

UNDERFUNDING OF UNIVERSITIES

KEY ISSUES

In the 1990s, the Conservative government made deep funding cuts to post-secondary education and de-regulated tuition fees. They also passed a law allowing for private universities to be created in Ontario. The Liberals have failed to reverse funding cuts; today, Ontario ranks second-last in provincial funding for post-secondary education.

Both political parties have starved universities of funds, leading administrations to privatize services, contract out work, defer maintenance and raise tuition and other fees.

- McGuinty introduced a tuition fee freeze then removed it, causing tuition fees to skyrocket. Ontario fees are now among the highest in the country, making it increasingly difficult for working families and CUPE members, who are also students, to attend university.
- Continued funding cuts mean that university workers are losing jobs to privatization, contracting out and attrition.
- Infrastructure is crumbling at campuses across the province, posing significant health and safety risks for university workers and students.
- There is more commercialization and corporate sponsorship of buildings, public spaces, and specialized departments and curriculums.
- User or 'ancillary' fees have become a cornerstone of privatization with students and university workers having to pay: parking, gym and recreational facility fees; lab and equipment fees; fees for transcripts, grades; and university identification cards, among other things.

THE PARTIES – REPORT CARD

Conservatives

- Have proposed more private sector partnerships for university funding.
- Have no commitment to roll back tuition fees.

Liberals

- Refuse to address the funding requirements needed for universities to provide adequate permanent staffing and faculty hiring, and address building maintenance and capital needs.
- Tuition fees have skyrocketed since they reneged on their promise and took the freeze off fees.

NDP

- Committed to reduce tuition fees and improve student assistance.
- Called for increased funding to ensure that Ontario universities have the funds they need.
- Committed to scrap plans for private universities.

CUPE ONTARIO'S POSITION ...

Our choice: Only the NDP will ensure that tuition fees are reduced and that Ontario universities have the funds they need to stay public.