



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **UNITED STUDENT GROUPS COMMEND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S COVID-19 STUDENT AID PACKAGE**

OTTAWA, April 22, 2020 -- The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) and Quebec Student Union (QSU) are pleased with the comprehensive student aid package announced today by the Government of Canada. The package will bring significant relief to all students affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and will provide valuable support to at-risk students and recent graduates who need it most.

“Today’s announcement is great news for any student dealing with financial hardship because of COVID-19,” said Adam Brown, Chair of the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations. “\$9 billion in aid is a great sign that the federal government cares, and is listening to the needs and concerns of students during this unprecedented time.”

Today’s announcement expands the Government of Canada’s COVID-19 response by providing a generous \$9 billion aid package to postsecondary students and recent graduates. Under the new package, students and recent graduates who do not qualify for the existing Canada Emergency Response Benefit will be eligible for another Emergency Student Benefit worth up to \$1,750 per month in relief. In addition, the government has also committed to doubling the Canada Student Grant for the 2020-21 academic year, along with other changes to come in the Canada Student Loan Program. The government has also pledged to invest an additional \$75 million in the Post-Secondary Student Support Program, Metis Education Strategy, and Inuit Education Strategy. Further, \$291 million in funding has been committed to the Canada Granting Agency to allow for student researcher extensions. Today’s announcement also commits to creating the new Canada Student Service Grant which will provide \$5,000 to students who volunteer for a set number of hours during the pandemic.

“Today’s announcement is taking a lot of pressure off the students’ shoulders. They can finally go through their finals or research without worrying about May 1st rent.” Said Philippe LeBel, president of the Quebec Student Union.

“This kind of comprehensive aid package is key to ensuring that all Canadian students and recent graduates are protected during this pandemic, ready to return to classes and the workplace once physical distancing measures are reduced,” added Brown. “Today’s announcement includes much-needed immediate financial relief for students and recent graduates who do not qualify for the CERB, while also making sure that students are able to access and afford their education moving forward.”

CASA and the QSU have been committed to ensuring that the federal government safeguards



the future by protecting students during the COVID-19 pandemic. We had previously called upon the federal government to provide serious relief for students by: Establishing an Emergency Response Benefit stream for students and new graduates, increasing the Canada Student Grant for low- and middle-income students, waiving the requirement for the fixed student contribution, permitting international students to travel to Canada in September 2020, and extending the research funding for student research funding issued by Canada's Granting Agencies. CASA and the UEQ applauds the Government of Canada for taking action on our specific recommendations.

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**About CASA**

The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations (CASA) is a national voice for Canada's post-secondary students. Established in 1995, CASA is a non-partisan, not-for-profit student organization composed of student associations from across Canada. We represent 24 student associations, representing 380,000 students to the federal government of Canada. CASA advocates for a post-secondary education system in Canada that is accessible, affordable, innovative and of the highest quality.

**About QSU**

The Quebec Student Union's mission is to defend the rights and interests of the student community, of its member associations, and of their members, by promoting, protecting, and improving the conditions of students and those of local and international communities.