



MEMBERSHIP ADVISORY: 2015-2019 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE PROVINCE OF NOVA SCOTIA AND THE NOVA SCOTIA UNIVERSITIES

BACKGROUND

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is a non-binding agreement made between the Nova Scotia government and the university presidents, which regulates things like tuition fees and university funding. This MOU was signed on June 21, 2016 and is valid until the spring of 2019.

“ Tuition fees for out-of-province, graduate and professional students remain permanently deregulated ”

2015-2019 MOU

This MOU fails to make universities safer and more accessible for students. Here are some of the most important agreements made between the province and our universities that students should know about:

- This MOU caps provincial funding growth at 1% a year, which is lower than the annual rate of inflation. This will result in university costs being downloaded onto students through tuition fees.
- It includes a tuition policy that reaffirms universities’ ability to use tuition fee resets to implement massive fee hikes (some students will see their fees increase by more than 10% a year until 2019).

- Tuition fees for out-of-province, graduate and professional students remain permanently deregulated which means, like international students’ fees, these fees can be raised by any amount the university chooses from year to year.
- The MOU talks about combating sexualized violence but doesn’t go far enough. The MOU refers to universities having sexual assault policies but doesn’t go as far as the Safer Universities and Colleges Act or the Sexual Violence Action Plan, legislation introduced by both opposition parties. The MOU is one of the only documents students have to hold our university and government accountable, but still does not provide any formal recourse when the government or university doesn’t live up to their side of the bargain.

STUDENT RESPONSE

SEXUAL ASSAULT ON CAMPUS

Students have been demanding greater accountability from university and government decision makers around sexual assault prevention on our campuses. This year, students worked with both opposition parties to put forward legislation, Bill 114 and Bill 164, which would require universities to have quality sexual assault policies, better on-campus services and supports, and mandatory reporting of the number of reported assaults on campus. Dalhousie staff and students signed over 1000 postcards in support of passing Bill 114. Students have consistently said having language

in the MOU, which is a non-binding agreement, is not enough and are still organizing to pressure the Liberal government to pass legislation. To get involved for the fight for safer campuses, email our Vice President Academic and External, Amina Abawajy, at vpae@dsu.ca.

TUITION RESETS

This year Dalhousie took advantage of tuition fee resets to raise tuition fees for students in Engineering, Agriculture and Pharmacy. The university’s Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) proposed increases between 15%-20% for Engineering, Agriculture and Pharmacy students: the largest hikes in over a decade. Students came out in large numbers to the BAC student consultations to raise their

opposition to, and concerns with, the fee increases. After immense pressure from students the BAC incrementally reduced the recommended fee increases. On April 19 the tuition fee increases went to a vote at the Board of Governors’ meeting and students came out to once again to try to stop the monumental hikes. After students demanded the Board “reject the reset,” the Board moved to a private meeting room where they forced through the vote on increasing tuition while students chanted outside. For more information on the student response to the Budget Advisory Committee, go to dsu.ca/issues/advocacy-and-research-documents. To join the fight for more accessible education, email our Vice President Academic and External, Amina Abawajy, at vpae@dsu.ca.