

## **Proposed Tuition Fee Increases for Out-of-Province Students**

Dear members,

I am sure you are all aware of the recent proposal from the Quebec Government to increase tuition fees for out-of-province students. If the proposal is adopted, it is obvious that there will be a serious impact on Concordia University as well as on other universities in Quebec.

The following letter from President Graham Carr was recently circulated to faculty and staff at Concordia and I thought it would be worthwhile sharing with the CUPARUC community.

Garry Milton  
President, CUPARUC

October 31, 2023

### **Update on anticipated financial impact of Quebec tuition increases**

Dear Concordians,

I write to update you on the serious impact that the Government of Quebec's changes to tuition fees will have on Concordia. Details of the government measures are not yet finalized, but it's clear that the new policies will have devastating financial implications for Concordia and undermine our reputation as a global, next-gen university proud of its diversity, accessibility and openness to the world.

Specifically, we fear that the government's decision to nearly double tuition for out-of-province students from \$9,000 to \$17,000 will lead to a precipitous decline in undergraduate enrolments from the rest of Canada. By charging out-of-province students the proposed Quebec tuition rates — rates which were already well above the Canadian average — we will be priced out of the market.

We are undertaking a painstaking, program-by-program assessment, but we believe it's likely that our out-of-province registrations will decline by 65 to 90 per cent, beginning with the implementation of the policy in fall 2024. This year, Concordia welcomed over 900 new students from the rest of Canada, bringing the total to nearly 3,500 Canadian students studying here from other provinces. Based on our current numbers, we risk losing up to \$8 million out of our budget for 2024-25, rising to \$32 million annually in four years as students paying the previous out-of-province rates graduate. Whatever the detailed analyses eventually show us, the ramifications will be far-reaching and complex for our operations.

Three weeks after our first meeting with the Minister of Higher Education, we have yet to receive written details of the policy change with respect to international undergraduate and graduate non-thesis students. As we are well into recruitment season, this makes it extremely difficult to assess the full effects of the proposed measures and to provide potential students with the correct information. However, based on what we have been told verbally, the impact will be equally severe. Assuming our registrations in these groups hold steady at 5,300 students — perhaps an optimistic scenario, given the confusion and poor publicity the announcement is creating — Concordia's revenues for international students could decline by \$7.5 million in 2024-25 and by \$30 million per year in four years.

To summarize, based on the information that has been shared by the government to date and our own preliminary impact assessment on future registrations, the potential total loss of \$15.5 million in revenues just for 2024-25 would gravely aggravate our existing deficit situation. In four years, when the measures apply to all students concerned, we risk losing in the neighbourhood of \$62 million, representing 9-10 per cent of our current annual budget.

Clearly, the impact of the government's new policies will dramatically affect our financial situation and shrink our student population. At this stage, it's too early to anticipate what the full consequences will be. However, by working together, we will protect Concordia's mission of providing students with a world-class education, generating cutting-edge research and driving innovation that makes society more just and equitable for all. The reputation of our university has never been better, and I am committed to maintaining that momentum.

Many other leaders in the community have voiced their concerns about the fallout of the new tuition fees, including the mayor of Montreal as well as the president of BMO Financial Group, Quebec, the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal and the Conseil du patronat du Québec. The rectors of Université de Montréal, Université Laval, Université de Sherbrooke, HEC Montréal and Polytechnique Montréal have also publicly criticized the measures. Student associations have renounced the measures as well.

We have received no indication to this point that the government is prepared to reconsider its actions. Nevertheless, we continue to seek open channels of communication with the government, working with our colleagues at McGill and Bishop's.

We are grateful for the support that so many of you have expressed over the past few weeks. You witness every day how Concordia makes countless contributions to Quebec's cultural richness and economic prosperity, and it's important that we continue to communicate this message as widely as possible.

I will share more information with our community as new developments arise.

Graham Carr  
President and Vice-Chancellor