



NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

Student groups commend federal government's COVID-19 student aid package

Edmonton, Alberta – The Students' Association of MacEwan University (SAMU) and the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) are pleased with the comprehensive student aid package announced today by the Government of Canada. The package will bring significant relief to all students affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and will provide valuable support to at-risk students and recent graduates who need it most.

"It is encouraging to see that the federal government is providing students the much needed financial relief due to the impacts of COVID-19." said Cole Baker, SAMU Vice President External. "We have been advocating strongly to both the Provincial and Federal government when it comes to COVID-19 and it is good to see the Federal government respond to our advocacy in this way. It is important to recognize the many financial hardships that our students are facing and this financial relief is a step in the right direction."

Today's announcement expands the Government of Canada's COVID-19 response by providing a generous \$9 billion aid package to postsecondary students and recent graduates. Under the new package, students and recent graduates who do not qualify for the existing Canada Emergency Response Benefit will be eligible for another Emergency Student Benefit worth up to \$1,750 per month in relief. In addition, the government has also committed to doubling the Canada Student Grant for the 2020-21 academic year, along with an increase in Canada Student Loans that will bring weekly allowances from \$210 to \$350. The government has also pledged to invest an additional \$75 million in the Post-Secondary Student Support Program, Metis Education Strategy, and Inuit Education Strategy. Further, \$291 million in funding has been committed to the Canada Granting Agency to allow for student researcher extensions. Today's announcement also commits to creating the new Canada Student Service Grant which will provide up to \$5,000 to students who volunteer for a set number of hours during the pandemic.

"This kind of comprehensive aid package is key to ensuring that all Canadian students and recent graduates are protected during this pandemic, ready to return to classes and the workplace once physical distancing measures are reduced," added Adam Brown, CASA Chairperson. "Today's announcement includes much-needed immediate financial relief for students and recent graduates who do not qualify for the CERB, while also making sure that students are able to access and afford their education moving forward."

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SAMU and CASA have been committed to ensuring that the federal government safeguards the future by protecting students during the COVID-19 pandemic. We had previously called upon the federal government to provide serious relief for students by: Establishing an Emergency Response Benefit stream for students and new graduates, increasing the Canada Student Grant for low- and middle-income students, waiving the requirement for the fixed student contribution, permitting international students to travel to Canada in September 2020, and extending the research funding for student research funding issued by Canada's Granting Agencies. SAMU and CASA applauds the Government of Canada for taking action on our specific recommendations.

About SAMU: The Students' Association of MacEwan University (SAMU) is a student-centered organization governed by students, for students. Providing many programs and services that serve the student body including but not limited to the food bank, peer support, breakfast club, and emergency loan program. Acting within MacEwan, while maintaining independence from the University. It is an organization, serving students, inspired by students.

For more information visit www.samu.ca.

About CASA: The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) is a national voice for Canada's post-secondary students. Established in 1995, CASA is a non-partisan, not-for-profit student organization composed of student associations from across Canada. We represent 24 student associations, representing 380,000 students to the federal government of Canada. CASA advocates for a post-secondary education system in Canada that is accessible, affordable, innovative and of the highest quality.

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