

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Student Organizations Applaud McCall Review

The University of Saskatchewan Students' Union (USSU) and the Canadian Federation of Students Saskatchewan component [representing the University of Regina Students' Union (URSU), the University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students' Association (GSA), and the First Nations University of Canada Students' Association (FNUnivSA)] released its reaction to the "Post-Secondary Education Accessibility and Affordability Review", released today by the Honorable Warren McCall, Saskatchewan Minister of Advanced Education and Employment.

"The recommendations announced today will go a long way to address many of the issues facing students surrounding the affordability and accessibility of a post-secondary education," said USSU President James Pepler.

Out of the fifty-one recommendations contained in the McCall Review, the announcement of a \$1,000 tuition reduction in 2008/2009 would make the most immediate impact in students' lives if implemented by the next government. Such a reduction would bring Saskatchewan tuition fees below the national average, while enhancing the student experience across Saskatchewan's campuses.

"The proposal for lower tuition would ensure that more young people across Saskatchewan would have access to high quality post-secondary education," said Pepler.

"The McCall Review is a recognition by the government that tuition fee increases in Saskatchewan have made education unaffordable and inaccessible," says URSU President Michael Burton. "We are happy with the recommendations of Minister McCall's review and we would encourage the leaders of all provincial parties to support and implement them."

Saskatchewan students currently face many unique challenges to accessing affordable post-secondary education. Over the last fifteen years, tuition fees in Saskatchewan have risen by 227%, leaving Saskatchewan with the third highest tuition fees in the country. Over that same period of time, enrolment in Saskatchewan post-secondary institutions has dropped by over 13%.

Statistics Canada research indicates that low and middle income students, as well as Aboriginal students are hardest hit with the high cost of a post-secondary education. Students from rural areas also face higher costs associated with living away from home when attending post-secondary institutions, while receiving no additional bursary support. Average student debt for a student taking a four year bachelor degree program is now over \$20,000, with 18% of students having a debt of over \$25,000.

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