

**Full Answers to the Party Report Card Survey,
Coordinated by the Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers (ANSUT)
In Advance of the 2017 Nova Scotia Provincial Election, May 30, 2017**

If your party forms the next government of Nova Scotia, what are the top 5 issues your party will focus on? List in order of priority:

NDP

- 1 Primary health care
- 2 Education
- 3 Poverty reduction
- 4 Seniors' care
- 5 Opportunities for youth

LIBERAL

- Infrastructure
- Youth & Jobs
- New Ideas for a Better Economy
- Support for an Aging Population

Healthy People and Communities

**Please note: These issues are important to the Liberal Party. They are all of equal importance.

PC

No answer.

If your party forms the next government of Nova Scotia, what will university support look like in terms of core funding, tuition support, and research? Please provide details on specific funding levels where possible.

NDP

It is our view that the present moment requires long-term social investments in Nova Scotia. This includes investing in the education, skills and opportunities of our young people. An NDP government would work with the federal government to establish a funding formula that would increase the capacity of our colleges and universities to provide quality educational programs while reducing, and in some cases eliminating, the cost to students.

LIBERAL

During a very challenging fiscal climate, overall assistance to universities has increased under a Liberal government by almost \$72 million; a 21% in the last four years. The Liberal Government has also made a significant infrastructure investment in various universities across the province totalling \$16.0 million since 2016/17.

Investments have also been made in the area of research through funding opportunities for students through internships (funding available through the Mitacs Accelerate program) totalling \$705,000 and \$3.7 million in research scholarships for Masters and PhD students with funding allocated to universities based on the number of graduate students enrolled. The 2017-18 Liberal budget made the following statement on research.

"New ideas come from the brightest minds, and we want to keep our best and brightest. We also want to attract the world's top researchers here to Nova Scotia. That's the goal of Research Nova Scotia, which will be in place this year. Government is reinforcing its commitment to develop a strong research and development environment in Nova Scotia, having recently created a new \$25-million Research Nova Scotia trust. The trust will help create a research environment that leverages federal and industry funding and partnerships, and attracts and retains highly qualified talent." The Liberal Government has made the cost of university for students more affordable. In the last four years the interest has been removed on student loans and the Loan Forgiveness Program was established.

The 2017-18 Liberal Budget expands student assistance with higher weekly loan allowances, and, as requested by Students Nova Scotia, extends provincial loan forgiveness to students who complete their undergraduate programs in five years from four. A Nova Scotia student graduating from a Nova Scotia university will now receive over \$30,000 in non-repayable support; the equivalent of 4 years of average tuition.

This means more Nova Scotia students will be eligible to have their entire provincial loan forgiven.

A Nova Scotia student graduating from a Nova Scotia university will now receive over \$30,000 in non-repayable support; the equivalent of 4 years of average tuition. If re-elected, a Liberal Government will continue to work to ensure we make a post-secondary education more affordable for Nova Scotia students.

After years of operating grant cuts made by the NDP, the Province and Nova Scotia's 10 universities signed a Memorandum of Understanding in June, 2016. If re-elected, a Liberal government will retain its commitment in the Memorandum of Understanding signed to a 1% increase in the operating grant in each year of the memorandum. The Memorandum expires in March, 2019. Any additional support in the form of an operating grant will be negotiated in the future Memorandum of Understanding.

PC

Jamie Baillie has an optimistic, pro-growth vision that focuses on rebuilding Nova Scotia. Investments in infrastructure will lead to the creation of thousands of jobs. By building our economy we will be able to invest more into institutions such as universities. A new Progressive Conservative government will sign a Memorandum of Understanding with our universities to get tuition in Nova Scotia back down to the national average. There are also specific initiatives that we will pursue to the benefit of our universities. We will help young Nova Scotians stay in the province and find work by replacing the Graduate Retention Rebate that was cancelled by the Liberal government. And a Jamie Baillie government will protect post-secondary students by requiring colleges and universities to develop comprehensive sexual violence policies and provide supports for students affected by sexual violence.

Since 2014, university funding has been increasing at a modest 1%/year, but this follows cuts that total 10% between 2010 and 2013. If your party forms the next government of Nova Scotia, will you increase, decrease or maintain this current level of financial support over the course of your mandate? If applicable, by what %, and in which year of your mandate would changes begin?

NDP

Increase. An NDP government would increase financial support for universities. More details on the NDP's plan will be released this month.

LIBERAL

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PC

Since it is difficult to know with certainty what is the true financial situation with the provincial government today, it would be unwise to commit to specific increases over the next four years. However, Nova Scotia Progressive Conservatives want to be fair and honest partners with the university community as we rebuild our province. For example, a PC government will encourage more applied research on Nova Scotia's economic and social problems, programs to address job market needs and the commercialization of research and intellectual property development.

Will you publicly pledge to make university education a priority for your party by supporting the return of university operational funding to 2010 levels (\$349 M) by 2020?

NDP

Yes

LIBERAL

The Liberal Government values the role universities play in our province and our economy. Despite tough fiscal challenges, we have increased overall assistance to universities by 21% in the last four years. Future operational increases will be considered when the next Memorandum of Understanding is developed between the Province and universities.

PC

No answer

Does your party support the implementation of free tuition for all university education (under graduate level) in Nova Scotia within the next four years? Why or why not?

NDP

Gary and the NDP believe that the elimination of post-secondary tuition fees is an idea whose time has come. The NDP plan would begin with the elimination of tuition fees for Nova Scotia Community College, opening the doors to opportunity to a generation that has largely had them shut. This policy would impact 11,000 full-time students and over 11,000 part-time students at all 13 campuses of the NSCC. It would be the first step towards making post-secondary education more affordable in Nova Scotia. The Liberal government has allowed university tuition fees to skyrocket in Nova Scotia. Other provinces such as Ontario and New Brunswick have introduced policies to make university affordable, and we should be showing similar leadership in Nova Scotia. An NDP government would take immediate steps to prevent further increases in university tuition fees, and would implement a strategy for reducing university tuition fees. More details will be released in an upcoming NDP platform announcement.

LIBERAL

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PC

No answer

Do you support including ANSUT as a stakeholder in the next round table discussion of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Province of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Universities (2018/19) Why or why not?

NDP

Yes.
The NDP believes that the people who teach, learn and work in universities should have a say in strategic decision-making about our university system in Nova Scotia.

LIBERAL

No. Prior to the development of the most recent Memorandum of Understanding, the Liberal Government embarked on an extensive consultation process involving students, parents, businesses as well as university faculty, staff and presidents. The purpose of this consultation was to develop a long term direction for Nova Scotia universities and the current Memorandum of Understanding. If re-elected, a Liberal Government will continue to work with all stakeholders prior to the development of the next MOU.

PC

For any agreement to be meaningful it must involve all of the parties affected by the agreement and contributing to the implementation of the agreement. While the university presidents and government ministers act as signing officers for their organizations we would expect participants such as ANSUT to be part of the process of developing the next memorandum of understanding.

If your party forms the next government of Nova Scotia, will you reverse legislation (such as bills 100, 75, and 37) that deny the right to fair collective bargaining? Why or why not? If yes, when would this process begin?

NDP

Yes. Gary and the NDP fully support the process of free and fair collective bargaining. An NDP government would immediately repeal McNeil's anti-worker legislation, and would commit to negotiating in good faith and fostering a relationship of respect with public sector unions.

LIBERAL

NO. Bill 100, The Universities Accountability and Sustainability Act is the first of its kind in Canada. It holds our institutions accountable and ensures our universities are here for years to come. Regular financial reporting and projections will give a clearer picture of universities' financial situations and help catch issues before they become emergencies, and revitalization plans offer a tool of last resort to help universities in significant financial trouble get back on track. If a university can show it's at risk of financial collapse and is in the midst of collective bargaining, it would have an option to extend negotiations beyond the end of the planning process. This only happens if the university can demonstrate a significant operating deficiency. Independently verified financial documents would have to clearly show that a university couldn't continue to operate unless something was done. If granted an extension, it would mean that the ability to strike or lockout would be suspended and a final collective agreement could not be signed until the planning process is complete. Negotiations can continue while the planning process is underway and the option to strike or lockout or finalize an agreement is back on the table once the revitalization plan has been finalized. An extension will allow everyone in the university community to focus on the plan's development to ensure the university is around and healthy for the long term.

PC

A PC government would repeal Bill 148 and negotiate fairly with employees, always keeping in mind the ability of taxpayers to pay.