

Dalhousie students rally for accessible post-secondary education

HALIFAX – Dalhousie students are joining students from across the province in a Day of Action to call for reduced tuition fees, increased university funding, and converting student loans to needs-based grants.

“We’re taking to the streets because student action works,” said Jaqueline Skiptunis, Dalhousie Student Union Vice President Academic and External. “Across campus, students are being forced to pay more and the university is being forced to make cuts to academic programs and student services. Each year, we’re paying more and watching the quality of our education threatened.”

In 2007, a student day of action won a 4-year tuition freeze and in 2011 students held the largest rally in Halifax in a decade to stop a proposal to completely deregulate tuition fees, which could have resulted in annual increases of 25 per cent.

Years of tuition fee increases in Nova Scotia have made Nova Scotia one of the most expensive places to study in Canada. Students in Nova Scotia also graduate with some of the highest debt loads. After a four-year degree, students in Nova Scotia have an average debt of over \$37,000.

“Education should be a right for all, not a privilege for the few who can afford it,” said Ali Calladine, a Dalhousie student and rally organiser, “We will keep fighting back until post-secondary education is accessible to everyone.”

The Nova Scotia Government is currently considering tax reform which would include a \$72 million tax reduction for the highest income earners. Investing that \$72 million in post-secondary education could convert 100 per cent of Nova Scotia student loans into grants and reduce tuition fees by 24 per cent.

“We won’t stand by and watch the provincial government make cuts on the backs the students studying in this province,” said John Hutton, a Dalhousie student representative on the Board of Governors and rally organiser. “If the government can afford to lose \$72 million on a tax cut for the rich, it can afford to adequately fund post-secondary education.”

The Dalhousie Student Union is the province’s largest student union, representing the approximately 18,000 undergraduate, graduate, and professional students who attend Dalhousie.

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If you would like to schedule an interview with a student spokesperson of the Dalhousie Student Union, please contact Emily Davidson at 902-422-1405 or 902-494-7193 or email Emily at dsu.graphicdesign@dal.ca