



**NAITSA
ADVOCACY
2020**



INTRODUCTION

Established in 2008, NAITSA's Advocacy Department pursues issues that affect NAIT students and Alberta's post-secondary education system.

NAITSA works with other students' associations and the Alberta Student Executive Council (ASEC) to achieve both short and long-term advocacy goals. Through a collaborative approach with NAIT and NAIT students, NAITSA builds and strengthens our relationships with NAIT administration, local municipalities, the Province of Alberta and the Government of Canada. NAITSA can achieve more with strong relationships than with an activist approach.



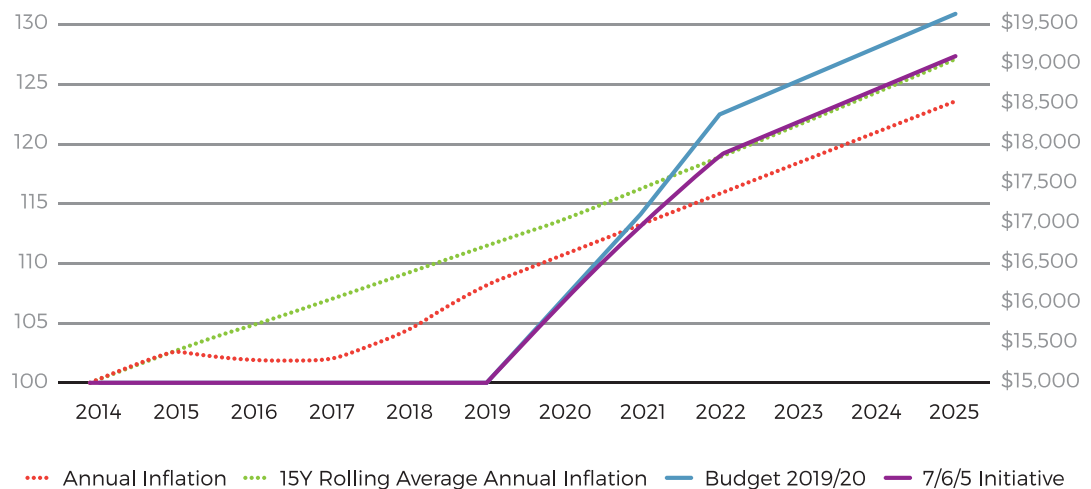
ISSUES FACING NAIT STUDENTS

Tuition Increases

The Alberta government will allow post-secondary institutions to raise tuition up to 7% per year for the next 3 years. After that, tuition may only increase by inflation. NAITSA, with our partner associations in ASEC, will work to limit these increases. These increases impact students by costing them thousands more per year.

NAITSA and ASEC are recommending that these increases be scaled back to 7%, 6%, and 5% respectively to create a better balance between affordability and sustainability. The chart below shows the difference between raising tuition 7% each year and the 7-6-5 initiative.

ALBERTA TUITION MODELS (2014 = 100 = \$15,000)



Mandatory Non-Instructional Fees

Mandatory non-instructional fees are fees charged outside of tuition. The Government of Alberta requires that students' associations approve new mandatory non-instructional fees. This vetting of fees requires that NAITSA examines the case for need made by NAIT. NAITSA is working with NAIT to produce a standardized procedure by which new fees can be examined and decided upon.

International Tuition

International tuition still remains under-regulated. The government has set out guidelines for increases but does not enforce them. NAITSA will continue to work with ASEC to lobby the government for better regulation of international tuition. Alberta needs international students and the skilled labour they provide. They should be treated fairly, not just as a revenue source.

Apprenticeship

NAIT has seen its apprenticeship numbers drop significantly in recent years due to Alberta's slumping economy. As Alberta recovers, those numbers should increase. As enrolment increases, NAITSA will ensure that apprenticeship students have their voices heard and have the services they deserve.

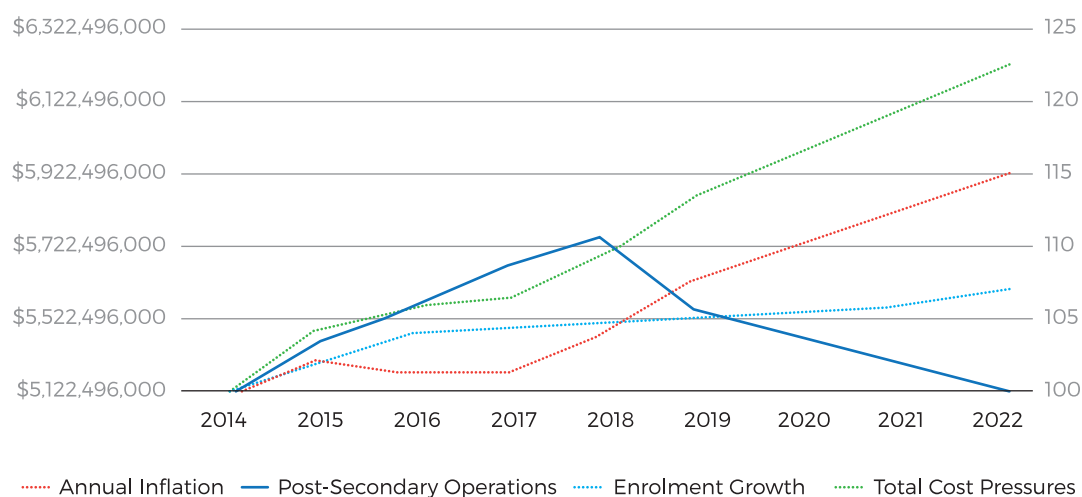




Budget Cuts

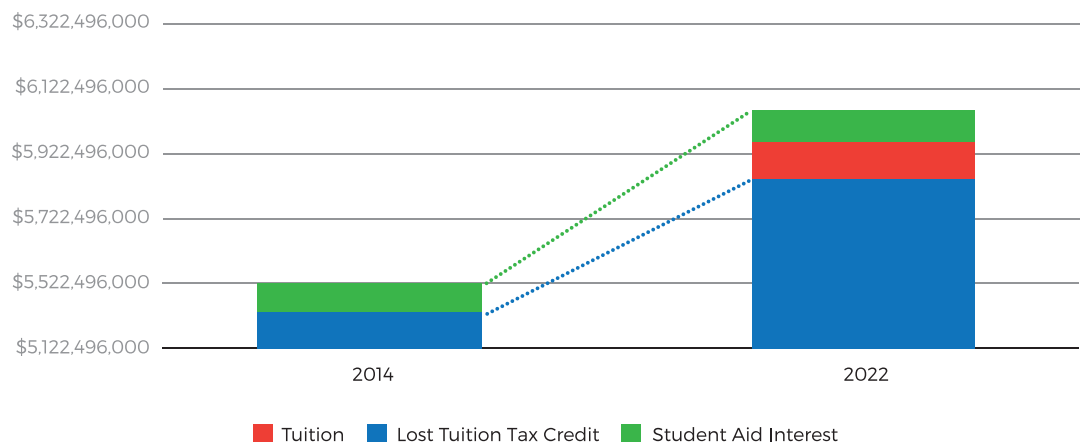
The Government of Alberta is following through on their goal of balancing Alberta's budget by 2023. NAITSA is working with Advanced Education to give the student perspective on where NAIT should look for savings and what the future should look like in terms of services for students. The 2019/20 budget reduced funding for post-secondary operations by 10.23% or \$583 million from 2018 to 2022. NAITSA is recommending student representation in the operational planning process for post-secondary operations funding reductions. The chart below illustrates the difference between operational funding from the Government of Alberta and enrollment growth as a part of total cost pressures.

INSTITUTIONAL FUNDING CONSULTATION: POST-SECONDARY OPERATIONS FUNDING



The budget also eliminated the Education Tax Credit, which will increase costs for students by 5%-15%. The government also increased the interest rate on students loans, adding more costs. The total increase in costs for students amounts to 25%-33% between 2014 and 2022. That's almost double the rate of inflation. To mitigate this, NAITSA and ASEC are recommending a tax rebate called the Alberta Graduate Retention Program. This will help students as they transition into the workforce.

PER YEAR STUDENT EDUCATION COST INCREASE



ISSUES FACING STUDENTS

Transit and Transportation

In September of 2020, NAITSA will enter the final year of its U-Pass contract. We will have to negotiate a new contract to be approved by students in a referendum in early 2021.

NAIT and NAITSA have been working with the City of Edmonton and other municipalities to move U-Pass from stickers to SmartFare, a program from the metro area transit providers that will allow students to tap their student ID card to use their U-Pass and not have to wait in a line for stickers.

Housing

NAITSA has been working with NAIT for a number of years on concepts for an on-campus residence. NAIT is the only post-secondary of its size in Alberta that does not have student housing. NAITSA has met with the government regarding this issue and will continue to champion this goal in the future.

Pedestrian Safety

There are several crosswalks around NAIT that are unsafe. NAITSA is working to have those crosswalks upgraded. Our lobbying efforts with the City of Edmonton have the goal of ensuring that poorly lit or obscured crosswalks will cease to be a safety issue around campus.

Textbook Costs

The cost of textbooks has risen at 2.5 times the rate of inflation since 1990. These inflated costs make Alberta post-secondary education much less affordable and reduce access to learning for those who are most vulnerable. NAITSA is working with both NAIT and the Government of Alberta to increase support for Open Educational Resources (OERs). NAITSA believes that OERs are an essential part of the future of learning in Alberta.

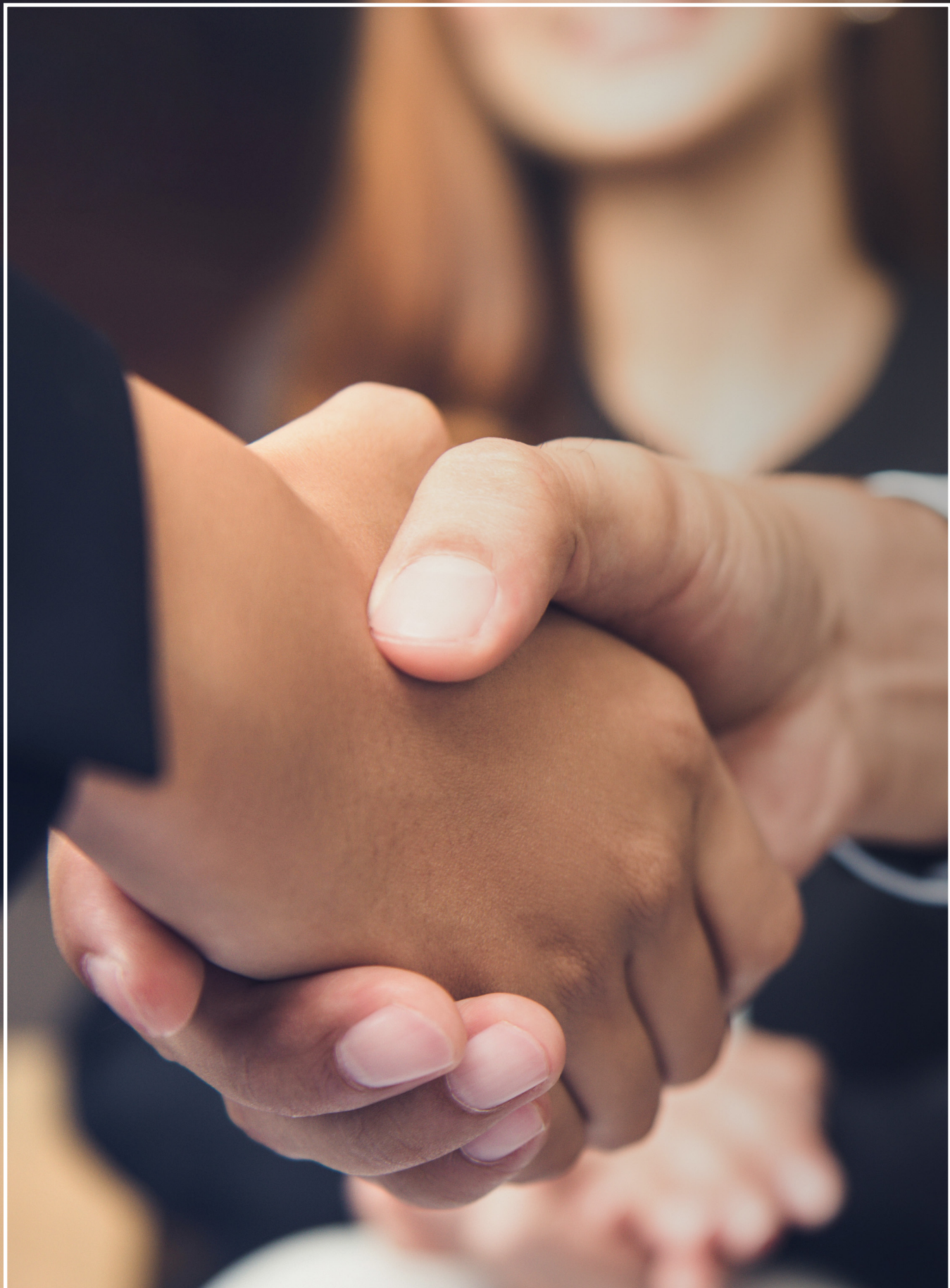
Fall Break

NAITSA is working to ensure that a fall break week is implemented at NAIT.

Study Spaces

Students have advised NAITSA many times that there are not enough quiet study spaces on campus. While NAITSA understands that space on campus is at a premium, study spaces remain an important priority. As a polytechnic committed to student success, additional study spaces should be on NAIT's list of priorities.





METHODS

Building Relationships Through Advocacy, Not Activism

NAITSA's default advocacy method is to build relationships, rather than be adversarial.

While NAITSA may not always agree with the government's actions and policies, it is far more effective to discuss our issues with them in person rather than organize demonstrations that distance ourselves from them and create animosity. If the default position is to protest, then it can create activist fatigue. There is a place for demonstrations in the advocacy toolbox, but it is not the tool we use unless absolutely necessary.

Social Media

It is important to inform students and the public about our advocacy efforts and the facts surrounding issues that are important to students. One of the ways that NAITSA communicates with students is through our various social media platforms.

Media Relations

Occasionally NAITSA will need to get messages out to the public at large through press releases and press conferences. While NAITSA serves NAIT students, it is important for us to keep parents and taxpayers informed of important post-secondary issues.

PARTNERSHIPS

ASEC

The Alberta Students' Executive Council consists of 15 students' associations from across Alberta, representing more than 100,000 students. By combining our resources and efforts, we can better make students' voices heard to government.



Edmonton Student Alliance

The ESA combines their efforts to bring student issues to the municipalities in the metro Edmonton area. The ESA will be doing an advocacy blitz during "AdvoDays" later this year.





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