



Grand River Post Secondary Education Office

P.O. Box 339
2160 4th Line
Ohsweken, ON. NOA 1M0

Telephone: (519) 445-2219
Toll Free: 1 (877) 837-5180
Fax: (519) 445-4296
E-mail: info@grpseo.org
Web Site: www.grpseo.org

Update April 24 2009 - The Future of the Post Secondary Student Support Program

To all Six Nations post secondary students,

I have received calls asking if post secondary funding will be cut this fall.

I am writing to let you know that nothing has come to this office stating this.

In fact, the GRPSEO has received the first funding instalment for 2009/2010 so we are expecting the funding to continue as usual **for this year**.

INAC advised the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development that education funding authorities (including post secondary) have been renewed to [March 31] 2012. (See INAC evidence to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern [Development](#), Thursday, February 26, 2009).

Having said that it is important for you to know there is significant cause for concern.

Students going to college or university and receiving financial assistance through the GRPSEO already know that the available funding does not cover the full costs of going to school. Students also know that many eligible students do not receive funding as there isn't enough funding.

Why is this happening?

- The Post Secondary Program that includes the post secondary student support program (post secondary funding) has been subject to a 2% annual cap on expenditure increases since 1996.
- The per student cost of post secondary education far exceeds the 2% annual increase.
- The number of eligible students increases each year.

Increased demand (increased cost per student + more students+ limited funding) = increasing numbers of unfunded and self-funding students

What do we know?

- Current forecasts indicate that two-thirds of all new jobs will require some form of post-secondary education.
- First Nations are working diligently to close a 28 year education attainment gap and the lack of adequate student financial supports creates and maintains barriers that keep the gap in place.
- Indian and Northern Affairs (INAC) is under pressure to show improved outcomes for the post secondary program. (See the Jan 2009 [Audit](#) of the Post Secondary Program for the range of issues).
- INAC is conducting an internal review of the program and has advised that significant changes to the Post Secondary program are under consideration. (See INAC Minister Strahls' letter to Chiefs and [Councillors](#) Feb 2009).
- INAC is looking to maximize the impact of available resources through the creation of a data base and greater coordination with other government of Canada programs. (See INAC evidence to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern [Development](#), Thursday, February 26, 2009).
- Alarming, an option being considered is delivering the program through the Canada Student Loans agency.
- INAC denies that post-secondary education is an Aboriginal and Treaty right and has stated that eliminating the 2% cap remains a challenge.

- The Canada Student Loans has been in existence for 45 years, yet the education attainment gap for First Nations peoples still exists.
- We know the problem does NOT lie with the goals of the program-nor in the delivery mechanism of the program.
- We know that we must maintain First Nation community-based Post Secondary Education funding delivery and supports – they are critical to student success.
- We know the problem with the Post Secondary Education Program lies in the Federal management of the program including the systemic underfunding of the program.

Our Message

Six Nations does not object to accountability.

Six Nations objects to the unilateral development of policy changes that will have harsh impacts on Six Nations students.

Six Nations along with all First Nations in Canada are capable of making significant contributions to a stronger sustainable economy.

This cannot be achieved if First Nations are excluded from creating solutions that work.

We understand that INAC has several internal historical systemic issues. For example, funding allocation methods vary by region across the country. The department lacks accurate comprehensive data systems to track outcomes and gaps. We are willing to help create solutions.

First Nations across Canada are expressing their concerns about this review and the future of the post secondary student support program.

The Six Nations Council is the political advocate for post secondary at Six Nations. The Grand River Post Secondary Education Office supports the Council in its advocacy efforts.

Your thoughts and ideas about how to ensure access to post secondary education for our students are welcomed.

The Six Nations Council has decided to mount a lobby regarding the future of post secondary.

The Chiefs of Ontario is also coordinating an action plan.

More information will be posted for your consideration, follow up and action.

The GRPSEO will make every effort to keep you informed, in the mean time please feel free to call me or send in your ideas.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Jamieson
Director of Student Services & Counselling