



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release
22 February, 2017

Welcome Relief for British Columbians with Student Loans

SURREY, BC – The Kwantlen Student Association (KSA) commends the BC government for lowering student loan interest rates from Prime plus 2.5% to Prime. Previously, BC charged the highest rate in Canada (alongside New Brunswick) and on August 1, 2017 we will join Alberta and Saskatchewan in only charging the prime rate on provincial student loans.

In his budget Speech on Tuesday, Finance Minister Mike de Jong stated “that every young person, irrespective of their family's financial circumstances, should have the opportunity to make their dream a reality by having access to the vocational institution, college, or university that will provide them with the education and skills training they require.” The Kwantlen Student Association agrees, **“which is why we believe that charging interest on student loans is unfair. It means that those who need to take out loans pay more for their education than those who do not”**, says Alex McGowan, KSA President and Vice President, External Affairs.

The reduction in interest rates will save students \$1,500 in the course of repaying the average loan, however those with student loans will still pay \$1,500 more for their education than those without. **“This is a strong first step to reduce the cost of education, and the KSA hopes that BC continues the national trend of reducing interest rates on student loans to zero percent”**, says McGowan.

While this is a great announcement for student borrowers, the KSA is disappointed that the provincial government has not taken this opportunity to invest in affordable housing for students. With over 10,000 students on housing waitlists in BC each year, funding student housing would ease demand for rental housing, and for heavily used public transit to get to universities. This could all be done at no cost to government if schools were simply allowed to borrow to build housing. The KSA hopes that the provincial government will continue to work with the Alliance of BC Students and post-secondary institutions to address the longstanding student housing crisis in our province.

-30-

For more information please contact:

Alex McGowan, President and VP External
Kwantlen Student Association
p 778.241.0599 | e president@kusa.ca

Nicki Simpson, Policy and Political Affairs
Kwantlen Student Association
p 604.599.2869 | e policy@kusa.ca

The KSA represents over 18,000 students at the four Metro Vancouver campuses of Kwantlen Polytechnic University.