

POSITION STATEMENT: Financial Aid & Affordability

ISSUE:

The Bishop's University Students' Representative Council (BUSRC) strongly believes in a university experience that is open and inclusive to all students, regardless of financial background. We advocate for increased financial aid, transparency in the scholarship process, and affordable tuition. Financial barriers should never prohibit access to education.

RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY:

- Bishop's University
- Government of Quebec
- Government of Canada

DETAILS:

Rising tuition and cost-of-living pressures across Canada have created increasing financial strain for post-secondary students. The Bishop's community operates within this broader economic context and must prioritize financial accessibility and affordability. These financial pressures significantly impact student mental health, well-being, and academic success. The SRC strongly supports centering student access, equity, and financial wellbeing within all affordability initiatives.

IMPACT/ANALYSIS:

Cost-of-living pressures compound existing inequities that create barriers to students' academic success, retention, and participation in campus life. When financial aid systems lack transparency and equity, students are left to navigate the complexities of the system without support. Ensuring accessible and transparent affordability measures, policies and initiatives that strengthen access, support, and overall student wellbeing are essential to the student experience.

POSITION:

The Students' Representative Council advocates for institutional financial transparency and accountability. We support clear, accessible reporting of budget allocations, meaningful student representation in financial decision-making processes, and proactive communication regarding changes that impact student fees or services. Financial governance must be transparent and student-centered to maintain trust and ensure alignment with student priorities.

The Students' Representative Council supports the following:

Long-Term Goals:

- Expansion of financial aid and affordability measures, including increased needs-based aid and improved access to emergency funding for students.
- Creation of a centralized and accessible scholarship database that is searchable and user-friendly to ensure students have an up-to-date understanding of different scholarship opportunities.
- Greater transparency in scholarship, prizes, bursaries and awards decision-making processes
- An equity-centered review process of scholarships that recognizes systemic barriers and the value of underrepresented forms of achievements
- Transparent and accessible annual reporting on scholarship distribution
- The continued institutional funding or the increase of funding towards the Community Cupboard and other food security initiatives on campus
- Support for increased affordable and secure off-campus student housing
- Increased student aid from the Government of Quebec and the Government of Canada to increase student flourishing

Short-Term Goals:

- Support initiatives that increase paid student work opportunities

The Students' Representative Council opposes the following:

- Any form of tuition increases without clear knowledge of how the increases will be used to support students
- Any form of tuition increase that targets a specific demographic of students
- Reductions in institutional financial aid or emergency funding for students
- Any form of unpaid student work or utilization of students for free labour without formal compensation or acknowledgement



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