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Needs-Based Grants Policy

1.0 Preamble

On average, those who have a university degree earn more than those with only a high school diploma. As such, having a post-secondary education is now essential to obtaining a career. However, individuals from low income households cite that the upfront cost of paying for their education is a major barrier to them pursuing post-secondary education. The majority of students from low income households who do decide to pursue post-secondary, pay for their education through student loans. This places them at a disadvantage compared to their peers who can pay out of pocket or have family support to pay for their education. Those who take out students loans end up paying more for their education (\$7,000 more) due to interest incurred on their loan. As debt levels increase, the likelihood of degree completion decreases as students chose to enter the workforce instead of going further into debt to finance their education.

There are post-program supports in the form of debt forgiveness and low interest rates for those who are struggling with repaying loans. However, students are often unaware of these programs prior to entering post-secondary, and these programs do not reduce the barrier of the up-front cost of education. Up-front, non-repayable grants will help people who would not otherwise be able to attend post-secondary.

British Columbia is the only province without a needs-based grants program. Students in BC pay more for their education than their peers across the country who have access to non-repayable grant programs. Education should be affordable and accessible no matter where you live in Canada. As such, the province of BC should recreate a needs-based grants program for all BC students that is accessible to all undergraduate and graduate students, including international students; is not contingent on program completion; and includes provisions for students with disabilities or dependents.

2.0 Definitions

Needs-based: funding that is allocated based on financial need in order to address said need as opposed to a reward for other factors such as academic performance, athletics or volunteering.

Non-Repayable: funding that does not need to be repaid. Unlike loans which need to be repaid, usually with incurred interest.

Up-front Grants: funding that is received during the enrollment process, before the start of classes.

Low Income: the low income cutoff is determined by the Federal government, and is assessed based on household (as opposed to personal) income.

3.0 Policy

Whereas, students who take out loans will pay more for their education due to incurred interest,



Whereas, students are less likely to complete their degree as their debt levels increase¹,

Whereas, a comprehensive needs-based, non-repayable grants program would reduce student loan debt and increase program completion rates,

Whereas, non-repayable grants help people who would not otherwise be able to get through post-secondary,

Whereas, the majority of students who take out student loans come from low and middle income families, and are more likely to come from marginalized backgrounds,

Whereas, the most cited reason for not attending post-secondary education, from individuals from lower incomes, is the up-front cost of education

Whereas, up-front grants at the point of enrollment will increase accessibility to post-secondary education,

Whereas, everyone should have access to education

Whereas, BC is the only province without a needs-based grants program,

4.0 Resolution

Therefore be it Resolved That the Kwantlen Student Association advocate for the re-introduction of a comprehensive needs-based grants program for low-and-middle income post-secondary students in British Columbia.

Be it Further Resolved That the Kwantlen Student Association support a needs-based grants program which is: accessible to part-time and full-time undergraduate and graduate students, including international students; is not contingent on program completion; and includes provisions for students with disabilities or dependents.

¹ (Berger, J., Motte, A., & Parkin, A. (Eds.). (2009). The price of knowledge: Access and student finance in Canada. Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation.
<http://www.yorku.ca/pathways/literature/Access/The%20Price%20of%20Knowledge%202009.pdf> p.74)