

# FAIRNESS FOR INTER- NATIONAL STUDENTS



# INTRODUCTION



**WE ARE IN EVERY  
RESPECT AN  
INTERNATIONAL  
UNIVERSITY.**

**AT YORK, WE HOPE  
TO FOSTER YOUR  
GROWTH AS  
SCHOLARS BUT  
ALSO AS CITIZENS.**

**– PRESIDENT  
RHONDA LENTON<sup>1</sup>**

The York Federation of Students consistently works to serve its members through its four pillars: clubs, services, campaigns, and events. Through our central mandate, we believe in a free and accessible education and will continue to advocate on behalf of all of our members. Many international students from all around the world have chosen York University to pursue a post-secondary education in Canada because of the quality of education, as well as a higher chance of gaining employment after graduating. According to York University's mission statement, *"York University is open to the world: we explore global concerns. A community of faculty, students, staff, alumni and volunteers committed to academic freedom, social justice, accessible education, and collegial self-governance, York University makes innovation its tradition."*<sup>2</sup>

In the midst of COVID-19 and the uncertainty of the global economy, now more than ever do we as students look to our university's leadership to stay true to its mission statement. We look to president Lenton to act by her words of keeping York University *"known internationally for our progressiveness, our commitment to social justice, accessibility and inclusivity"*.<sup>3</sup> While we recognize the efforts of the university with the emergency student bursaries for qualifying students in this period, our university as leaders in the fight for inclusivity and accessibility should be, and can be, doing more to support students, including international students who are some of the most vulnerable at this time.

According to Statistics Canada, due to COVID-19 *"not only have their studies (post-secondary students) been disrupted, but many have lost jobs or job prospects, raising concerns about their financial circumstances and their academic future."*<sup>4</sup> With the government's decision to exclude international students from CESB, it is the duty of our university to continue the fight for inclusivity and support in this case, for international students.

<sup>1</sup> New International Student Orientation 2017

<sup>2</sup> <https://about.yorku.ca/our-mission/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://president.yorku.ca/files/2017/09/A-Welcome-Message-from-President-Rhonda-Lenton-September-7-2017.pdf?x89807>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/200512/dq200512a-eng.htm>

In addition, the York University Graduate Students' Association is disappointed by Dean Loebel's response<sup>5</sup> wherein graduate students are being encouraged to apply for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and/or the Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB), and to take a leave of absence if they are unable to progress in their degree. While we understand the difficult position that the pandemic has put York University in, it is clear that the needs of graduate students are being repeatedly ignored. Many graduate students do not qualify for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) since our work as teaching assistants and research assistants has migrated remotely. And, if graduate students take a leave of absence, as suggested by Dean Loebel, it is unclear if their non-student status will make them ineligible for the Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB). In addition, the Canada Emergency Student Benefit mandates that students receiving this benefit demonstrate that they are looking for summer work<sup>6</sup> and will be connected through the Canada Job Bank with employers looking to fill job shortages. This does not address the complex financial and personal circumstances of graduate students, let alone provide any assistance to our international student membership whose eligibility to access CERB and CESB is contingent on their immigration and Social Insurance Number status.

It is without doubt that the university's administration is facing unprecedented challenges due to COVID-19 be it on how to maintain its enrollment levels, or how to best support its current students. However, what we also know for a fact is that the decision to continue increasing tuition fees for international students by 10% for the 2020-2021 academic year during a global pandemic is one that is detrimental both to the university and affected students. International students face a variety of barriers when they choose to study abroad, including many that come as a surprise. Currently, *"without jobs or prospects, many returning students (are) worried about how to pay for future education-related expenses, in addition to their current expenses."*<sup>7</sup> International students face restrictions on employment, exorbitant costs for education and healthcare, as well as xenophobia and racism on an everyday basis but at an exponentially higher rate now. In the interest of continuing to advocate for students on our campuses, we have developed three demands which we believe would benefit York University as a whole, and which are in line with our university's mission statement of social justice and accessibility to education.

***Within this document are demands that we believe the York University Administration can accomplish and implement.***

1. Release a public letter to Prime Minister Trudeau calling on him to include International Students in the CESB.
2. Tuition Freeze for international students for the 2021-2023 academic years.
3. Increase the amount of bursaries and awards offered to international students to accommodate for their high cost of living.

<sup>5</sup> <https://elink.clickdimensions.com/m/1/25044496/02-b20121-a5e44de5cbe641e59460c347e451a5f2/2/19/38ccbe4a-ab13-4722-8de3-ff69c25dcad3>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/student-support-benefits-covid19-1.5548883?fbclid=IwAR04lo4yGvwCxsB7D-zJIHR24Q5UOg0p-FZorcYIQgtrUNIZLiBjERcYOTY>

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*

## DEMAND #1

# RELEASE A PUBLIC LETTER TO PM TRUDEAU CALLING ON HIM TO INCLUDE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN CESB

As it stands, non-Canadian international students are not eligible to receive funding from the CESB. According to the numbers published by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), *“as of December 31, 2019 there were 642,480 international students in Canada.”*<sup>8</sup> The IRCC also notes that *“this number represents a 13% increase over 2018, a slightly slower rate of growth than in 2018 when international student numbers grew by 16% over the previous year.”*<sup>9</sup> Acknowledging these trends, it is reasonable to project that the international student population on university campuses will continue to grow over the next few years. However, if students are unable to afford the cost of living in Canada due to this global pandemic, we may find that that is not the case. As outlined in the next section, international students in Canada contribute tens of billions of dollars to the economy each year. Yet with this pandemic, their inability to work, and without government support to encourage their presence here, we may find that this trend inevitably declines.

David Dingwall, President of Cape Breton University (CBU), has actively begun a fight for the international students at CBU to be eligible for federal aid.<sup>10</sup> President Dingwall addresses the dire circumstances of the pandemic and how it is affecting all students, including those who are from other countries. York University can further this precedent if President Lenton reaches out to the federal government on behalf of our international student body. This is why we are requesting that President Rhonda Lenton call upon Prime Minister Trudeau to include international students studying within Canada in the framework of the CESB through a public letter. International students provide vital contributions to our economy, our academics, and our culture. It is time for this country to show them exactly how much they are truly valued. York University now has the opportunity to be at the forefront of meaningful and long-lasting change. Publishing this letter will not only show York students that they are being fought for in a time of dire need, but will also reflect positively on the university in a global academic context.

<sup>8</sup> <https://cbie.ca/international-students-in-canada-continue-to-grow-in-2019/>

<sup>9</sup> [ibid](#)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.cbu.ca/newsroom/releases/federal-funding-leaves-international-students-behind/>

## DEMAND #2

# TUITION FREEZE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FOR THE 2021-2023 ACADEMIC YEARS

In the midst of a global pandemic, it is unfair that international students have to face the extra barrier of increased tuition fees. We recognize that the university has released an award of \$1000 towards the summer tuition for international students and \$2000 towards the F/W semester. However, recognizing that the 10% increase and other financial burdens of students surpasses the award provided, a tuition freeze for international students is the most effective support provided. Our goal is to see as many of the barriers to education be eliminated as much as possible; this includes accessibility to education and this increase in the midst of a pandemic is anything but accessible.

## CONTEXT:

TABLE 4b. Approved Undergraduate International Fee Rates (\$)

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Arts, Science and Other	\$26,030	\$28,633	\$31,496
Bachelor of Design	\$24,238	\$26,662	\$29,328
UG Prof. Program (BCom, ITEC, BPA, BDEM)	\$27,783	\$30,562	\$33,618
UG Prof. Programs (BBA/iBBA)	\$28,472	\$30,607	\$32,903
BEng - Computer Science	\$26,261	\$27,574	\$28,953
BEng - Software, Computer, Geometrics, Space	\$31,513	\$34,384	\$36,103
BEng - Mechanical/Civil/Electrical	\$32,746	\$34,384	\$36,103
JD/LLB	\$28,468	\$34,820	\$36,561

In 2014, the Canadian government set a target to have 450,000 international students studying in Canada by 2022,<sup>11</sup> which would have been a rise of 2.7% international students from 2014 (438,157).<sup>12</sup> As of December 31, 2019, there are 642,480 international students in Canada,<sup>13</sup> a significant increase of approximately 46.63% since 2014 (438,157). For the 2013-2014 school year, international students paid an average of \$19,514 with Ontario seeing a 10.1% increase from 2012-2013, while graduate students paid an average of \$13,628.<sup>14</sup> While targeted international recruitment strategies are often publicized, there is a secrecy and subtleness to the tactics used and the ways in which international students have been recruited by Canadian post-secondary institutions. Utilizing the argument of better access to education in Canada, institutions utilize International Students to diversify their reputations, and fill in funding gaps, however, this oftentimes comes at the cost of misleading promises and offers to some of these students - the impact of which is felt when students arrive to institutions such as York University, and are surprised by the lack of support and resources available to them. York University is one of the most diverse universities in Canada, and as a result, a large portion of students are international, and are looked at as a large contribution to York University revenue.

International students play a significant role in the Canadian economy, contributing \$9.3 billion GDP in 2014, which amounts to 11% of Canada's total exports to the world and 2.2% of Canada's total merchandise exports, and creating over 122,680 jobs.<sup>15</sup> Ontario contributed the highest to the GDP of \$4.4 billion (47.3%), with international students spending \$5.4 billion while creating 54,286 jobs.<sup>16</sup> In 2018, an estimated \$21.6 billion contributed to the GDP,<sup>17</sup> a federal increase of 132.3% within four years. The Canadian economy continues to flourish through international students as not only the price of tuition has increased, but so has the amount of international students and as a result more and more international students spend their income on essential expenditures such as rent and food to fit the basic means of living.

Many changes have instituted a dramatic increase in the Canadian GDP. Since then, as reported from average numbers for the 2019-2020 year, undergraduate international students pay \$29,714, and graduates pay \$17,744 in Canada. Those changes being a rise of 52.3% and 30.2% since 2014, respectively. From the previous years to 2019-2020, Ontario was the only province that saw a decrease in average tuition for full-time students with a 9.9% decrease for undergraduate students, and a 9.1% decrease for graduates.<sup>18</sup> However, especially at our university, this decrease came at the expense of international students, with a 10% increase for two consecutive years, leaving international students to pay on average an undergraduate tuition of \$38,276 (+9.3%) and graduate tuition of \$23,770 (+5.5%).<sup>19</sup> Institutions within Ontario, such as York University, continue to inflate the price of international students. The increase in prices reflect upon the treatment of international students. International students study in Canada for better access to education but face the burden of inflated prices, and York University could be the forefront for change by assisting international students fairly.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.universityaffairs.ca/news/news-article/international-student-enrolment-continues-to-soar-in-canada/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.international.gc.ca/education/report-rapport/impact-2016/index.aspx?lang=eng>

<sup>13</sup> <https://cbie.ca/international-students-in-canada-continue-to-grow-in-2019/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/130912/dq130912b-eng.htm>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.international.gc.ca/education/report-rapport/impact-2016/index.aspx?lang=eng>

<sup>16</sup> [ibid](#)

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.international.gc.ca/education/strategy-2019-2024-strategie.aspx>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/190904/t001b-eng.htm>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3710004501>

### **DEMAND #3**

# **INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF BURSARIES AND AWARDS OFFERED TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

It's evident that international students require support immediately. While we acknowledge the current available bursaries for international students - the LA&PS International Student Emergency Bursary and the two York University Emergency bursaries - there are a few issues that make it difficult for international students to access the funds. With regards to the LA&PS bursary: it is described as a bursary with limited funds, with little to no details on how much money has been allotted. The bursary does not explicitly state how much money can be given to applicants, and instead states that a maximum of \$1000 can be awarded without fully addressing the guidelines or criteria for determining the bursary amount.

Similar problems arise when examining the York University Emergency Bursaries. With little explanation to criteria for accessing the benefits, we've found that many student applications are rejected, and with no appeals process in place, this leaves students unable to access any emergency financial support at all. We are requesting that the York University Administration increase available bursaries for international students in order to adequately support the needs of its applicants. While we understand that there is a lack of public funding provided towards post-secondary institutions, and that this places considerable strain on the efficiency of institutions such as York, we also know that these are unprecedented times. By reallocating funds from areas that will inevitably no longer be at regular operating capacity due to COVID-19 impacts, the York Administration has the capacity to improve upon the current support for their students. These supports can range from our expansion of current bursaries, to the introduction of new grants, bursaries, and awards.

Increasing the bursaries available would allow York University to both continue its role as a leader in post-secondary education, as well as set the precedent for other post-secondary institutions in this unique time we are currently living in. We strongly believe that by investing in your students, particularly in times of hardship, will not only have a beneficial impact on currently enrolled students, but will also help to situate York University as an institution that genuinely cares for its students - which will undoubtedly help to strengthen its reputation globally.



# CONCLUSION

It is readily apparent that the world is struggling in this time of global pandemic. Through tuition hikes, lack of financial support, and mental duress, many international students are unsure of whether they will be able to survive long enough to complete their degrees. York University has the opportunity to intervene and communicate to its community that they are genuinely valued beyond their financial contributions to the institution. We firmly believe that our three demands are achievable and work for the betterment not only of international students, but the university's reputation as well.

York University prides itself on its core ruling principles of academic freedom, social justice, accessible education, and collegial self-governance. With the continuing rise of tuition fees in the midst of a global pandemic, we beg the question, whose academic freedom are we uplifting? When students have to worry about managing jobs, degrees, families, and personal lives, should they really be worrying about what necessity they will need to sacrifice in order to pursue higher education? How is it just to have students sitting next to their peers, receiving the exact same education, who are paying tens of thousands of dollars less than their classmates simply because of where they come from? Who is able to access education at such a high cost and more importantly who is unable to access it? York University leans on its four pillars to uplift new goals, new ambitions, and new innovations. Let York University be a true innovator and strong example to other universities, not just within Canada, but across the globe.

The following pages contain testimonials from over 35 York University international students on their experiences surrounding paying for their post-secondary education. We look forward to working with the administration on the proposed policy initiatives and hope that our enthusiasm is matched by making these positive changes a reality for students.

# STUDENT TESTIMONIALS

## GRADUATE STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

***Testimonial From Pablo Ramos-Cruz, International Ph.D. Student in Social Work and VP Community Relations for York University Graduate Student Association.***

The first thing I feel is important to address is that International Students left everything behind when moving to Canada. Back home we resigned from jobs, housing, family/friends support system, health insurance, etc...

To move to a country full of uncertainty due to visa limitations.

We are not considered citizens so most welfare support programs do not apply and we have a 20 hours max limitation to work per week.

So our vulnerability level is high. This means that decisions by universities hit international students harder because they are the only institution that "cover" us from the lack of state "protection".

When COVID hit Canada, and York responses were so vague, I started to be anxious about a few things:

- Is the government going to require us to go back home? They are saying that is not a requirement at the moment, but how long will it be before they change their mind?

- How am I going to survive back home, if I don't have health insurance, job, housing, money?
- If I stay in Canada, how am I going to pay my bills when there are no jobs (most of them prioritize citizens) and the government isn't including international students on the new bursaries.
- If I take a leave of absence I have to leave the country (because visa requires continued enrollment), but if I stay I can't study because universities are closed.
- Also, I have to take into consideration that if I leave Canada I can't come back until the borders are open again.

In other words, we were left in limbo in a foreign country that is not helping us simply because we are not citizens. It is extra frustrating that our home country is doing little to nothing in helping us because we are not there. It is clear that international students feel that they are invisible in that they get no assistance from the government and the university in which they attend.

# UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT TESTIMONIALS



“Covid-19 has impacted not just Canadian citizens but international students residing in Canada, as well as the rest of the world. Since the pandemic hit, many students have faced financial difficulty. While summer courses have moved online most, if not all students, find it beneficial and cost effective to return home. However, due to many international restrictions placed on travel, international students are unable to fly back home and thus lose out on the opportunity to save money on housing and food. Being a 4th year student of Economics I decided to enroll in summer courses to complete my degree, instead of staying idle during the summer.

In the midst of the crises, York university has continued to increase international student tuition, not taking into consideration the effect it has, especially during this time of uncertainty. My sister, who is the sole provider for not just my education and living expenses, but also the expenses of my retired mother, has now been financially impacted as her husband recently lost his job due to Covid-19. The financial strain placed on her has directly impacted the monthly income (rent, allowance, etc) I receive. I have also lost out on many summer internship opportunities and jobs with the prospect of saving enough money for the fall term. Online courses do not provide the same benefits students get from in-class learning.

International students are unable to get any financial support from the government and to top it off, the increase in international tuition fees

makes it completely inconceivable. I commend and appreciate the efforts York university has taken to ensure the safety of everyone. However, I urge the university and President Rhonda Lenton to take international students into consideration by not implementing the 10% tuition increase during this time and as long as courses remain online.”

- Anonymous



“I’m an international student coming from Lebanon. Knowing that there’s a protest going on and there’s an economic crisis taking place, I can say that my family is affected adding to it the pandemic that we’re going through. My dad is unemployed and my mom is a teacher, but I chose to take a student loan in order to come to Canada because there’s a better future for me here. My plan was to work after the Winter semester so that I can afford staying here. I demand a change in the tuition fees for International students, we too have financial issues and we chose Canada and York especially because we believe that they hold a better future for us. I’m just one in thousands, imagine other students who have a hard time in coping with studying and working in order to keep up with the raises. I chose York to be a family to me, and I hope that one day I won’t worry about paying back my tuition and working to keep my rent”

- Anonymous



“I am an international student currently in my third year in Global Health. I recently enrolled

in summer courses and I was astonished to see the increase in tuition fees. I knew they were going to increase the tuition fee but I thought this year, York will give it an ease due to this global pandemic. However, York still increased the tuition fee for international students from this summer. This is inhumane because they are ignoring the fact that it's a global pandemic and the economy is crashing worldwide.

My parents are unable to send me tuition fees for summer because all the functions in their workplace have stopped so there is no income for them. In addition to this, the cities are in lockdown so they can't travel to the capital city to send money through the bank. We have several humanity courses in York, but it is ironic that York itself doesn't show any humanity towards international students in the midst of a global pandemic. Although York had offered a bursary but that's only for the month of March/April, but what about our expenses for the rest of the months. Most of us are stuck in this country, we can't go back home. We don't have income or any additional help from the York administration and the Canadian government. We still have to pay our rent, food expenses and personal care and as well as the increased tuition fee for summer.

We, international students are always left out and the administration and the government never fail to remind us that we are outsiders and just cash cows. At first we need York administration to stop the increase in fees until the global pandemic is over. We also should be included in CESB in order to pay for our monthly expenses. Although the government has declared that international students can work more than 20 hours, most of the students have no jobs. This leaves us with no support from any end. I hope our voices are heard by the York administration and the Canadian government. “

- Anonymous



“International student money does not grow on trees – our parents work so hard for it. University

tuition prices are already hyper inflated, and we are expected to pay an additional 10% increase on top of that? I think there is a sweeping misunderstood generalization that all international students are super rich – sorry to break it to you but we are not. Our parents save up for years and sell some of what they own to provide us with an education that is far better than what we have back home. Also, does this pandemic only affect those in the Western world? Are our parents not back home struggling at work because of COVID-19 where their workplace is insecure due to the global economic instability?

Exploiting us during this time is inconsiderate, inhumane and disgusting because you are disrespecting us, our parents and our futures. By getting us to pay a 10% increase – especially during this pandemic - you are reaffirming the fact that we are cash cows that can be milked whenever you please. In fact, the 10% increase should not exist in the first place – we already pay both our kidneys in dollars as it is, and you want more? Please find a more human and decent way of making money that does not involve you laying a hand on our parents. My parents called me up saying that they are worried about their job and that hopefully the tuition fees would decrease this year – and I did not know what to say to them because it's not in my control, just like how this pandemic is not in anyone's control. Make life a little easier for us and our parents back home by getting rid of this exploitative and inconsiderate 10% increase every year, especially during this pandemic – in fact, lower the costs for tuition for everyone this year because of the current financial uncertainty and instability.

This pandemic has been so hard for my family and I. First of all, I was unable to fly back. Second of all, my part-time workplace furloughed all its employees. Third of all, my father's job is facing uncertainties because of this pandemic – he is the sole provider for my education. We aren't

millionaires – we are just middle class people who have worked, saved up and sold property to get a better education, and here we are being exploited as if our hard work does not matter. The support I require from the university administration is that you stop with the 10% increase completely, you reduce this academic year’s university fees – and from the Federal Government, I ask you to extend the CESB to us international students as well. We are humans too and we are struggling as well – our part-time jobs have gone, OSAP doesn’t help us, not all our families are filthy rich, we also need help and support during this tough and uncertain time. Please look at us like we are humans and not some foreign money making machine. Thank you.”

- Breezy Prabahar



“As an international student like many others, my home country closed their borders before I could have the chance to go back. There was a major gap between the information given to us by the University and ResLife. I am aware that they were trying to navigate the situation as best as possible as well but I believe that they could have done better. Residents did not provide us with information about Summer Residence until 11 days before the official move out date. In that time, we were supposed to look for alternate options if needed and move out. Moreover, as a part of ResLife, we were suddenly told to stop coming to work just hours before a shift which was quite unexpected even though they would partially compensate us going forward. The University did introduce Emergency Bursaries but personally it didn’t affect me much and I still haven’t heard back from anyone from the Emergency Travel

Bursary department yet and it’s been a month now. I strongly believe that the Canadian Federal Government should involve us in their plans too. We contribute to the economy significantly and don’t receive much in return. We pay three times the tuition that Canadians pay. We spend most or all year in this country then why aren’t we entitled to the same help as Canadians are receiving right now?”

- Anonymous



“I recently checked the fees I pay as an international student and I pay 5x more per credit than a domestic student, FIVE TIMES. It’s so unsettling and unfair. Even if we don’t pay the same, I just hope that gap decreases in the near future. It’s so frustrating to be busting my butt because I know I can’t even afford to fail and have to retake the course. I don’t understand why or agree with my fees increasing as I matriculate. It’s already perplexing enough to see the pay difference in receiving the EXACT SAME education. Tuition fees should be fixed priced depending on the faculty/department and type of student. Also, I apply for scholarships from my country but if I’m unsuccessful then my parents are coming out of pocket or getting loans because the university has like two scholarships for international students. As a transfer student as well, it’s even harder because when I came to the school I didn’t qualify for the entry-level ones either. We need more scholarships/bursaries available, why are there so many for domestic students when they already pay significantly less than us?”

- Anonymous



***"I am Livia Gozzellino and am an international student from Italy. When I learned that fees for summer courses have been increased for international students but not for domestic students, firstly, I was surprised because the courses will be offered online. The quality of online courses is definitely not the same as those with face-to-face lectures and the opportunity for students to communicate in person with their professors. In addition, since the courses are online, no one is going to be using the facilities or utilities on campus. Yet even though I will not be getting "the full package"; so to speak, I am expected to pay higher fees.***

***Secondly, the online format is a work in progress. Professors are still figuring things out themselves. Recently, I experienced two major glitches doing online exams. The experience was even more stressful than it would have been if I had written it in person. Thus, I am struggling to understand why I have to pay higher fees for summer courses while my Canadian friends don't.***

***When I first decided to study in Canada as an international student, I was well aware that I was going to pay much more than the average Canadian student. However, we are all currently living in an unprecedented situation in which many countries are experiencing major difficulties. Italy, as I am sure you know, is one of the countries hardest hit by Covid-19. My father lost his job in February and so my mother's part-time salary is the only income that my family has coming in. Moreover, because I have been studying and working in***

***Canada, I am not eligible for financial aid for students in Italy. Nor am I eligible for CERB since I decided to come back home before the official lockdown. I applied for the "Travel Disruption Bursary"; but the amount I received was not even enough to cover the amount that I paid for my flight home.***

***In short, now not only does my family have to worry about the current situation but also paying for my tuition and my future prospects.***

***In all honesty, I was expecting more understanding from the university and Canadian Government towards international students given that we have been patient, accepted all expectations and, above all, put our trust in the hands of the government and York. This is a pandemic. It calls for sympathy. I am saddened to see that once again international students are being penalized when the first concern should be their wellbeing and that of their families.***

***I am aware that I am just one of the many international students, but I hope you will be willing to consider an adjustment regarding summer fees for international students or, at least, provide us with more financial aid, such as CESB. After all, even if Canada isn't our home country, it's where we have chosen to study, providing its university system with funds that have been and continue to be used to improve it. Kind Regards"***

***- Livia Gozzellino***



“Tuition fees for international students are high, yes we know. Having to increase them every

year has made it worse for us during this period given that we aren't receiving any funds from the government and yet we have to pay rent and living expenses. I came to Canada because of the culture, diversity, quality of life, you name it but increasing tuition fees every year for international students isn't something I can accept because we are already paying so much but we aren't getting anything back. Moreover, summer courses' fees should be reduced because we are all home in our own comfort, facilities in the University aren't being used, why should we pay more for it especially at this time? Sure, you can increase it, but is it necessary at this period of time? ”

- Anonymous



“As an international student, with very little family surrounding me, the sudden shock of the COVID-19

pandemic came as an overwhelming and challenging surprise to me. I had to decline a wonderful opportunity to volunteer abroad and that could have helped me improve upon a foreign language as well as increase international connections to further my studies. Also, I was not able to return to my home country because Canada's borders as well as my country's borders have been closed.

My residence gave us the opportunity to continue to stay there on condition that we leave by the ending date. Some of my exams were very challenging because it required us to read slides that have not been fully taught. Certain courses simply should not be suggesting students to

“read” the slides but should have provided more resources to help us.

I wanted to plan for the summer and the next academic year, but I am studying to be an analyst. I quickly realised that my school fees have increased drastically. I think this is most unfair. I am not from Canada and so paying for my fees is quite an expensive process. The large increment in my fees stops me from picking the suggestive number of courses I can handle during the summer. I felt that because my internship could not happen, I could at least use my time very wisely to study and acquire the necessary credits for other courses. I feel attacked. I feel that being an international student completely marginalizes myself and many others like me. We are not receiving a lot of resources such as financial alleviation. We are held to a higher standard and for a much higher price. I felt that because the courses are held online, most students especially the internationals should receive the same (old) fees or even less.

This pandemic has affected my family because we cannot go out all the time to work and as a result, income is low. I urge the university administration and the Canadian Federal Government to have a much open heart and plead with them to decrease international fees. We are all deeply affected by this pandemic, but we should not be punished financially. A lot of my people back home have been laid off and so money is very tight. This is not the time to burden students with higher fees. It mounts unto our many problems. I am very open to a discussion with the university administration for matters regarding international fees.”

- Constance Anson





**Dear President Lenton and  
York administration,**

**On behalf of Vanier College Council, we would like to issue this statement in support of the York Federation Students and their fairness for international students campaign.**

**As a college with over 9,000 constituents, and a majority of them being international, we have seen first hand the toll that international tuition fees has taken on students. The tuition fees in Ontario are one of the highest in all of Canada, and are triple the amount for international students. These students come from abroad and choose York because of the opportunity that studying at a Toronto university holds. To make the assumption that all international students are extremely wealthy is unfair and offensive to those who come from abroad to study at York. Many of these international students' families make just enough to provide for their child's abroad education, and still have to pay for things like housing, textbooks, food and many other additional expenses that a domestic student may not be faced with. In addition, there are restrictions placed on international students by the government when it comes to how many hours they are allowed to work per week, which again affects their income and comfort when studying abroad.**

**International students receive the exact same education that domestic students do but at triple the cost. The same facilities that are made available for domestic students are also utilized by international students; these are the same facilities that we think all students can agree need updating, yet we have still seen no effort on the administration's behalf. There is no reason to exploit these students other than for your own personal greed, especially when the money is not being put towards the interests of the student body. We hope that as the President and administration**

**of York, a place that over 55,000 students call home, you will take these statements and testimonials seriously and do your part to aid international students during such a trying time.**

**COVID-19 has affected so many people worldwide and your students are not exempt from this. Many students, both international and domestic, have lost their jobs as a result of the government's implementation of self-isolation and the need for non-essential businesses to close. Many international students are employed on campus and we have seen almost no effort to help these students out. International students are also not qualified to apply for CERB, CESB or EI. Due to the closure of borders, many of the York students who live abroad are not able to travel back to their home countries to be with their families during this uncertain and anxiety-inducing time.**

**Additionally, these students are still required to pay ridiculous costs for rent, even when there is a pandemic going on. International students who live at the Quad for example, are still required to pay high rent costs even though their building's amenities have all been taken away. Students who live in York residence have been forced to move out and look for other accommodations (which is virtually impossible at this time) or be required to pay ridiculous amounts of money to remain there.**

**Once again, on behalf of Vanier College Council and our constituents, we plead with you to take this matter seriously and treat international students fairly, not only during this pandemic but in the near future and for years to come. International students are not cash cows and should not be exploited for the sake of a business. Thank you for taking the time to hear our concerns and we hope to see you join us in this fight for fairness.**

**-Yours Truly, Vanier College Council**





“Hello, I am currently pursuing a Post-Graduate certificate in accounting at the School of continuing studies at York University. I arrived in Canada in January and when I finally got a job at McDonald’s, The store closed after a month due to COVID-19. I have paid 16000 \$ for an 8-months program whose most part has run online which is not fair considering the high fees. Moreover, I have to do another course from coming September ( as per immigration rules, I need to study 2 years to apply for a work permit), The fees for which has been due and I have to deposit 5130 \$ before the mid of May which is impossible considering the present scenario in my home country where there is a complete lockdown and have to also pay another 12000 \$ before September. There has been no relief in fees like an option to pay during the course time rather than before the start or concessions. The government has also been ignorant for the international students and I am completely stuck right now in this moment of fear and uncertainty. ”

- Pranav Kapoor Student ID- 217616400



“I felt so “left-out” when I learned that domestic students are getting all the help they can but we, international students are just being ignored. I was studying in Canada but had to travel back to my home country because of this pandemic with little to no funds. Just because the price of air travel was too much, I had to pay a lot more and travel back. Also, University tuition fees are now a burden as no one is working (and we are in complete lockdown) and it is hard to pay the amount. Also, we know that international students are already being asked 10% more than they were previously asked for. We all know that international students pay way more than the domestic students, and thus I seek for help and support during this time where we all are stuck. I ( AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ) seek for emergency funds from whoever it may come from, whether it is York University or Canadian Federal Govt. University Administration is completely responsible for not taking care of their international students.”

- Anonymous



“York University has had one of the worst responses to the current ongoing situation. It has achieved its target of sidelining its International students in this time of uncertainty. We are away from home, with no emotional support from our families, have extreme financial constraints and above all, York is now raising its fee for us. It was giving emergency bursaries but I have yet to come across someone who got approved (I applied twice and I am still waiting for a reply. Hopefully it gets accepted in the next 4 years). I know times are hard right now but increasing tuition fee would severely impact the international students as our families are having an increasingly difficult time in supporting us. I urge the university to please keep the tuition fee the same, we are already stressed enough. ”

- Anonymous



“Hello Administration,

As an international student from the U.S. people often ask me why would I come here for school and my answer would be, because it’s very expensive there, I tried running from those issues, but it seems as if I’m running into the same dilemma. With York raising the international fees by an extra 10% it brings discouragement and stress, whether the student is paying out of their own pockets or if it’s their parents.

We are not “cash cows;” why drain us financially and give us classes that we don’t need? Why can’t we just take the classes we really need, so that way, we don’t have to worry about paying \$20-\$30,000 a year on tuition that will dig us deep into debts we will have to pay after graduating. This is unfair and we deserve better. Stop the 10%. ”

- Rajahi Whittle



"I am writing to you to explain my situation as an international student here in Canada. The conditions that I am facing have been incredibly draining on many levels.

First of all, the financial impact of the Covid-19 situation has been hard on not just students, but to the people who have lost their jobs or are suffering from incomplete financial benefits. As a result, many individuals including myself have been struggling to make ends meet.

Additionally, my tuition as an international student is over three times the cost of the tuition of a domestic student under normal circumstances. During this pandemic, international students have not been supported whatsoever financially. The economic impact of the pandemic has also been experienced by my family back home. The international students do not meet the eligibility criteria for the benefit funds set up by the government (CERB/CESB). As the pandemic has also impacted the borders, many students have no choice but to remain in Canada without the support of their families. I missed the opportunity to return back home as a result of which I am being forced to incur unforeseen expenses such as rent, etc. I am currently living on campus since I have no family/relatives in the country who I can rely on for support, therefore, I am quarantining alone.

Secondly, this has had a significant effect on my mental health. It has been incredibly difficult to live in isolation without the emotional support of my family for an unprecedented amount of time. The increased tuition fees have also amplified the stress of managing everything by myself.

Therefore, I request that you take these points into consideration in order to support international students during this global pandemic. It would be a lot easier if living accommodations were made available at a subsidized rate. Moreover, since

university classes are completely online for this summer, it becomes quite a strain to pay international tuition to just attend online lectures. Thus, the increased financial burden, as a result, acts as an impediment towards the academic progress of my degree. Again, I hope you take these facts into consideration.

I hope to hear from you soon. Kind regards"

- Falguni Gianchandani



"Hi there,

I am a second year student enrolled in the Financial and Business Economics program at York University.

Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, I have not been able to get a full time summer job or an internship. I had initially planned to earn some money during the summer by getting an internship, but most places where I have applied (around 6-8 different places) are no longer taking in interns due to the pandemic. This has completely distorted my original plan.

My nationality is Indian and both my parents are working hard in order to support me financially. In order to reduce the financial burden, I had decided to apply for internships and jobs.

I am just really glad that YFS is raising awareness about this issue. We, as international students definitely bring added value to the university, and also wish to be treated well in return. Raising our fees by 10% amid a global pandemic is according to me completely unacceptable. We are also in great need of financial support, just like domestic students. "

- Anonymous



Dear York U,

I thought that the most difficult part of being a student should be the actual studying. But if you're an international student like I am, there are so many other things that make life at YU challenging.

There is the obvious difference in tuition and price per credit which wasn't as problematic before because I came to this school knowing this. But when the tuition, only for international students is being raised, it seems almost spiteful. We already pay way more than resident students and many of us pay for residence, apartments or village houses on top of that. All while having to go through lengthy processes if we even want to try getting jobs to lessen some of these expenses. It just doesn't look good and it definitely isn't fair. Imagine knowing that you can't afford to fail a course because of the money you'll be wasting. And it's not like you can drop the class either because then you're wasting money and time because you can't get the credits that you were supposed to. Personally, I can't do summer school, so if I mess up a course, that's it for until I can take it again whether its next semester or next year.

So when I heard about the CESB I was excited but when I heard it wasn't going to be available to us international students, I was disappointed but not surprised.

Additionally, I told Jaskarn the Vp campus life about this but, I lived in residence this entire school year, and after all in person instruction was suspended, the housing offices asked us residence students to move out of our dorms as soon as possible unless it was completely impossible which wasn't a problem for me. I moved out like 4 or 5 days after they asked us to and filled out the form that they sent and with this being pretty rushed and short notice didn't return my room key. Like a week or 2 after I'm at home, I kept getting these emails that seemed directed towards students still living in residence.

So I sent an email to make sure they know I'm neither in res or in the country and they responded by asking me to mail my room key back to Canada which is next to impossible because my country is small so being in lockdown means that 90% of normal businesses are closed. It wouldn't be so annoying to me if they had even tried to understand my situation and said "send it when you can," but they gave me a deadline instead and said that if it wasn't met that I'd be fined on my student account.

This honestly left me speechless to the point where I didn't even try sending an email to explain my situation though I know I really should have. I think I was just angry that this school could still make my life difficult without me even being in the country.

- Myra Whitfield, third year



"First of all, thank you YFS for being a voice for the international students and fighting for our rights.

In university, I always thought that no one cared about how much international students pay to get the SAME education that domestic students get. Education is a basic right, not a privilege regardless of where you are from in the world. Being an international student who is already paying x3 the tuition fee, a 10% increase in tuition fee is unfair especially given the current circumstances caused by the coronavirus. My father's business has been gravely affected and I, being an international student, do not qualify for the CESB. Jobs are limited and it will be difficult for me to pay my tuition fee and other expenses. Not all international students are rich. Most of us have to work really hard in order to get a quality education. I hope the administration takes an initiative to treat us fairly in these hard times."

- Anonymous



***“Dear Rhonda Lenton,***

***I hope my story can help provide insight as to why the myth “all international students are wealthy and can afford their tuition” is truly a myth.***

***Coming to Canada, my initial intent was to obtain permanent residence after 2 years of my undergraduate studies because this was an available option for international students. At the time, my dad was in the process of retiring from his job. The initial plan was that my family and I would work together to support my education for those 2 years after which I would be responsible for my tuition (at the domestic rate). Little had I known that the permanent residence program would be abruptly ended the year I moved into Canada.***

***This news shattered me, disrupting all my hopes. I was encouraged by friends and family who hoped that I would qualify for scholarships given the high level of dedication I put into my studies. Based on this, during my first year, I looked into available scholarships at York but there were none. About 99% of all scholarships York offered were only available to domestic students. I had hoped this was only the case given it was my first year. I wish things got better from there, but they did not. A recession began in my country, Nigeria, leading to a***

***drastic reduction in my dad’s disposable income. I was left alone towards the end of my second year to pay for my tuition (at the international rate), at no fault of my parents as there was nothing they could do.***

***The follow-up question I anticipate is, why didn’t you just go back? The answer is the same reason I came to Canada in the first place. Canada was meant to be a safer place, a place of opportunities where I could develop myself and aspire for greatness. My parents wanted exactly that for me. If the situation in our countries allowed for our success and ability to develop our countries in return, Rhonda, we would. Almost no one considers it fun to leave most or all of their family for a new place where they will at least for some time be considered a stranger. No one leaves home in comfort, we take these journeys with a brave heart hoping that some good comes from it. Many international students seek hope, not fun.***

***I worked hard every single semester, picking up a part-time job while carrying a 30-credit full course load given that this was important for my future medical career. I did all this whilst striving to volunteer in my community and maintain my sanity. I made sure to maintain nothing short of an 8.7 GPA, however, this all meant nothing to the York***

**administration. The lack of scholarships for current international students continued all through up to the end of my undergraduate studies (this April). I had to work at hours when I should have been studying. I had to shed plenty of tears on countless occasions wondering how to get financial blocks off my student account so I could enroll. In addition, I still have to struggle with the burden of unpaid tuition and accrued debt.**

**To top it all off, the York administration decided to increase tuition by 10% every year! I was lucky to have a strong support system, strong faith, and a family that believed greatly in me. However, not every international student will have it this good. Not to exaggerate, but this is enough to drive some students into depression and more devastating outcomes as I experienced symptoms of it myself.**

**It is important to note that I was granted the continuing student scholarship of approximately \$1000 in my 2nd, 3rd and final year, and the \$1600 international excellence scholarship in my 3rd year. Although, I do appreciate the funds I received, in some ways it represented a mockery of my situation. International**

**students should not be awarded bursaries or scholarships at the same level or amount as their domestic peers. This should be logical considering that these tuition amounts vary substantially.**

**This is not limited to me, as I know several other international students going through similar situations. I had chosen York because during my admission, advising, and orientation process I was made to believe that York University truly cares for its students and strives for inclusivity and opportunity for all. My experience, financially, has suggested otherwise. This letter is not to invoke pity for my situation but to spark some compassion for the struggles of many international students. I am writing this letter to you in hopes that another international student in a similar situation doesn't have to go through the pain that I have. I write this hoping that future YorkU international students can find the hope they sought when they decided to move into Canada. Thank you."**

**-Tofunmi Olowogorioye**



"This is more of a rant, as I am mad and disappointed at some of the racism and hate which a high amount of YorkU students have been pouring onto us amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Being an international student at York University is tough.

Majority of our fellow Canadian classmates seem to think that all of us are so rich, and paying more than \$3000 for a course compared to the <\$1000 rate they have is fair.

More than 75% of the international students I know have to work part-time to support their education and daily expenses. And at least half of them have been working more than the maximum 20 hours allowed per week all these years just to make sure that they wouldn't starve and are not in debt.

To pursue higher education in a developed country has been my dream. Universities in my country (I am from a developing country in SEA region). especially those which have world rankings of top 100 have such bad qualities in education and infrastructures that, to learn what I love, I had to sacrifice a lot of things which all of you could not imagine.

I receive no fundings at all from my family and most of my international friends at YorkU are in the same condition. The rich, entitled Asian students you see every day do not represent us. I can't imagine what would happen to me if my relatives have not offered to provide me with some funds to live through this ongoing pandemic.

Include us in the CESB. Make all summer classes cheaper since they are all online now. (Remote is exactly the same as online still). Make our tuition fees double but not triple the fees which the locals pay. (reduce it from more than \$3,000 to approx. \$2,000).

I am not your cash cow. Stop exploiting international students. Why are we paying so much more (\$800 for Canadian compared to our >\$3000 per

3 credit course) than Canadian students? It should be higher but paying around \$2,200 more for a 3 credit course is ridiculous. Am I not a human being just because I am not fortunate enough to be born as a Canadian? Do I not deserve care and love too?

International students pay taxes in Canada too. We spend like Canadians too. We are not receiving support from our government because we have been paying taxes to YOUR government but not them. It is inhumane to treat us like a piece of crap and belittle us while we have been contributing to the Canadian's economy.

Thank you. And to everyone, stay safe and make sure to stay at home until the condition really improves. Underestimating the importance of social distancing even when we are now at the other side of the curve, will surely bring an even more disastrous outlook."

- C.J. Fong



"My name is Vikram Vardhan Singh and my pronouns are he/him. I am the Calumet College President but first and foremost I am an international student. I have been at York University for 3 years now and needless to say the biggest worry for me has been the tuition costs for studying here. Year by year the prices have been going up while there have been rumours circulating about the taxes we pay. I pay the same taxes as a Canadian resident and yet pay four times the tuition. An increase in tuition prices when the world economy is at risk and everyone is struggling to make ends meet is nothing short of a show of bad faith. The fact that the university is willing to increase prices at a time when classes are going to be shifted online makes it seem like they just want to use international students' money and that is the end of that. I hope the university reconsiders its decision and does not go ahead with this increase in tuition"

- Vikram Vardhan Singh



“As an international student life is not so easy. It becomes really difficult to cope up with the

tuition fees and also the cost of the textbooks. I thought I would be able to find a job and work during the summer term which would help me with my daily expenses for food, rent and also the textbooks but due to the pandemic, I am not able to work. I was not even able to go back to my home country. It is difficult I to manage all the finances during this time. Moreover, the university decided to increase the fees which is extremely stressful during this time. I have to take summer courses to be able to graduate on time but at the same time, I also have to see the financial burden I am facing because of the pandemic and the increase in tuition fees. I would want the university to reduce the fees and help students like me during such times. It would be a great relief. I urge the university to help us during this time by reducing the fees for this year. Maybe the government can help us by providing the student funds to international students as well. ”

- Anonymous



“I am an international student who has been impacted due to the ongoing global pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused quarantine and lockdown measures to be taken in different countries all over the world. This has caused a major setback in the global economy as many countries might find themselves in a recession at the end of it all. The pandemic has put a strain on the income sources of international students that are privileged to have their fees taken care of by their families and those who have to work to pay their own fees and take care of their basic necessities. Increasing international fees by 10% creates an extra burden on students and their families who are all trying to get through these tough times. I would like to use this opportunity to plead with Dr. Lenton and the Board of Governors at York University to reconsider implementing the increase of international student fees.”

- Anonymous



“To whom it may concern,

As we all know the University has been increasing the tuition of international students by 10% for the past 2 years. This has put a strenuous burden on students financially, mentally and psychologically. A lot of students spend a huge amount of time thinking about how they can make money to pay up their tuition just to graduate in time. This type of strain affects us academically as well because instead of focusing on academics, we spend most of our time worrying about finances and working so hard to make ends meet. I, personally and certainly sure that everyone does not deserve to live like this. There are alot of international students from third world countries like myself that come here to seek better education but instead we are being extorted because we do not have another choice and this is highly unfair. It is very unfortunate to be charged additional fees during this excruciating period when everyone is going through one thing or the other.

I have lost my job due to Covid-19 and it was my only stream of income which i was planning on using my earned money to pay for summer courses but due to the disruption and the increase in tuition it might be hard to pay in full and bounce back for fall semester. Even though my parents help to pay my tuition sometimes but because of the pandemic, exchange rates have increased which automatically make tuition more expensive before the increase and with the increase it becomes unbearable. I urge you to consider removing the 10% annual increase in tuition to make learning more affordable and comfortable for everyone. Thank you”

- A concerned international student





***“To the President of York University,***

***Subject: On the matter of tuition hike cast upon International Students.***

***As an International Student, I face a lot of adversities in my day to day life. I have spent the last 7 years of my life as an international student in Toronto and never have myself felt more excluded from society than ever. The social and economic toll of Covid-19 has a magnified effect on those who are not permanent residents and citizens, especially international students. I fear that the social and economic consequences of this pandemic will bring forth a society that favors those who have more access to capital giving them more access to key institutions like universities with many students becoming unable to afford paying for their post-secondary education.***

***Do keep in mind that International Students also have barely enough access to healthcare, as our health insurances become an instrument that separates us from getting equal treatment in hospitals and clinics. Given all these circumstances, a hike in tuition is unjust and takes the***

***structure of a scheme that drains the financial security of many international students. There is a commonly mistaken preconception that all international students can afford a life of luxury and bear the burden of paying higher tuition every year. To this I say, I can't, I simply can't afford to keep on paying more than what my parents earn, nor do I want to put them in a situation of accumulating more debt than they are already in.***

***I am heavily invested in pursuing a life in academia, but sadly I fear the worst that my dreams might take a U-turn as better universities become simply unaffordable to the likes of many. In solidarity with all other international students, I urge you to reconsider the tuition hike and help promote the true meaning of what it means to be in academia, i.e. a safe space where all have enough access to key resources and knowledge. International students have always been a part of York University, please continue to nurture such a cooperative and inclusive environment. Sincerely,***

***- Kevin Varghese, Secretary  
International Students'  
Association at York (ISAY)”***





“Dear Maam, I’m an international student at York university. I’m a psychology major and I just finished my first year. Before Covid, I used to have a job but got laid off during the pandemic. I don’t qualify for CERB as I didn’t earn \$5000 or the student benefit since I’m international. I’m going through a financial crisis and I can barely afford food, rent, phone bill and other necessities. I barely eat one meal a day and I’ve no idea how I am going to survive. It is a popular notion that international students are rich but that is not the case and I come from a very middle class family and they also are struggling and can’t help me currently. I’ve no one or no where to turn to. Regards.”

- Ranvir Mumwalia



“ Hi, I am an international student and currently I am unable to find part time or full time summer jobs in order to afford my rent and daily expenses. This pandemic has caused a huge number of job losses and students are on the brink of financial collapse. Balancing between work and study has become more challenging in recent times. Thank You”

- Zarif Tanzim Student #: 217438524



“To York University President, Rhonda Lenton and the Board of Governors

My name is Suyon Hwang, and I would like to propose my opinion about the impact of increasing tuition on international students at York University. Every year, tuition for international students is increasing by 10% and this is a major concern for us to study and live in Canada because not only studying at the University but also managing our life financially is difficult and stressful. Especially during this uncertain time due to covid-19, international students are seriously concerned about our family and our home country, some have already gone back, some are still thinking whether to go back or remain in Canada because paying rent and spending money on food is already a burden to us.

I understand that given the situation like this impacts a lot on the University side too, but we did not pay for online courses, we are investing our time and quite a large amount of money on facilities, services, and support that are available in University. I, as one of the international students, and as one of the representatives of ISAY(International Student Association at York), disapprove that the University is increasing our tuition fees any more.

- Suyon Hwang



“Dear York University President Rhonda Lenton and the Board of Governors,

My name is Ademi Yestayeva and I am an International student. It is something I take pride in, however the yearly increase in tuition fees for international students is something that greatly concerns me.

Canada is praised for being welcoming to those who are seeking a better life. On the campuses of York University, international students are a big part of the community, and even the York administration often promotes its diversity which we largely contribute to.

I strongly believe that we, international students, deserve to be treated as equal with domestic students as we are part of the same student body. This unexpected pandemic has put students through even more hardships than normal, but especially international students-financially and mentally-except we don’t have as much support.

Please, listen to us and stop the 10% tuition fees increase for international students this year. We are asking you for fairness. Thank you. Best regards.”

- Ademi Yestayeva



"I'm an International student from India pursuing Psychology Bachelor of Science at York, in my second year. I have been really affected by Covid, especially because I had some mental health issues going on around November to January, and had to quit my job to get my life back to normal and amidst this, everything shut down. I had some savings and my parents helped me as much as they could since November, but because I quit working in November, I'm not eligible for CERB, and now my country shut its borders and it is impossible to go back. It is really hard being away from family during this crisis, especially when you have to manage money and worry about where your next meal is going to come from. Thanking You,"

- Anonymous

2020-2021 will place additional burden on my family as the businesses have been severely affected. Given the situation for all the students I am requesting for the international fees to not be increased for the upcoming year by 10%. This would slightly help ease the burden on my family as well as other international students. Thank you for considering my request."

- Anonymous



"Stop raising our tuition fees! My parents agreed to pay for my education at York because they

were making enough money to do so. Now because of the pandemic they are making NO money. My father is a small business owner, and he is OUT OF WORK. Not to mention that my home country has been suffering from a serious economic crisis even before the pandemic started. Instead of getting at least some financial support, I am getting courses that are 300-600 dollars more expensive than they used to be. If this continues to happen, I must have to drop out and return to my home country, which I don't want to do. #wearepeopletoo. People whose wallets aren't bottomless"

- Maxim Volovik,  
an international student from Russia



"Dear Dr. Ronda Lenton and the Board of Governors,

Due to the COVID-19, I am unable to continue working as regularly. I used to work at Subway on campus as well as a student recruitment ambassador on campus. I have been laid off from Subway, so I am unable to work regularly. This has affected my ability to manage my expenses sufficiently. Both of these jobs together were able to help me with my expenses.

It has been harder for me to pay rent, groceries, phone bills and my essential living expenses. It has been a stressful situation both financially, mentally and physically. I have had to stock up on my groceries as well as have to pay for extra cleaning supplies, masks, and medicines for the situation. Being an international student, this has been an extremely difficult time for me as my parents in Kenya have been worried about me here. Due to the slow economy there and the given circumstances, it has also been difficult for my parents to send me money and difficult for us to manage our family expenses. Due to Covid-19 my father's wholesale business in Kenya has been affected and has placed a burden on my family. Increasing the fall/winter tuition for



"Feedback from other international students can attract potential students to the university.

However, if no one supports us especially during these tough moments, why would we encourage others to attend York? There should be a mutual understanding between both parties for everyone to thrive from a long term perspective. Ms. Lenton, please consider our requests. Thank you"

- Tom Chang



“ York university president, this is not how you should make international students

feel during a world pandemic. We international students already pay more than double compared to domestic students. Doug Ford, John Tory and Justin Trudeau, please understand our situation and include international students in CESB. Ms. Lenton, you should understand our situation that we do not have that much financial support from the government either, we are not all from rich families, we struggle financially to get the education here, and you should not put the financial burden on us especially during a world pandemic and online classes. Just put yourselves in our shoes for once and think of how we are struggling and what you should do to reduce the stress we go through every single day to reduce the stress we go through every single day to survive here in this country far away from family without any support. Just think about it before you slap us with increased tuition fees. Look into the mirror and look at humanity dying when you increase the fee. I request Rhonda Lenton to once try to decrease international fees instead of increasing it during a world pandemic”

- Anonymous



“I am an international student who used to work and take out my own living expenses, but my family

thought it would be a better idea to come home during such a pandemic and I lost my job. I live off campus and my rent and mobile bill are fixed expenses, amidst this economic crisis York plans to increase the tuition fees per course which just hits hard because it doesn't give many bursaries to international students and there is no OSAP for international students as well.

I still don't get the reason for charging 3 times the fees from international students, it just becomes unaffordable at times. University education is an important part of one's life and if not free, it should be at least affordable. I paid \$33,000 for two semesters last year and that is how badly they're increasing the gap between the domestic and international students. The York community needs to understand that making university education affordable for both domestic and international students is most important. The global impact ranking truly doesn't matter until the administration decides to take care of their own students primarily”

- Anonymous



“Please my parents are suffering during this pandemic too. \$6500 for one FULLY ONLINE

pandemic ridden course is A LOT to bear, hope you can understand”

- Shannon

**FOR MORE INFORMATION  
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