numerous channels of funding, but an overwhelming 71.5% of our participants identified OSAP as a means to pay tuition (among others). Furthermore, 86.6% of surveyed students will unquestionably graduate with debt, and almost a quarter of the same sample study will graduate with over \$40,000 of debt. This problem of tuition fees is not echoed across all provinces in Canada, however. According to Statistics Canada, Canadian full-time students in undergraduate programs paid, on average, \$6,373 in tuition fees for the 2016-2017 academic year, which is almost \$2,000 less than the average tuition fees paid in Ontario. To put things into greater perspective, undergraduate

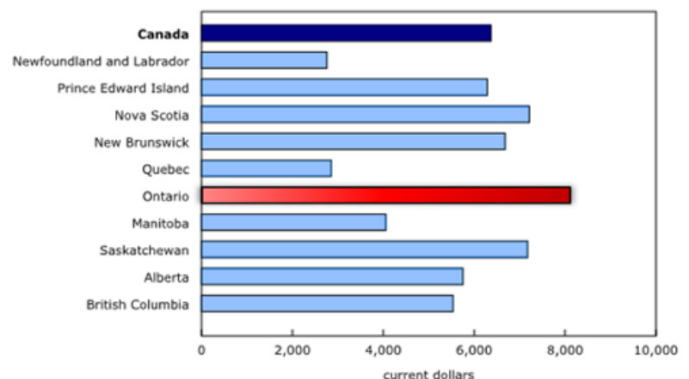


Image 1.1. Weighted average undergraduate tuition fees for Canadian full-time students, by province, 2016/2017. Image from Statistics Canada.

students in Ontario paid \$8,114 (the highest average tuition fees in 2016-2017), whereas undergraduate students in Quebec paid only \$2,851 in 2016-2017 (Statistics Canada). These numbers speak volumes. **We pay almost quadruple the amount** our fellow Canadians pay for a comparable level of education. Consider image 1.1. This chart shows that among ten provinces, students studying in Ontario pay the highest fees, among other provinces, namely, Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia.

Are the High Fees Justified?

Considering how many study spaces, healthy food options, and modes of transportation are available to UTSC students, are these costs justified? About 90% of our participants in our survey said the growing tuition fees are not justified by the level of education and student services they receive. Having established that UTSC's tuition fees are very high relative to the rest of Canada, our survey sought to question how students respond to this and what their attitudes are in relation to high tuition fees. It is already a well-known fact that Ontario students are subject to the highest fees for a post-secondary education in all of Canada. In fact, when asked to name the province with the highest tuition fees, 92% of our participants correctly identified Ontario.

Impact and Solutions

When asked what students would consider to be a reasonable tuition base, most participants suggested that if tuition cannot be subsidized by the government, then the additional compulsory fees should be eradicated, and tuition should be anywhere between \$4,000-\$8,000. This would substantially reduce tuition fees; such that education could become much more affordable and attainable. Some surveyees also suggested that the removal of interest on existing student loans would reduce student stress and make repayment a little more manageable. These suggestions, opinions, and ideas are important because they begin the conversation from the ground up. While there does seem to be a general consensus on the unjustified rise of UTSC's tuition fees, it is essential to any plausible solution that we understand the reality of this problem.

"I am having extreme difficulty, given that my tuition is \$20,000 a year and I'm a domestic student. OSAP does not even give me enough to pay my fees. It's such a struggle to work and be in school at the same time, just [so I can] pay for school."
- a student showing deep-seated frustration

This statement resonates with so many students, but it raises several profound questions. What price are we willing to put on knowledge and a fair education? Are we passively marginalizing incredibly low income families where students have to undertake two or three jobs just to go to school? Is it equitable that many are denied access to a competitive education? Do we fare well in contrast to other countries where post-secondary education is free, like Germany for instance? Why are tuition fees high and on the rise in the first place? At CITT UTSC, we sought answers deeper than hard and fast facts. For more answers regarding our students' opinions on such matters, check us out and get to know more about your suggested solutions and CITT's considerations for rising tuition fees.