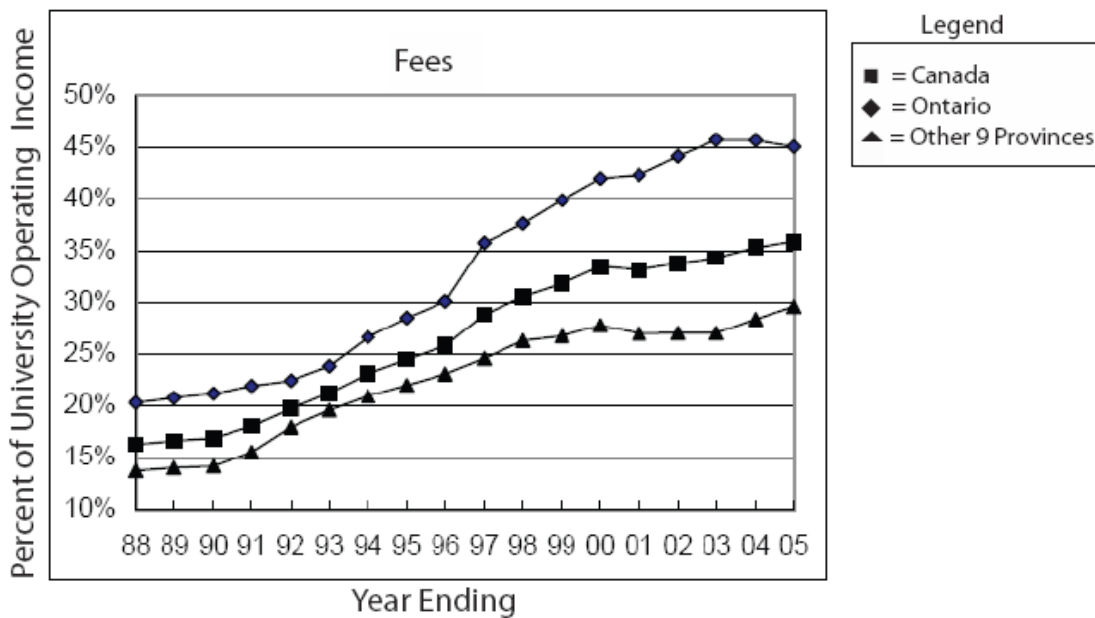


A Brief Overview of Ontario Tuition

Throughout the country, post-secondary education (PSE) has traditionally been funded through three main sources: the provincial governments, the federal government, and students. Over time, however, a substantial proportion of funding is also derived from other sources, such as private donations or private revenue on campus. In most provinces, tuition fees and private donations have been required to supplement the declining contribution of provincial governments. Ontario students have faced increasingly challenging circumstances as the government of the mid to late 1990s made deep cuts into PSE support, leaving students to largely make up the difference.

The following graph illustrates the sources of university income over nearly the past two decades. From this, it becomes clear that as provincial operating grants have declined it has been students, through tuition, who are turned to as reasonable sources of revenue.

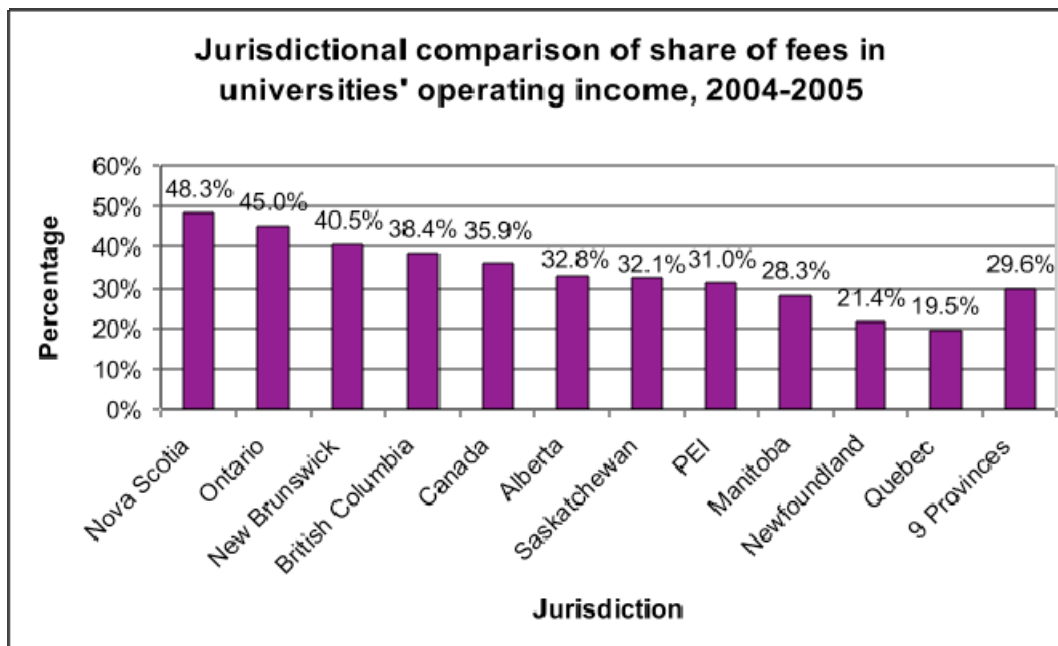
Percentage of Total Ontario University Operating Income Recovered From Student Fees, 1987-2005



After a very brief tuition freeze during the 2004/05 and 2005/06 academic years, Ontario developed a new tuition framework through the "Reaching Higher Plan" which took effect in 2006/07. In this new framework, universities were given permission to increase tuition by a maximum overall average of five percent annually, by agreeing to participate in the Province's "Student Access Guarantee", where no qualified student is prevented from attending PSE due to financial constraints. This average is a calculation based on a tuition increase by a maximum of 4.5 per cent for first-year arts and science and four per cent in senior years, combined with an increase by a maximum of eight per cent in first year and four per cent in subsequent years for graduate and some undergraduate professional programs.

Concerns

Since the current framework was implemented OUSA has chosen to highlight the inherent access and affordability issues created by a policy of tuition rising at a rate much faster than inflation. Specifically, OUSA has focused on those students from traditionally underrepresented groups: low-income, aboriginal, first generation, rural and northern students, and students with dependents. To properly understand the inequity of the current student contribution in Ontario, it is important to draw comparisons with other jurisdictions such as other Canadian provinces and U.S. public institutions. Lower funding means students pay for more of their education than anywhere else in Canada. As of 2006, Ontario students paid for 45 per cent of their schooling through fees, as compared to an average of 29.6 per cent for the other nine provinces. This can be seen in the following graph:



As a specific point of concern, the current tuition model leaves international students particularly vulnerable to dramatic and persistent cost increase. Tuition costs for international students attending post-secondary institutions in Ontario are not regulated by the province. Unsurprisingly, this has led to significant tuition hikes over the past many years. International students pay far more than their residential peers, and actually pay 100% or more of the cost compared to the 44% that Ontario students currently pay, and the 30% Canadian average.

Where OUSA Stands

- 1) The fundamental stance OUSA has taken on tuition requests that Ontario's cost sharing be "responsible" and reflects the national average of approximately 70% contribution from the province and 30% from the student.
- 2) OUSA argues that all tuition be regulated by the provincial government, including international fees, and that all fees increase at a rate no greater than CPI.
- 3) OUSA advocates for the continued control of non-tuition related ancillary fees by students, as these fees can contribute greatly to the cost of higher education.