

University of Winnipeg Budget a Mixed Bag for Students: UWSA
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The University of Winnipeg Students' Association commends the University of Winnipeg for tabling a 2015-2016 budget that avoids cuts to student services and academic programming, but strongly opposes fee increases which will make our University less accessible.

The budget outlines a number of important investments that our association has been calling for. The University's investment in three full-time, in-house general counsellors will improve access to mental health services on campus. Supporting initiatives such as the student PowWow, implementing TRC recommendations that help advance the process of indigenization, and hiring new tenure-track faculty bodes well for the student experience and quality of education at the U of W.

While aspects of the budget deserve praise, we're disappointed to see the inclusion of fee increases for both domestic and international students. Several ancillary fees are rising above the rate of inflation, two by almost 9%. International students taking science, business, education or kinesiology courses are already paying 3.7-4.3 times more than their domestic peers and will now shoulder tuition fee increases between 5.8%-9.9%.

"Students were not consulted about these fee hikes, which will put a further squeeze on personal finances and exacerbate upfront barriers to education," said Peyton Veitch, UWSA President. "While the University of Winnipeg deserves credit for rejecting the slash and burn approach that we've seen at the University of Manitoba, this budget falls short in terms of ensuring affordability."

In the months ahead, the UWSA will work with the Canadian Federation of Students – Manitoba and other student organizations in lobbying the provincial government to regulate ancillary and international student fees. We'll also continue to collaborate with faculty, staff, and administration in seeking a fair funding model for the U of W, which receives less funding per-student than any other public post-secondary institution in Manitoba.

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