**USC Responds to 2021 Federal Budget**

**London, ON** - Yesterday, the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Chrystia Freeland, presented the Government of Canada’s [Budget 2021: A Recovery Plan for Jobs, Growth, and Resilience](https://budget.gc.ca/2021/en/index.aspx). The USC was pleased to see several student-facing investments, including investments in the Canada Student Grants program, the Post-Secondary Student Support Program, and Canada Summer Jobs.

“We are excited to see investments in students in the 2021 Budget,” said Mackenzy Metcalfe. “Student financial aid has been a consistent priority of our executive team throughout this year, and we are excited to see our year-long advocacy efforts materialized in the budget.”

In June, the USC presented at the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities to stress student concerns. President Matt Reesor and Vice-President External Affairs Mackenzy Metcalfe emphasized the need for student financial aid through COVID-19.

In November, the USC attended a virtual lobby week through our federal advocacy organization, [Undergraduates of Research-Intensive Universities](https://www.uowr.org/). During this lobby week, we worked with nine student unions across Canada to discuss student concerns with Members of Parliament, including student financial aid, international students’ work opportunities, Indigenous student financial aid, and undergraduate research.

Following these initiatives, the USC saw 2021 Budget contribute historic investments in student financial aid, including doubling the Canada Student Grants for two additional years, extending the pause of interest on Canada Student Loans until March 31, 2023, and investing $150.6 million over two years, starting in 2021-22, to support Indigenous students through the Post-Secondary Student Support Program and the Inuit and Métis Nation Post-Secondary Education Strategies.

Investments in student work-integrated learning were also a highlight in the 2021 Budget. These investments included $371.8 million in new funding for Canada Summer Jobs in 2022-23 and $239.8 million invested in the Student Work Placement Program in 2021-22 to support work-integrated learning opportunities for post-secondary students.

“We heard from our students that affordability was a top concern,” said Matt Reesor, USC President. “The investments in this budget show that the government heard students loud and clear.”

Our work is not finished. The USC remains committed to advocating for accessible, affordable post-secondary education to support students and help Canada build back better.

*The University Students’ Council represents the interests of 35,000 professional and undergraduate students at Western University in London, Ontario.*