

OCUFA: RECKLESS GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT THREATENS EDUCATION QUALITY AND STUDENTS' RIGHTS

Ontario's faculty believe that, without increased public funding for Ontario's universities and colleges, the Progressive Conservative Government's announced tuition fee reduction is nothing more than an ill-conceived political gimmick designed to distract Ontarians from damaging cuts to the province's already underfunded postsecondary education system. OCUFA has long advocated for tuition fee reductions but not in the absence of increased core funding and sound student financial aid policy.

OCUFA is concerned that the fee reduction, OSAP cuts, and changes to ancillary fees were announced without consulting any stakeholders at the province's universities or colleges. This demonstrates a government pursuing a political agenda, not one interested in good public policy or helping students.

The announced OSAP cuts and changes to eligibility criteria

mean it will be harder for many students to access postsecondary education. While faculty are reassured that the Minister's remarks signaled the government's commitment to not cutting core operating grants for post-

secondary institutions, the announced changes mean that universities and colleges will struggle with less funding and students will be burdened with less financial assistance, more expensive loans, and higher debt.

"These reckless changes will shrink university budgets, increase class sizes, encourage further tuition fee hikes for international students, and threaten both the accessibility and quality of postsecondary education in Ontario," said

Gyllian Phillips, President of the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations. "We should be accelerating investment in postsecondary education in Ontario. Instead, this government has slammed on the brakes and put the car in reverse."

The government's unnecessary and anti-democratic decision to make many ancillary fees voluntary undermines students' rights on campus and increases administrative costs and red tape for universities. Many of the fees the government has identified as non-essential were introduced by students through democratic votes. Students' unions in particular are democratically elected, not-for-profit organizations founded by and for students. This is an attack on the ability of students' unions to represent and support their members.

"Students' unions provide numerous crucial services

and support for students on campus, and, through their advocacy work, they play an important role holding universities and governments accountable for decisions about issues including tuition fees and student financial assistance," said Phillips. "It is no coincidence that this government is cutting support for students' unions at the same time they are cutting OSAP. Ironically, this appears to be another attempt to stifle political debate, dissent, and speech on campus."

Ontario's universities are vital institutions that produce amazing graduates and research. But maintaining this level of excellence will require that the government actually sit down and talk to students, faculty, staff, and administrators, instead of continuing to make uninformed decisions in secret, behind closed doors.

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Father Arrested After Stabbing His Son in Whitby

A 48-year-old Whitby male is arrested after stabbing his 19-year-old son in Whitby overnight.

On Friday January 11, 2019, at approximately 12:20 a.m. members of Central West Division responded to a residence in the area of Manning Road and Anderson Street in Whitby for a domestic-related incident. Officers located a 19-year-old male who was suffering from stab wounds. The teen suffered serious but non-life threatening injuries. He was transported to a Toronto-area trauma centre. His father was arrested and facing numerous charges.

A 48-year-old male from Whitby is charged with: Aggravated Assault; Weapons Dangerous; Uttering Threats and Assault with a Weapon.

Male Arrested after Robbing Several Victims in Oshawa

A 24-year-old Oshawa male was arrested after threatening several victims in Oshawa with a knife.

On Tuesday, January 9, 2019, at approximately 12:20 p.m. members of Central East Division responded to the Refuge, a drop-in centre located on Court Street in Oshawa. The suspect was involved in a verbal altercation with another male after he believed that the victim stole his cell phone. The suspect then went to get a knife from the kitchen area and threatened the same male and others in the centre. One male was cut on the hand by the knife, he was treated at the scene. The suspect took property from several victims and left the premise on foot. Officers located him nearby and he was arrested.

Jose LOPEZ, 24 years of age of No Fixed Address is charged with: Robbery x2; Assault with a Weapon x2; Theft Under \$5,000; Uttering Death Threats x10; Weapons Dangerous x6; Fail to Comply with Recognizance; Fail To Comply with Probation x2 and Assault Police Officer x2.

Teenager Shot in Ajax

A 17-year-old male was shot near the intersection of Salem Road and Kingston Road East in Ajax at approximately 2:15 p.m. Thursday.

On Thursday, January 10, 2019 at approximately 2:15 p.m., the 17-year-old male was walking near a plaza when he was shot by an unknown suspect believed to be in a vehicle. He was taken to a Toronto trauma centre with a non-life threatening injury. Originally, a witness provided a description of four suspects (three teenaged males and one female) driving away in a van or large SUV. Investigators would like to review video surveillance and speak to further witnesses to confirm the descriptors of the suspects. Officers attended the area to collect video evidence and interview witnesses.

Male Charged in Elaborate Credit Card Fraud Scheme

A 32-year-old male from Quebec is facing 70 charges after he racked up more than \$164,000 in fraudulent credit card charges.

From September to November 2018, the accused participated in an elaborate credit card fraud scheme. During this time, he attended several Home Depot stores situated throughout Durham Region and in other parts of Ontario. He impersonated Home Depot credit card clients and used their in-store credit cards to make purchases of merchandise and gift cards worth more than \$164,000. The DRPS Major Crime - Fraud Unit entered into an investigation into these incidents. The accused was identified and a Canada wide warrant was issued. He was arrested in Laval, Quebec earlier this week.

Hovel KECHICHIAN, age 32 of Laval, Quebec, is charged with Fraud Over \$5,000; Personation with Intent x23; Possess Credit Card Obtained by Crime x23 and Possess Identity Info with Inference of Fraud x23.

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