

**Ministry of Training,
Colleges and Universities**

Minister

Mowat Block
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2

**Ministère de la Formation
et des Collèges et Universités**

Ministre

Édifice Mowat
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2



February 07, 2014

Mr. Ben Coleman
Director
Arts and Science At-Large
University of Toronto Students' Union
b.coleman@utsu.ca

Dear Mr. Coleman,

Thank you for your correspondence about the tuition billing practices at the University of Toronto. I appreciated reading your questions, comments and suggestions.

As you know, while considering a new tuition fee framework, my ministry committed to address other tuition-related issues through separate consultations. Student groups, including the Canadian Federation of Students, the College Student Alliance and the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, took part in the Working Group on Tuition Billing and Associated Fees. This working group provided valuable feedback on issues related to tuition deposits, program and flat-fee tuition structures and compulsory ancillary fees.

Following these consultations, we took feedback from other stakeholders, including you, into consideration. I am pleased to tell you that my ministry has introduced revisions to the tuition fee framework guidelines that should benefit many students at the University of Toronto and other postsecondary institutions.

These policy changes have been introduced with the expectation that institutions will implement them for the 2014/15 academic year. However, because of the system changes required, my ministry recognizes that some institutions may not be able to fully implement the changes until 2015/16, at which time they will become mandatory.

The press release for these changes is available at [//news.ontario.ca/tcu/en/2013/12/fairer-fees-for-university-and-college-students.html](http://news.ontario.ca/tcu/en/2013/12/fairer-fees-for-university-and-college-students.html). However, I would also like to share further details of the changes:

- Institutions may no longer set a deadline for the payment of the term's tuition earlier than one month before the start of the study period. Typically, this date falls in early August for programs that begin in September.
- For students who have established an OSAP entitlement one month prior to the start of the study period, the due date for the term's tuition must be deferred to align with the OSAP disbursement date.
- Institutions will be required to provide all students with the option of per-term billing without being charged a fee.
- Institutions may require a maximum deposit of the greater of \$500, or 10 percent of the annual tuition fees, up to three months before the first term of study. Typically this date falls in early June for programs that begin in September.
- The deposit requirement may be charged before the first term of study each year, and may be charged to all students, including those who expect to receive OSAP support. This recognizes the need to confirm the acceptance of admission offers in order to plan the delivery of programs. Institutions are being asked to be receptive to students who request a deferral of tuition deposits for financial reasons.
- Up to \$500 of this deposit may be non-refundable if the student does not commence or return to their program with the university. Institutions are being asked to make accommodations and refund deposits to students who withdraw under reasonable circumstances (e.g., parental or medical leave).
- Tuition payments for subsequent terms for students not receiving OSAP support will be due no earlier than one month before the start of term. For students receiving OSAP, these payments will be due no earlier than the start date of the term.
- Following these due dates, universities will be able to charge reasonable and transparent late fees to ensure timeliness of payment.
- For universities that charge students on a program or flat-fee basis, the minimum course load threshold will be raised to 80 percent of a normal course load. This policy will be implemented over a three year period with no mandatory changes for 2014/15, moving to 70 percent in 2015/16 and to 80 percent by 2016/17.
- Universities that use a program or flat-fee structure will not be able to charge students for additional courses taken above a normal course load.
- For students with permanent disabilities that require a reduced course load as a learning accommodation, universities must have publicized policies in place exempting these students from paying tuition fees on a program or flat-fee basis.
- The current moratorium on new program or flat-fee tuition structures will remain in place for the length of the tuition framework.
- Beginning in 2014/15, institutions may not charge an ancillary fee for confirmation of credential completion and for providing a graduation certificate.

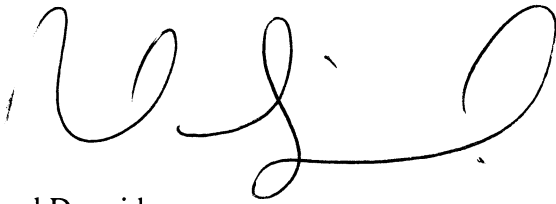
- Fees for digital learning materials that are the property of the student, including test or assessment tools, have been added to the list of exemptions from the requirement for an ancillary fee protocol.

As you can see, to a large extent these requirements reflect the timing of OSAP disbursements to students. Over the past ten years, the number of full-time students supported by OSAP has increased to 61 percent, a significant change from 33 percent in 2002/03.

My ministry has made every effort to consider each stakeholder's comments and views before finalizing these policies and processes. We have attempted to strike a fair and reasonable balance for both institutions and students.

I trust this information is useful. Thank you again for writing, and for your important advocacy on behalf of the University of Toronto students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brad Duguid', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Brad Duguid
Minister