



ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES & COLLEGES COALITION

University and College workers raise the alarm on proposed changes in Bill 33

The Ontario Universities and Colleges Coalition (OUCC) is deeply concerned with the proposed changes in Bill 33, the [Supporting Children and Students Act, 2025](#). Bill 33 represents an existential threat to the autonomy of our world-class publicly-funded higher education system. It reflects the Ontario Government's continued problematic efforts to exert increased control over colleges and universities, utilizing legal tools to prioritize political agendas over the educational needs of Ontario's students and their communities. Despite the stated intention to increase transparency and support for the postsecondary education (PSE) sector, this proposed legislation serves as an unnecessary distraction, undermining the academic missions of PSE institutions across the province.

Given that the 2025 Ontario Budget confirmed declining government funding for the PSE sector for the foreseeable future, this Bill arrives at a time when students, public institutions, and the broader economy can least afford it. We are profoundly disappointed to see that, despite Ontario ranking dead last in Canada in per-student postsecondary funding, the provincial government is proposing yet more oversight, costly red tape, and wasteful bureaucracy rather than ways to invest in and strengthen the sector.

With respect to Bill 33's proposed "Research Security Plans", we are disappointed with the Ontario Government's repeated reliance on Ministerial Directives. These Directives are not subject to the same scrutiny as other legal instruments, with the Ministry's recent reliance on Directives bordering on being anti-democratic. Our elected officials don't get an opportunity to debate these Directives, with the result that they would only give the government further unchecked authority. This interference with PSE research poses a threat to academic freedom and could stifle an already world-class network of institutions producing cutting-edge research.

We are also intensely concerned by the government's ongoing attacks on equity-based initiatives and the focus on rigid and restrictive admissions policies at Ontario colleges and universities. Contrary to this government's mischaracterization, all students must still meet rigorous academic requirements for admission into a college or university in Ontario. These particular and few equity initiatives empower PSE institutions to foster more diverse and inclusive learning environments, which can only enhance the academic experience for students. Bill 33's proposed changes to the regulation of fees that support critical student services on campus also reinforces our fears that the Ontario Government will stop at nothing to exert its influence over every aspect of PSE communities in Ontario, destabilizing them in the process. Students continue to call on the Ministry to respect the autonomy of students' unions and campus groups, and the unnecessary oversight on ancillary fees.

We call on the Ontario Government to invest meaningfully in the province's world-class publicly-funded (but currently under-funded) colleges and universities, to support students facing multiple crises on campus, and to engage in broad, genuine consultation across Ontario. Given the threats to institutional autonomy, the ongoing trade tensions with the United States, and the growing domestic student enrollment crisis in Ontario, it is imperative that the government recognize the value of our postsecondary education sector and its role in ensuring social mobility and economic prosperity in Ontario — rather than continuing to undermine it.

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The Ontario Universities and Colleges Coalition (OUCC) represents over 435,000 faculty, staff, and students from every public postsecondary institution in Ontario. It includes members of the Canadian Federation of Students–Ontario (CFS-O), Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA), Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), Ontario Secondary Schools Teachers’ Federation (OSSTF), Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC), Unifor, and United Steelworkers (USW).