

MEDIA RELEASE

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WESTERN STUDENT LEADERS MEET WITH PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION DURING A WEEK OF LOBBYING IN OTTAWA

OTTAWA, ON: Today, members of the University Students' Council (USC) Executive, in partnership with student leaders from across the country, will wrap up a week of dialogue with over 150 Members of Parliament, Senators, and government officials in Ottawa. The meetings were part of the annual lobby conference hosted by the Canadian Alliance of Students Associations (CASA), and were focused on advancing several priorities, most notably:

- The need to eliminate the 10 per cent and 15 per cent price premium from the book import tariff, which unnecessarily increases the price of textbooks for Canadian students.
- A student loan repayment program that protects graduates from defaulting on their loan obligations, which is a particularly timely issue given the number of recent graduates who have lost their jobs during the economic downturn.
- The need for a balanced copyright regime, to ensure students, teachers, and researchers are able to freely use copyrighted material for research and private study.

USC President Stephen Lecce, and Vice-President University Affairs Jacqueline Cole met with over twenty Members of Parliament during the week, including Prime Minister Stephen Harper, and Opposition Leader Michael Ignatieff.

“We spoke to Prime Minister Harper and Mr. Ignatieff about the importance of expanding opportunities to higher education for more Canadian students,” said Stephen Lecce, President of the University Students' Council. “Both leaders were very receptive to our ideas – particularly, we’re hopeful they’ll both support the elimination of the import tariff that drives up the cost of textbooks for Canadian students.”

“Our political leaders are rightly concerned with addressing the economic doom and gloom of today,” said Jacqueline Cole, Vice-President University Affairs of the USC. “During our meetings we focused the attention of Mr. Harper and Dr. Ignatieff on strategies to ensure Canada has the highly educated workforce it will need to compete once the country emerges from the global economic downturn,” continued Jacqueline Cole, Vice-President University Affairs of the USC.

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For more information, please contact:

Rachel Halpern
Communications Officer
University Students' Council
(519) 661-3574
usc.commun@uwo.ca

Stephen Lecce
President
University Students' Council
(519) 709-0254
usc.president@uwo.ca

Jacqueline Cole
VP University Affairs
University Students' Council
(519) 661-3574
usc.university.affairs@uwo.ca