

## **Students call for meaningful input, tuition fee reductions**

HALIFAX– Students at Dalhousie University are calling on the government to reduce tuition fees and end differential fees for international students.

“Eliminating differential fees for international students and introducing tuition fee reductions for all students will make post-secondary education more accessible in this province,” said Amr ElKhasab, International Students Representative of the Dalhousie Student Union.

The provincial government is currently in the process of negotiating a multi-year funding agreement with universities in Nova Scotia. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the government and the presidents of the universities in the province sets out tuition fee regulations and puts in place a multi-year funding package for post-secondary education.

The current MOU negotiating process pushes students even further away from the table than previous negotiations. The new process involves ‘stakeholder consultations’ facilitated by a third party, instead of students participating directly in negotiating meetings. Students are also concerned that there is no clear process for how these consultations will inform the MOU. Past MOU negotiations included student at the table as non-signatory members, without veto rights.

“For students the negotiation process has gone from bad to worse,” said Jacqueline Skiptunis, Vice President Academic and External of the Dalhousie Student Union. “Further isolating students from fee negotiations undermines our voices and negates the stake we have in our own education.”

Students in Nova Scotia pay the third highest tuition fees in the country and, on average, graduate with over \$30,000 in student debt. International students also pay a premium to study at Dalhousie, with average tuition fees of over \$15,600 per year for an undergraduate degree and upwards of \$16,100 per year for graduate studies.

“Students know education is a public good,” said Skiptunis, “Public policy should be discussed and debated publicly.”

The Dalhousie Student Union is the province’s largest student union, representing over 18,500 undergraduate and graduate students at all campuses of Dalhousie University.

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For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact Emily Davidson at 902-494-7193 or 902-422-1405 or dsu.graphicdesign@dal.ca