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University budget makes it clear- time for serious investment in PSE

Last week, the University of Regina Board of Governors approved its 25th consecutive balanced budget, made possible once again by rising tuition fees for the 11th consecutive year in a row, asking students to pay more and faculty and staff to do more with less.

As URFA has said in the past, we do not support the University balancing its budget on the back of our students, who are finding it more and more difficult to make ends meet, with many taking on higher debt loads as they face a further 2.8% tuition increase this fall. Tuition has now increased by almost 40% since 2008, and the University of Regina is ranked as the fourth most expensive University in Canada, according to Maclean’s. URFA stands with students, and urges the University to consider the impact that yearly tuition increases have on our students, and on the affordability and attainability of post-secondary education in this province.

URFA also recognizes the role that the provincial government plays in the development of this budget. A decade of austerity and underfunding of post-secondary education have led to yearly tuition increases and cuts at the U of R. For the third year in a row, Universities in Saskatchewan either saw cuts or a zero per cent funding increase from the provincial government. A significant re-investment in post-secondary education, combined with a tuition freeze, would have enormous benefits for students and for the working conditions of University faculty and staff. URFA will continue to work to build partnerships with URSU, RPIRG, the CUPE locals on campus, and other groups to build student and worker solidarity and advocate for much needed investment in post-secondary education.

While it is important to invest in the infrastructure of a growing University, the people who work to support the mission of the University continue to face increased workloads since the number of faculty members is not increasing while the number of student is.

It is time to make re-investing in post-secondary education a priority. The continued success of our institution depends on it.

Sylvain Rheault

URFA, President