



COLLEGE STUDENTS BACK IN CLASS 37 DAYS LATER

COLLEGE STUDENT ALLIANCE

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Nov. 19, 2017 - After a record-long strike lasting over 5 weeks, College Student Alliance (CSA) is relieved Ontario's college students and faculty will be back in class this week.

After the longest college strike in Ontario's history, students could return to the classroom on Tuesday. Unfortunately, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) and the College Employer Council (CEC) failed to successfully negotiate a new collective bargaining deal, resulting in the Government of Ontario passing back-to-work legislation.

"While we are relieved students will be back in class this week, back-to-work legislation is not the resolution CSA advocated for," said Joel Willett, president. "Had OPSEU and CEC agreed to our request of binding arbitration, a deal could have been reached at the bargaining table over a week ago. This is disappointing for all parties involved."

Students will have to pick up the pieces of a broken semester. Students must be compensated for their unmanageable costs, which were out of their control, due to weeks of failed negotiations. Students must have the option to withdraw from their program, and receive a full tuition refund, should they choose to do so as a result of the strike. Students must be involved in conversations, had at all levels, regarding changes to legislation to ensure a strike of this nature can never happen again.

CSA has worked on details for the Student Hardship Fund with the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD) since the fund was announced last week. CSA has advocated for all students to receive compensation from the fund. CSA has also asked for the Ministry to allow students who choose to withdraw for any reason related to the labour disruption to have the ability to do so. These students should receive a full tuition refund and no implications on their transcripts. CSA expects fund details to be rolled out early this week.

"We hope the Ministry has taken all student concerns in to consideration when it comes to compensation and academic futures," Willett said. "Students have suffered academically, financially, and emotionally. They deserve options now after being in the dark for weeks."

CSA has also advocated for the Ministry to consider the many ways this detrimental strike has impacted OSAP loans and grants. Students will need more money to cover incurred costs quickly. When the Ministry moves forward on the provincial taskforce, the inclusion of student leaders should strongly be considered. This would give students, the most important stakeholder, a seat at the table.

CSA looks forward to working with the Ministry and all political parties to ensure a strike of this nature will never happen again.

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About College Student Alliance:

College Student Alliance (CSA) advocates on behalf of Ontario college students in partnership with student leaders. Through our member student associations, CSA represents the collective voice of Ontario's college students.

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