



THE **LiNK**

le délit

NOV.

10

SPECIAL JOINT ISSUE

NUMÉRO COMMUN **SPÉCIAL**

Facts and Figures Behind Tuition Hikes / Faits et chiffres derrière la hausse des frais de scolarité

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Un mot:

Le 10 novembre 2011, *The Link*, *The McGill Daily* et *Le Délit* se réunissent dans un effort de solidarité pour rejoindre les milliers d'étudiants québécois qui manifesteront dans les rues. Lors de la manifestation, les trois journaux universitaires distribueront le cahier spécialement conçu pour l'occasion.

Ce n'est pas la première fois que les journaux étudiants produisent ensemble un numéro spécial. La dernière collaboration a eu lieu en réponse au massacre de 1989 de l'École Polytechnique, lorsque les étudiants se sont réunis pour coucher sur papier leurs émotions et leurs pensées.

Cette semaine, encore une fois, nous joignons nos forces alors que les étudiants du Québec vont écrire leur histoire dans le long combat qu'est la lutte pour l'accès à l'éducation.

Le nombre d'étudiants en grève et dans la rue en fait foi: la jeunesse d'aujourd'hui n'est pas la foule apathique, non-participative et manquant de solidarité que les politiciens espèrent.

Demander une meilleure accessibilité à l'éducation entre dans la ligne de pensée d'un investissement publique à long terme. C'est un combat pour un système de financement juste et pour un investissement dans le futur. Les étudiants ont compris qu'ils ne peuvent plus jouer les bouc-émissaires d'un système en déroute plus longtemps. Un vrai dialogue est requis.

Le 10 novembre pourrait être le coup d'envoi des actions contre la hausse des frais de scolarité et le partage d'information et la collaboration étudiante, qui à ce point, représente un pouvoir essentiel.

Nos journaux encouragent chacun de se tenir informé au sujet de ces enjeux: lisez, apprenez-en davantage sur vos droits et parlez en autour de vous. Cela n'est que le commencement dans les négociations étudiantes pour un meilleur avenir.

En toute solidarité en ce 10 novembre,

The Link, The McGill Daily & Le Délit

* La position prise dans cet éditorial ne fait pas l'unanimité au sein du conseil de rédaction du *Délit*.

A Word:

On Nov. 10, *The Link*, *The McGill Daily*, and *Le Délit* will come together and take to the streets in solidarity with thousands of university students across Quebec to distribute a copy of the special insert you're holding.

It's not the first time our student papers have been compelled to put out a joint paper. Our last collaboration was in 1989, after the Montreal Massacre at the École Polytechnique, when students "came together to put their thoughts and feelings on paper."

This week, we're joining forces as Quebec students are facing yet another historic moment in the ongoing fight to keep education accessible.

The sheer number of us declaring strikes and taking the streets on Nov. 10—over 100,000 were anticipated at press time—proves that youth today are not the self-interested, apathetic and non-participatory citizens policymakers hope we are.

Calling for accessibility to education recognizes the long-term public good. It's a fight for a fair funding model and for an investment in the future. Students have realized we cannot afford to be the scapegoat for a set of broken systems any longer and that real dialogue about alternatives at this point is mandatory.

Nov. 10 could very well be a tipping point in student action on tuition hikes. Sharing information and student collaboration at this moment is real and tangible power.

Our papers encourage everyone to get informed about the issues, understand your rights to strike and talk to each other. This is only the beginning of negotiating a better future for students.

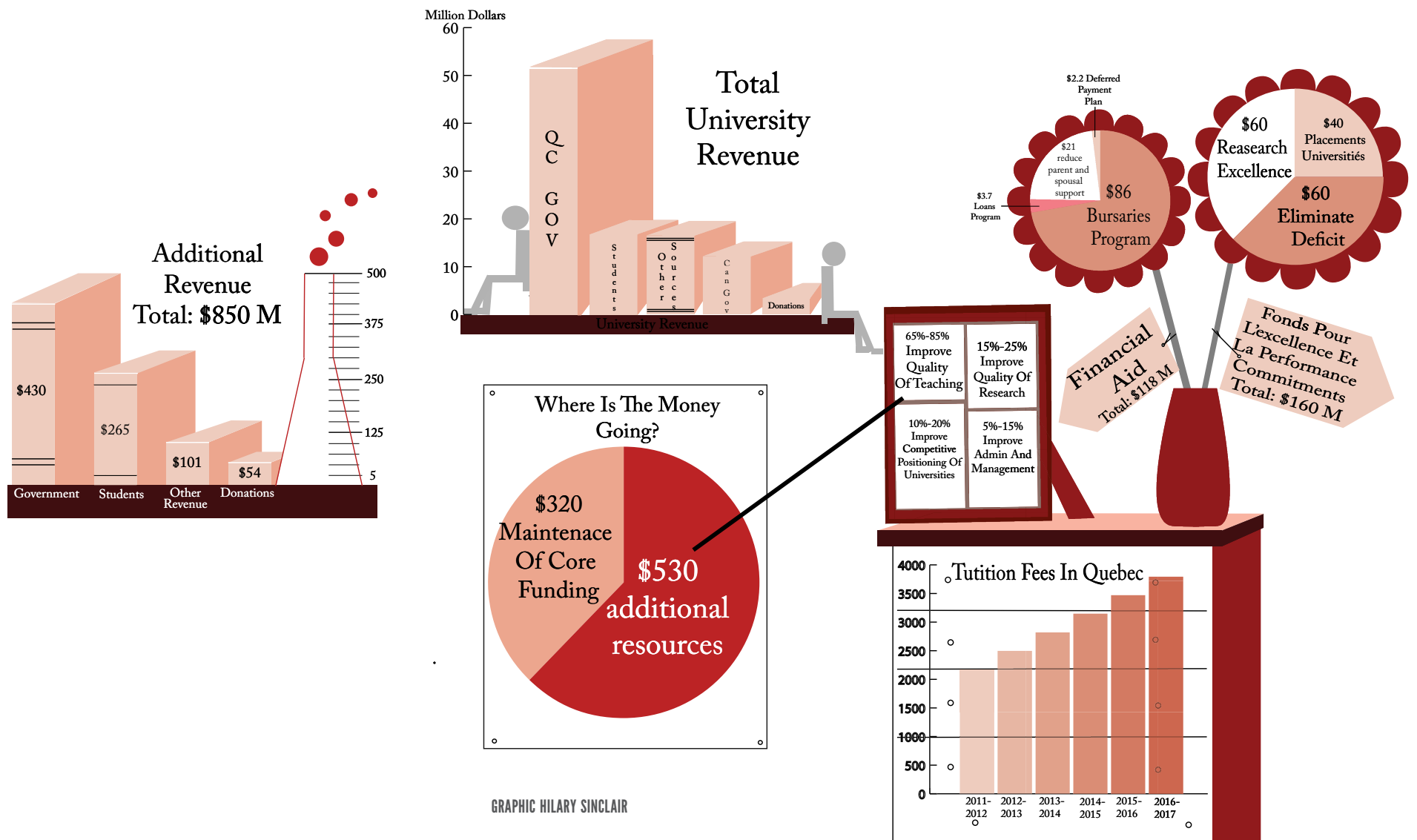
In Solidarity on Nov. 10,

The Link, The McGill Daily & Le Délit

* This editorial does not have unanimous support among the members of *Le Délit's* editorial board.

STATUS OF THE STRIKE

Université/University	Manifestation/Protest	Grève/Strike
UQAM	OUI/YES	OUI/YES
UDEM	OUI/YES	30 associations facultaires sur 82 ont voté pour la levée des cours. Certaines doivent voter la semaine prochaine.
CONCORDIA	OUI/YES	The Arts and Science students and the Graduate Students voted for the strike at their General Assemblies.
MCGILL	OUI/YES	No, but there is going to be a strike vote at the Faculty of Arts' (AUS) first GA, on November 8th.
UNIVERSITÉ DE SHERBROOKE	OUI/YES	3 associations facultaires ont approuvé une levée de cours, 2 associations facultaires doivent encore voter, sur 11 associations.
UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL	OUI/YES	3 des 80 associations facultaires et départementales ont voté pour la grève (AEEH, AGEPP-UL, AEEA-UL).
UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À TROIS-RIVIÈRES	OUI/YES	Non (Leurs membres ont voté non lors de l'Assemblée générale)
BISHOP	PAS DE RÉPONSE/NO ANSWER	
UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC EN ABITIBI-TÉMISCAMINGUE	OUI/YES	Non (Il y a eu une journée de grève régionale le 12 septembre pour protester contre la hausse)
UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À RIMOUSKI	OUI/YES	Levée de cours votée et approuvée
UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À CHICOUTIMI	OUI/YES	Levée de cours votée et approuvée
CÉGÉPS/CEGEP	OUI/YES	20 CÉGÉPs, sur les 48 du Québec ont déjà voté pour la grève. 6 CÉGÉPs doivent voter le 7 ou 8 novembre.



Breaking Down the Budget

How the Government Plans to Spend Our “Fair Share”

• HILARY SINCLAIR

—THE LINK

There are a lot of numbers flying around when it comes to the debate about tuition fees in Quebec right now—numbers like \$1,625 and \$325 and \$850 million.

But what do they actually mean? Before asking an entire province to go on strike against tuition hikes, it's important to understand what the numbers are saying. What does almost doubling our tuition get students?

In March, the Quebec government released “A Fair and Balanced University Funding Plan,” a document that called for students to pay their “fair share” of education costs.

To “give Quebec the means to fill its ambitions,” the 58-page budget outlined four key goals required to meet university funding needs, “fairly redistribute” the cost of education, ensure accessibility and “introduce performance commitments to improve quality of education.”

Crunching the Numbers

Tuition fees in Quebec have gone through two ice ages. From 1968 to 1991, fees were frozen at just over \$500 per year for full time undergraduate students. They rose to \$1,630 until 1994, and then remained frozen until 2007.

While restructuring tuition, the government also wants to close the province's \$483 million deficit. To do that, the government plans to raise more money from students and individuals. This arrangement hinges on “access to additional revenue of \$850 million in 2016-2017.”

How are they going to spend all this extra cash? The plan details \$530 million worth of programs slated to improve the quality of teaching and research.

More Money = Higher Quality?

Meant to keep universities accountable to the government, each school will develop and publish its own targets. In 2014, the province will conduct an in-depth review of the results. If targets have not been reached, the university is required to draft an action plan to help reach these goals... for a second time.

The budget also outlined “performance commitments”—five-year agreements between the province and universities that allow Quebec City to oversee how the new money is being spent.

The government expects schools to double donations by 2016 but hasn't come up with a plan to stimulate fundraising—except to match donations to individual institutions.

The province can only reach its goal of providing universities with \$850 million in extra money if \$54 million of that comes from donations. For that to happen, universities must increase the amount of donations they receive by eight per cent annually until 2017.

Currently, the government gives universities \$0.25 for every dollar donated, up to \$1 million per institution, and with a province-wide cap of \$10 million. The new plan will eliminate this ceiling.

But according to Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec President Martine Desjardins, universities in Quebec—and particularly francophone institutions—are already struggling to raise donations.

“When you ask for 20 per cent for each university, you know the

big universities can raise that from different groups, but in other regions, you cannot even raise 10 per cent. I think they won't be able to do it.”

In 2010, Concordia received \$8.9 million in donations.

The plan will give \$0.50 per dollar to universities with 15,000-plus students and will match smaller universities dollar for dollar. If they fail to reach the eight per cent goal, however, universities only get \$0.25 per dollar.

Target Taskmaster

The budget also established the Fonds pour l'excellence et la performance universitaire, a body which is intended to make sure that funds are spent properly and targets are met. With a \$160 million mandate to ensure universities raise donations by eight per cent annually, the Fonds has a lot on its plate.

Despite clear purposes to match donations, eliminate deficits and support research excellence, the budget doesn't detail the body's administrative costs or explain who will oversee its operations. Without someone to keep an eye on things, how can the province guarantee how student money will be spent?

A Fair and Balanced Plan?

While some features of this budget could benefit students and improve the quality of post-secondary education, many questions remain.

There are questions like why the tuition levels of 1968 were so optimal that we should return to them, questions about who is going to oversee the distribution of funds and questions about what real motivation universities have to make performance deals with the province.

When a budget is drafted that directly affects students and is supposed to help students get a better education, it would not be unreasonable to assume the government would be eager to defend and promote its plan.

That is not the case, however. Despite numerous interview requests, the Ministry of Education and Finance Ministry were unwilling to clarify aspects of the budget.

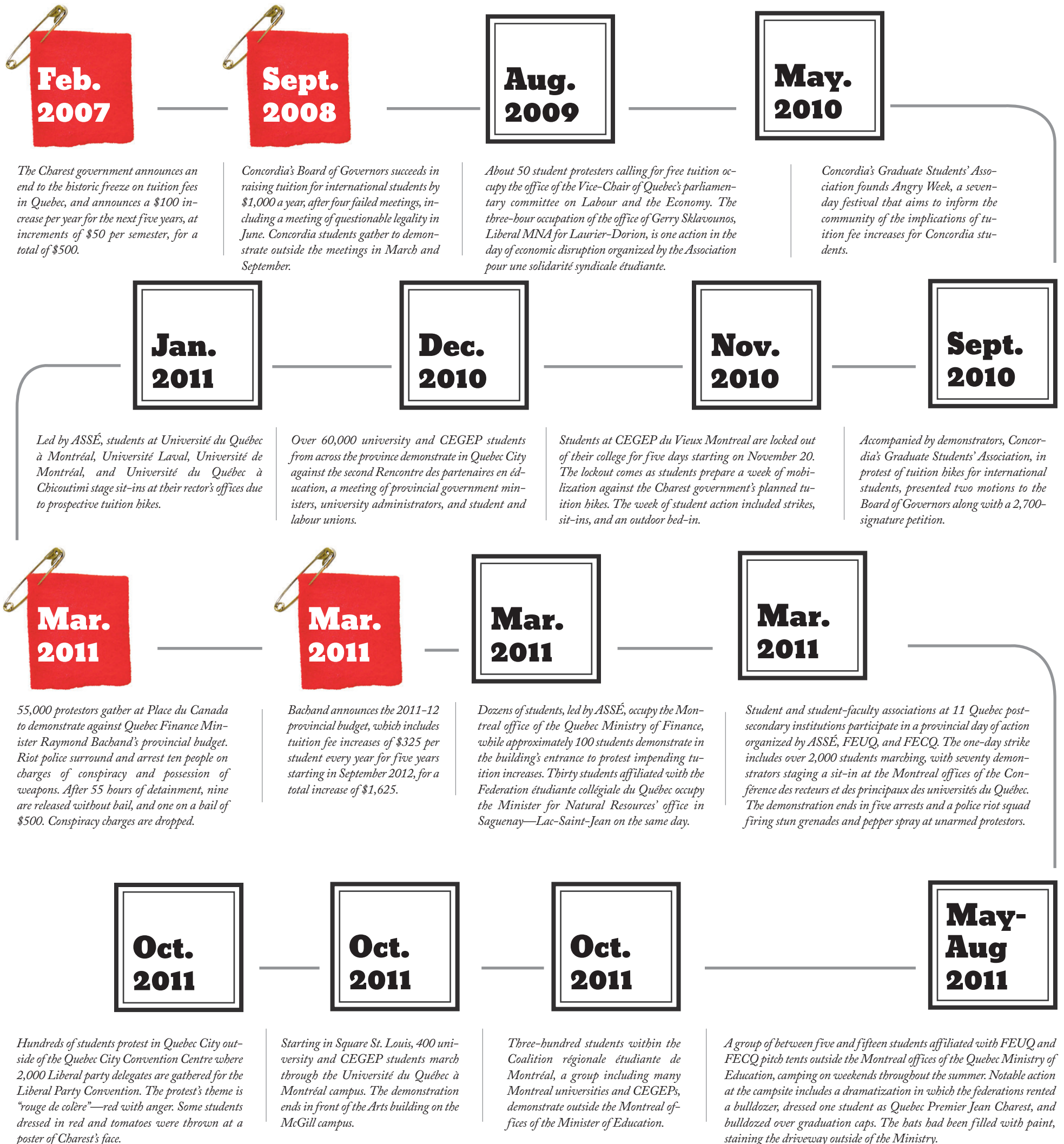
It is your choice to strike on Nov. 10. Consider the numbers and make an informed decision. At the end of the day, are we getting what we are paying for.

—with files from Andrew Brennan

Tuition Timeline

Student Mobilization Against Quebec's Tuition Hikes

– Compiled by Erin Hudson,
The McGill Daily



Another Way to Pay

Student Groups: University Price Tag Doesn't Have To Rise

ANDREW BRENNAN—
THE LINK

With students energized and united by student unions and lobby groups against the Charest government's proposed tuition hikes, funding alternatives—like free education, or at least reasonable fees and better governance—are being proposed.

But adequate funding alternatives will require a major overhaul, as well as an ideological one, to make this happen.

"It is a question of political will," said Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois, communications secretary for the student lobby group L'Association pour une solidarité syndicale étudiante.

"[The province] has the money to do it, but must decide where [they're] going to take it. From students already paying? Or, [from] where it is: big corporations and rich people."

Holly Nazar, of Free Education Montreal, similarly said there are "a bunch of places where taxes are practically non-existent, or actually are."

Citing figures from research think-tank L'Institut de recherche et d'information socio-économique, Nazar indicated that increasing taxes on the financial capital of banking institutions from 0.98 per cent to 1.5 per cent would generate

\$271 million in revenue—\$6 million more than the funds to come from increasing tuition fees.

According to IRIS, the provincial government lost \$950 million in potential revenue by cutting household taxes in 2007 that "especially favoured the most affluent individuals."

Since 2000, the Quebec government has implemented over \$5 billion in tax relief for corporations and individual incomes. A free-education model, according to IRIS, would cost \$700 million annually in funding to implement.

This is in addition to maintaining core funding, which the Quebec Government has valued at \$320 million in their proposed university-funding plan.

FEM calculated the cost to implement free education and maintain core funding to be \$1.22 billion annually, a mere two per cent of Quebec's annual budget.

More Accessible to Whom?

Nazar explained that policy in *la belle province* has recently shifted towards catering to economic interests rather than the public good.

"There is a perception that Quebec is socialist," said Nazar, "but we are looking out for the concerns of corporations and the rich, and we're even rewarding private money infiltrating into universities by offering them incentives to do so."

Though proponents of the tuition fee increase promise to maintain accessibility in attaining higher education training, this is double-peak, according to Nazar. Increasing tuition fees lowers enrollment, she said bluntly—no matter what.

"Just repeat the lie. Repeat over and over that accessibility won't suffer. Where's the evidence?"

In late October, the British Broadcast Corporation reported that following a £6,000 raise in tuition by the government for 2012, applications to English universities dropped nine per cent.

Desjardins said she also believes lower fees will result in a more-accessible education system, but that we must know all the facts before proceeding in any direction, which is why the Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec is lobbying to continue the tuition freeze, so that policy makers, advocates and students alike have time to see the implications of changing tuition fees.

As she prepares for Thursday's province-wide demonstration, Nazar ultimately wants students to be more aware and united. If not, accessible education will not be possible.

"Concordia students need to realize that it's not about \$325 a [semester], it's about getting fucked over. I imagine many people can pay the increase, but that's not the point—many more cannot."

>>THREE OPTIONS FOR ALTERNATIVE FUNDING

These propositions from FEM would have the wealthy help fund free education through higher taxes, while accounting for necessary funding. This would cost \$1.22 billion annually.

01

Immediately start taxing 100 per cent of capital gains, or the profit a company sees from their own assets such as stock and property acquisition, instead of just 50 per cent, which is the current policy of the province. This could create \$346 million in potential funding. Further, return income tax to pre-2007, yielding \$950 million.

02

Tax Quebec's \$346 million in capital gains and raise \$702 million from raising taxes by 1.4 per cent on the financial capital of banks to 2.4 per cent. In the second year, increase taxes on highest-income earners from 24 to 25.4 per cent, generating \$294 million.

03

Increase financial capital taxes from 0.98 per cent to 2.4 per cent, raising an additional \$702 million. Raise the taxes on the highest-income earners in this province from 24 per cent to 26 per cent—which would make for an additional \$420 million. This leaves \$100 million to be accounted for by other government funding plans already in place.

Les Échos du Passé

• ANABEL COSSETTE
CIVITELLA

—LE DÉLIT

Les manifestations qui débutent le 10 novembre 2011 n'ont rien d'une révolution. Il suffit de se rappeler la mobilisation étudiante de 2005 pour y entendre des échos familiers.

L'année scolaire 2004-2005 reste marquée d'un X dans le calendrier des manifestations étudiantes.

En réplique à une coupure de \$103 millions dans les programmes de prêts et bourses, l'insurrection étudiante ne s'était pas fait attendre: une grève de sept semaines et 230,000 personnes dans les rues avaient finalement eu raison de la tentative du gouvernement libéral qui avait rendu les armes et les \$103 millions en mars 2005.

CONTEXTE À COMPARER

Simon Grandjean-Lapierre, à titre de Président de l'Association des Étudiants du Collège Lionel-Groulx, était monté aux barricades durant l'année scolaire 2004-2005 pour contester les coupures.

Il se souvient du contexte politique de l'époque: «Le gouvernement était fraîchement élu de 2003, il n'y avait donc pas de grogne comme en ce moment, et certainement pas autant de protestations.»

Quant au contexte médiatique, l'une des plus grandes différences perçues par Laurent Gauthier, actuel Vice-Président aux affaires universitaires à la Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec, demeure dans la présence des médias: «En 2004, le sujet sortait moins dans les médias parce que le mouvement étudiant publiait moins de recherche.»

En effet, en publiant des rapports chiffrés sur l'endettement étudiant, la FEUQ s'attire plus de partisans qui peuvent fonder leur engagement sur des faits tangibles.

L'influence des gains du passé

Récupérer les \$103 millions demandés, après sept semaines de grève, Simon Grandjean-Lapierre qualifie cela de «gain symbolique».

En effet, si les \$103 millions n'ont finalement pas été déduits du programme de prêts et bourses, «on ne faisait que récupérer l'argent qui nous appartenait, nuance-

t-il. De plus, le total en jeu était minime sur le budget du gouvernement».

Toutefois, d'après l'ancien président du collège Lionel-Groulx, le message était clair: la solidarité fait bouger les choses.

Pier-André Bouchard St-Amand, président de la FEUQ en 2004-2005 soutient qu'il y a eu autant de gains positifs que négatifs suite à cette grande manifestation. Le retour des 103 millions était évidemment très important, puisque c'était le fondement de la campagne. «Il y a aussi eu une prise de conscience collective. Les étudiants avaient l'impression de participer au débat civique.»

Par contre, la conviction d'avoir accompli une grande avancée s'est dissipée avec le temps. L'ancien homme fort de la FEUQ avait notamment l'impression que la jeunesse qui s'était levée allait prendre des mesures pour changer le paysage politique après 2005.

«Après huit ans avec les libéraux, on voit que ce n'est pas vrai. Les circonstances ne sont plus les mêmes.»

Les acteurs du changement

Si la communauté universitaire restera toujours contre toute forme de hausse des frais ou de coupures budgétaires, qu'en est-il de ceux qui ne sont pas directement touchés?

Le corps enseignant, par le biais de la Fédération Québécoise des professeurs et professeurs d'université s'insurgeait contre les coupures en 2004-2005 et s'inquiète encore aujourd'hui des conséquences de la hausse des frais.

À l'opposé, traditionnellement, la Conférence des recteurs et des principaux des universités du Québec, suit les décisions du gouvernement en place.

Le citoyen moyen, quant à lui, réagit différemment en fonction du combat mené.

«La société civile n'était pas impliquée de la même manière en 2005, puisque les coupures dans les prêts et bourses, soit l'aide aux plus pauvres, bouleversaient toute la société» tient à souligner Laurent Gauthier, Vice-Président actuel aux affaires universitaires de la FEUQ.

«Aujourd'hui, c'est un combat plus idéologique qui rallie les étudiants» souligne-t-il.

Pier-André Bouchard St-Amand

voit plutôt la hausse de \$1625 en cinq ans comme une stratégie en défaveur des libéraux en comparaison avec les coupures de 103 millions: «Lorsque le gouvernement a touché aux prêts et bourses, il a seulement atteint une parcelle de la population.

«Maintenant qu'il touche 100 pour cent des gens, il suscite un potentiel de mécontentement bien plus grand».

Et maintenant...

Pour ceux qui manifesteront cette année, Simon Grandjean-Lapierre y va d'un conseil: ne pas avoir peur des mythes et médisances politiques.

Par exemple, le gouvernement menaçait les étudiants en grève de retenir leur diplôme, de faire payer les sessions supplémentaires, etc. «Évidemment, ce ne sont jamais des choses qui se concrétisent» assure-t-il.

Il ne faut tout de même pas oublier qu'il y a toujours des limites à ne pas dépasser. «C'est correct de manifester, mais il faut faire la part des choses; l'acharnement des manifestants n'apporte jamais rien de plus».

Know Your Rights

The International Student Perspective on Prolonged Strikes

• JULIA JONES—
THE LINK

Being an international student in Quebec means you are required to be a full-time student every semester except the year you're graduating in order to legally stay in the country—paying, by far, the highest tuition fees in the province.

As of next year, it could get even worse. If students decide to go on an indefinite general strike in 2012 over the winter semester, international students could stand to lose over \$10,000 in tuition fees.

If the union holds the vote for a strike early enough and students drop out of winter classes in preparation for a strike semester, international students in support of the strike can choose to either take the hit and lose the semester, or to take the semester off and go back home.

As Nov. 10 approaches and students prepare to fill Montreal's streets in protest of a \$325 yearly increase for the next five years, international students can say they've done less for worse.

At Concordia, international students' tuition has been increasing by 35 per cent a year since 2005-2006, including unannounced hikes for all international students. It increased by 50 per cent for John Molson School of Business gradu-

ate students in 2009.

Currently, tuition fees for undergraduate international students in Art & Sciences can be over \$20,000.

With numbers this high, you would think international students would be the first to speak up against tuition hikes. But with more at stake than other students, they might be shy to come out and protest for fear of the consequences.

According to Nadia Hausfather, a Concordia graduate student and member of Free Education Montreal, a popular concern for international students is the loss of their study permits in the event of a prolonged strike.

"The only risk in terms of [losing their study permit] is if by chance a student had to renew their study permit during a strike," she said, however. "If that happened they'd have to prove that it wasn't their intent to join the strike, which they could easily do, so that's very minimal."

Another common misconception is that during an indefinite general strike, students wouldn't be registered for classes.

"[Being registered] is the power that [students] have—if they lose a semester, the whole entire system would be delayed by one semester," explained Hausfather.

"The whole point of [striking] is threatening the government with the risk of losing a semester. They will always threaten back that students will lose a semester. But of course neither students nor the government want to lose a semester."

This means international students can keep their jobs if they have an off-campus work permit, but in terms of on-campus jobs, it would be up to each student and the general assembly voting for the strike to decide whether students want to keep working.

Another misconception about student strikes is that since students have a union, they have academic amnesty and their transcripts will not be affected.

"Other than a democratic vote and a resolution, there is nothing that legally protects students who are on strike—at all," said Concordia Student Union President Lex Gill.

"A binding mandate from an accredited student association puts a significant amount of pressure on the university administration to accommodate that, but there's no specific legal status to a student union that goes on strike."

Concordia spokesperson Chris Mota said that a student strike, even if prolonged, would not

change the university's routine.

"It will be business as usual at Concordia. Professors will continue to teach and students will be expected to attend classes; all academic requirements of a course remain valid and students are expected to fulfill them."

The same will apply for international students, even though the administration has not looked into the issue of legality of study and work permits.

Even more common is the misconception that students don't have to pay student fees while on strike. For very pragmatic reasons, students are not asked to refrain from paying fees. "It's hard to get everyone to not pay their fees, and then there is a huge consequence in terms of having to pay interest," said Hausfather.

To international students afraid of losing a whole semester's worth of fees, it can be helpful to look at Concordia's participation in previous strikes. Hausfather said that losing a semester is not something students should worry about.

"In the history of general unlimited strikes, students have never lost a semester," she said. "Students who had flights booked [made] arrangements with their professors to be able to take their flight home and still finish their work. Usually

the semester is prolonged for a little bit for people to catch up."

Despite international students paying higher fees than Quebecers and Canadians, the proposed increase of \$1,625 would be a much smaller proportion of international students' tuition.

"I can understand the argument that [a general unlimited strike] would be perhaps less convincing to international students," said Hausfather. "That being said, I know from international students that any increase—even \$30—is really difficult, partly because they're already paying so much extra."

Concordia administration, however, isn't buying the possibility of a prolonged strike come wintertime.

"There won't be a prolonged strike," said Mota. "From my experience, that has never been an issue at Concordia. When students do participate in a strike, it's usually a one-day strike, in solidarity; I've been here for 18 years and I've never seen a prolonged student strike."

Hausfather said she'd like to challenge students to prove Mota wrong. "Things are looking up," she said. "It depends on Concordia students and their ability to not only think about their own education, but the role of education in the rest of society."

Tuition, Participation Linked After All

Finance Minister Relies on Incomplete Figures for Arguments

• ERIN HUDSON—
THE MCGILL DAILY

Since the end of the province-wide tuition freeze in 2007, the Quebec government has held a strong position on tuition fees, stating that students must pay more to "their fair share" towards university funding, while maintaining accessibility to universities will not be compromised as a result of the increases.

On Sept. 22, the Comité consultatif sur l'accessibilité financière aux études released an opinion on the increases, stating they were "worried about the possible negative effects of the hikes on the financial accessibility for current and future students to university studies."

Under the Loi sur le Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, the Minister of Education must consult CCAFE whenever changes are

made to student financial aid or tuition regulations.

Prior to the CCAFE's concerns, Finance Minister Raymond Bachand addressed accessibility concerns in a March speech when he announced the impending hikes.

"To those who fear this adjustment will act as a deterrent on university participation, I have this to say: there is no evidence of a link between university participation and tuition fees," said Bachand.

"In fact, in 2008-2009, the Canadian province with the highest university participation rate of students 20 to 24 years old was precisely the one with the highest tuition fees—Nova Scotia."

Philippe Lapointe, secretary of academic affairs for l'Association pour une solidarité syndicale étudiante, spoke regarding about the government's denial of the relationship between university participation and tuition hikes.

"The principal argument used by the government to say there is no link between [tuition increases and student participation] is that they show the post-secondary statistics.

"They say, 'Look, in Quebec, we have the lowest tuition and there are fewer students at the university, while in the rest of Canada, there are higher tuitions and there are more post-secondary students,'" Lapointe explained. "Where this is wrong is that they do not include the CEGEP students."

Research conducted by the Montreal-based Institut de recherche et d'informations socio-économiques challenges the numbers that show that Nova Scotia has higher participation rates while also charging the highest tuition fees.

Asserting Bachand's claim does not account for differences be-

tween the provinces' education systems, the IRIS believes the numbers "render ineffective comparisons that focus only on university participation rates."

Removing CEGEP students from the university participation figures disregards students seeking a vocational diploma and who opt for a college education rather than go to university, as they would have to in Nova Scotia, according to the research.

The IRIS also noted that Quebec's bachelor degree programs last three years, while the rest of Canada's bachelor programs last four, "artificially [raising] their university participation rate compared to Quebec's."

Mathieu Le Blanc, press attaché for the Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec, confirmed that the university participation rate in Nova Scotia is overstated.

Le Blanc also explained that research shows a large number of students attending university in Nova Scotia are from other Maritime provinces, thus raising the province's university participation rates.

IRIS researcher Éric Martin said that the relationship between tuition hikes and enrolment "has been confirmed in several different scenarios" and that Quebec's rate of postsecondary participation is 9 per cent higher than the rest of Canada's.

According to IRIS, the province's tuition fees—among the lowest in North America—have allowed 85,000 more students to pursue their education than would have been possible if Quebec's fees had matched the Canadian average.

For more information, consult tuitiontruth.ca.

Oui à l'excellence

• FRANCIS L.-RACINE—*LE DÉLIT*

La hausse des frais de scolarité n'est pas un objectif en soi. C'est plutôt un moyen pour que les institutions postsecondaires québécoises atteignent des standards d'excellence. L'enjeu essentiel reste donc de conjuguer la hausse des frais de scolarité avec le principe d'accessibilité des études postsecondaires pour tous les Québécois.

Le problème du sous-financement des institutions postsecondaires ne pourra pas être résolu uniquement par l'effort des étudiants. L'augmentation de la contribution étudiante fait partie de la solution dans le plan gouvernemental de financement des universités qui vise \$850 millions en 2016-2017.

Ainsi, le gouvernement libéral demande la participation des étudiants universitaires, mais aussi de l'ensemble de la société. Présentement, la contribution des étudiants à leur formation dans les provinces du Canada est en moyenne de 25 pour cent du coût réel; elle est de 12,7 pour cent au Québec.

La volonté du gouvernement du Québec de hausser les frais de scolarité est fondée sur une plus grande participation des étudiants à l'investissement dans leur avenir.

À la suite de la hausse des frais de scolarité, les étudiants contribueront à 16,9 pour cent du coût de leur formation, loin derrière la moyenne canadienne de 25 pour cent et loin derrière le pourcentage de la contribution des étudiants québécois en 1964-1965 avec 26,4 pour cent de leur formation.

Cependant, pour mettre un terme aux querelles «gèle-dégèle», le gouvernement du Québec et les acteurs de la société devront s'asseoir ensemble et décider d'un taux de contribution socialement acceptable de manière à ce que, dans l'éventualité d'une nouvelle hausse, elle soit absorbée proportionnellement au niveau de contribution fixé, sans désengagement de l'État.

Toutefois, il est primordial que tout argent supplémentaire versé par les étudiants soit réinvesti dans le réseau afin d'avoir un réel impact sur la qualité de la formation offerte. Prenons le plan de financement des universités de \$850 millions en 2016-2017. Le gouvernement investira plus de la moitié du montant à hauteur de \$430 millions.

Avec la hausse des frais de scolarité, l'effort

étudiant se chiffrera à \$332 millions; de ce chiffre 35 pour cent seront retranchés pour être directement investis dans le programme d'aide financière aux études, soit \$116 millions.

Ainsi, les étudiants contribueront à hauteur de \$265 millions au plan de financement des universités. Par la suite, \$101 millions proviendront des revenus additionnels des universités et \$54 millions des dons des entreprises.

Plusieurs nouvelles mesures seront mises en place pour accentuer l'accessibilité aux études.

Le gouvernement compte compenser la hausse des frais de scolarité pour les étudiants bénéficiaires du programme de prêts et bourses notamment par plus de bourses, une augmentation de l'aide financière, en révisant à la hausse la contribution demandée aux parents et au conjoint, et par l'actualisation du programme de remboursement différé.

Cependant, une autre solution d'accessibilité peut être envisagée. Celle de la Commission-Jeunesse du Parti libéral du Québec vise à s'assurer du respect du principe d'accessibilité en se dotant d'un mode de Remboursement Proportionnel au Revenu accessible à tous les étudiants.

Il s'agit d'une forme de remboursement des prêts étudiants fondé sur la capacité financière d'une personne à s'acquitter de sa dette.

En fait, il permettrait à n'importe quel étudiant de rembourser la différence entre ses frais de scolarité actuels et ceux qui lui seraient facturés après une hausse, seulement au moment de son entrée sur le marché du travail.

Le système du RPR donne plus de souplesse dans le remboursement de la dette et il réduit le risque d'étudier dans un domaine où la rentabilité ou la réussite est incertaine.

Le RPR est une mesure plus progressiste que le système actuel de remboursement des prêts étudiants et qui assurera l'accessibilité aux études supérieures pour tous.

En somme, si chaque acteur y met du sien, nous assurerons la survie et l'accessibilité du réseau d'éducation publique pour les générations futures. En allant dans cette voie, on s'inscrit sans aucun doute dans un mode solution et pas en mode manifestation!

Tuition Hikes Shall Not Pass!

• PHILIPPE LAPOINTE—
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS SECRETARY, ASSÉ

Great Britain, Chile, South Korea, the rest of Canada, and now Québec. The flood of tariffs threatens to drown every single island of knowledge accessibility to please the rising tide of knowledge merchandising.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the G20 and the right wing think-tanks join up to promote the ideology of private, student-financed education.

The concept of user as payer is described as a solution to the lack of funding for universities. However it's never pointed out that repeated tax cuts and the "income reduction" strategy used by neoliberal governments is responsible for the state disengagement in public university funding.

They also fail to address the reorientation of our universities. Universities are currently split between two models: one dedicated to teaching and academic research, and another dedicated to applied corporate research.

If the first model lacks funding and suffers from overcrowded classrooms, lack of teachers and aging libraries, it's because the second model overflows with income.

Before reinvesting massively in the universities, we should secure the use of the funds toward free public education. If it is essential that university education be accessible for everyone, it is crucial that it respects its original mission: education. Not only do we refuse to pay for a right, but we will not pay to benefit corporations.

Education is neither a luxury nor an individual investment. It's a right and a social choice. This hike, as well as the whole concept of tuition fees, spoils the accessibility to public education by imposing a material barrier between knowledge and students. It cannot and shall not pass.

Organize. Your student association is yours. Take it, participate in the general assembly, and if there is none, petition for one. Whatever your association is, make sure it is a democratic arena for discussion and decision-making.

Once this is done, get your association to work. A Mob Squad, an Anti-Tuition Council, or whatever name you want to give it. The important thing is that people hear what you have to say—and as often as possible.

Rise Up. On Nov. 10, stand up, walk to Émilie-Gamelin Park and join students from all over Quebec in an epic demonstration to express your opposition to the tuition hikes.

We have to be as numerous as possible. This is an ultimatum, the final notice to the government to say, "Hell, no!"

The demonstration needs to prove that we have the upper hand in the discussion. We need to prove that our potential for action is strong enough to flood Montreal's streets and overwhelm the government's policies. We need to show the population that we are resolute, that we are serious and that we aren't afraid to act to defend our rights.

Resist. Once we are organized and risen to send our ultimate message, we have to think about the next step. In the quite likely eventuality that the government does not bend, there's only one way to resist against tuition hikes—a general strike.

This winter we shall be prepared to occupy our campuses, disrupt the *status quo*, take the streets and reaffirm our opposition to the hikes. It is time to debate in your local general assembly if you are prepared to vote for a strike this winter and join thousands of students in a common cause for accessible public education.

Students, hear this call to organize, rise up and resist. This trend needs to be opposed everywhere. Facing this attempt to sabotage education, we have our answer—a general strike.

Probing the Propaganda

• JULIAN WARD & ANDREW SCHARTMANN—*THE LINK*

"With tuition rates expected to skyrocket, it's important for everyone to be informed about government cut-backs and tuition hikes," reads a pamphlet distributed by the Concordia Student Union.

We couldn't agree more, so we dissected the CSU pamphlet to test its accuracy. And it's a good thing we did! The document is fraught with informational errors—some vague, some misleading and others outright false.

The over 20 unsourced statements and statistics made for a difficult task, but this didn't stop us from unearthing many of the pamphlet's inaccuracies.

***EDUCATION IS A RIGHT! 30,000 STUDENTS WILL LOSE ACCESS TO EDUCATION DUE TO THIS TUITION FEE INCREASE.**

* If we stand together we can make sure that doesn't happen

This claim is supported by the following logic: If Quebec's tuition is raised to the national average, the province's participation rate will fall accordingly, thus eliminating 30,000 students. By the same logic, one would expect Ontario, which has the highest tuition rates in the country, to have the lowest rate of participation. This, however, is not the case.

***THE GOV'T ALLOCATES FINANCIAL AID UNDER THE ASSUMPTION A STUDENT CAN SURVIVE ON \$7 A DAY**

* Still today the program considers access to the Internet and transportation as a luxury expenses and does not cover it. Students are still graduating with massive debt.

This is entirely misleading. The statement reads as though the government is only giving out \$7 a day for all expenses when in fact the FEUQ document from which we believe this was taken says the government allocates \$7 per day for food only. This is also disingenuous because the source of this info is yet another FEUQ document, which itself isn't sourced.

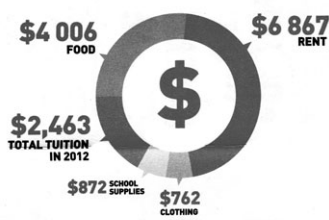
*** HIGHER TUITION FEES DO NOT EQUAL A BETTER EDUCATION.**

* In Europe, for example, tuition fees are low, but education remains excellent. Since 2007, Quebec students have seen their bill increase \$500. Is there a difference in quality of teaching, or class room sizes? No. On the other hand, presidents and upper management have seen a substantial increase in their salaries. Concordia alone has given out over \$2.5 million in severance packages over the past 5 years.

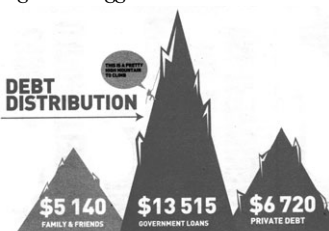
This \$500 increase affects ancillary fees, not tuition. Ancillary fees do not fund reductions in classroom size or improved teaching—to imply so is dishonest.

Also, tuition in Europe varies greatly from country to country; some provide practically free education, while others have quite high tuition fees (in comparison to the Canadian average). The sweeping generalization that a European education is "excellent" is also highly suspect. Prove it!

STUDENT EXPENDITURES BREAKDOWN (2012)



In 2010, the average yearly food budget for a student was \$3,294 according to the FEUQ. Even if the FEUQ's inflation rate of 4.8 per cent is applied over two years, the total is only \$3,618. And the price of tuition in 2012 is actually \$2,493. If the CSU cannot get the cost of tuition right, how can we trust the other uncited numbers? Also, who spends \$762 on clothing and struggles with tuition?



WTF do these numbers even mean?

For a full breakdown of the CSU pamphlet, go to thelinknewspaper.ca

To Strike or Not to Strike?

• COREY POOL—
THE LINK

The fight against tuition increases has finally come to a head, but a great divide still exists between students who understand the issue and those who don't.

Regardless of your political stance, in the next few days we all have to make a conscious decision on whether to join the movement or not.

Before we make that decision, we need to understand just where this movement is going, what our rights are as students, and what we can expect out of the next few weeks.

 **Remember, Remember, the 10th of November**

On Nov. 10, tens of thousands of students from across Quebec are expected to descend upon Montreal to take part in what is shaping up to be a historical day of action against the provinces proposed tuition fee increases.

Students from nearly every university and CEGEP across Quebec will be rolling into town to march to Jean Charest's office

in a demonstration that intends to send a clear and unavoidable message to the Premier.

"This is a province-wide movement, a province-wide demonstration, and a province-wide campaign against tuition increases," said Concordia Student Union VP External Chad Walcott. "Pretty much every post-secondary school across Quebec will be in Montreal [on Nov. 10]."

On Nov. 3, graduate and undergraduate members of Concordia's Arts and Science Federation of Associations officially joined the movement by voting in favor of a one-day strike mandate for the Nov. 10.

"[The strike mandate] is more of a symbolic gesture to the government to show that students really are starting to mobilize," said Nadia Hausfather, graduate student at Concordia and active member of Free Education Montreal.

"It's very practical because it encourages students to leave class on Nov. 10." Symbolic or not, a movement against tuition hikes carries no weight without student participation.

"Students need to understand that nothing can happen if they're not involved," said Haus-

father. "Any action and any general assembly that takes place will be nonsense without their support."

"Strikes are our strongest weapon," said Walcott. "They're really the only weapon we have as students to express our dissatisfaction with these issues. It's our means of applying pressure, and showing resolve."

It sends a clear message to the media, to the public, and even to politicians, saying, "Now we're pissed off, now we're missing out on school, and we're putting a lot of time and money on the line for change."

 **Know Your Rights (Or Lack Thereof)**

Earlier in the semester, a letter written by Concordia's Provost David Graham and approved by Interim President Frederick Lowy was circulated throughout various departments at the university. In it, Graham asks that faculty show "flexibility and leniency" toward students participating in the day of action on Nov. 10.

"[The letter] was not a request for academic amnesty," explains Graham. "I can't

authorize an academic amnesty, I can't demand or impose one, and the CSU is aware of that."

Graham points out that despite the letter, faculty are protected by their rights to academic freedom, which allows them full rights to refuse amnesty to students missing class for reasons that are not deemed legitimate by the university's standards.

"Individual faculty members have the right to decide what they're going to do, and how they are going to conduct their courses," said Graham. "As long as they are operating within university regulations I cannot, nor will I override that [...] It is [the faculty's] right to say no."

In short, this means that students are required to be in class on Nov. 10, strike or no strike. Unless you receive permission from your instructor that pardons your absence, you are responsible for whatever classes that are missed, and similarly responsible for the consequences.

"Students need to know that there is no official protection for them," said Graham. "They are free to behave as they wish, obviously within the limits of the law, with the knowledge that there may be consequences."



"Our Final Exam"

This Thursday is set to be a momentous event in the history of Quebec student movements.

With a head of steam gathered from successful movements like the student strikes of 2005, and rumors circulating that the government is already feeling the pressure of these movements, many are looking to the 10th as the stepping-stone to putting an end to these increases.

"Nov. 10 can be thought of as our final exam," said Walcott.

"If we pass it we go on to the next semester, and then more mobilization and more campaigning will follow. If we don't succeed on Nov. 10 then we fail, and that's it."

For Walcott, Concordia's reputation of activism and community engagement has been lost over the years.

"It's important that we bring that back," he said.

"The whole world is going through big changes, and this is a historical time, so why not get in on it? Things are happening."

Misallocation of Funds Not in Students' Interests

• HENRY GASS—
THE MCGILL DAILY

As tuition steadily increases, both the Quebec and Canadian governments are doing little to bolster student aid programs, with private and political interests converging at the expense of mounting student debt.

According to Students' Society of McGill University VP External Joël Pedneault, "There's no way to justify the current financial aid system in Quebec."

Pedneault argued the structure of Quebec's Aide financière aux études leads to the misallocation of millions of dollars of student aid.

Quebec students paying in-province tuition are eligible to take out loans from private banks and credit unions and have the Quebec government pay all interest on the loan until six months after the student's graduation.

"A huge chunk of the financial aid budget goes straight to banks, and when you think that the government could just be allocating that money straight towards universities to, for instance, lower tuition fees—which would mean that students would actually incur less debt—well, that means they wouldn't have to incur interest payments," said Pedneault.

According to a October 2009 study conducted by the Institut de recherche et d'informations socio-économiques, in the 2007-2008 fiscal year the Quebec government spent 45 per cent of the AFE budget on interest payments to the tune of \$79.6 million.

Pedneault added that a large portion Quebec's promised \$118 million "reinvestment" in financial aid will come from new tuition revenue paid by students, 35 per cent of which the government is committing to financial aid.

The Quebec government's 2011-12 budget states, "Students must shoulder their fair share of the effort made in regard to university education. In addition, it is essential for the government that the implementation of the funding plan does not jeopardize students' access to a university education."

A Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec report published last month revealed that students will be financing 98 per cent of the government "reinvestment" by 2018, when this round of tuition hikes ends.

In turn, the report claims that Quebec's total contribution to the financial aid budget will drop from roughly 48 per cent in 2010 to around seven per cent in 2018.

"The provincial government is

currently trying to withdraw funding from the [AFE], as it preaches the importance of an educated population for the future of Quebec," stated the FEUQ report in French.

Another financial aid situation unfolding at the federal level involves the \$15 billion ceiling set by the Canada Student Financial Assistance Act, which dictates how much money the federal government is allowed to distribute in loans to students.

According to Canadian Federation of Students National Chairperson Roxanne Dubois, the government did not expect to reach the ceiling until at least 2016. She said the expected date for passing the ceiling is now January 2013.

"It can only be assumed that some changes are coming down the pipes to the [act]," she said.

Dubois described three possible changes to the act: the cap could be increased, it could be removed, or the federal government could stop giving out student loans altogether. She said students would carry most of the cost for each option.

"If we're no longer giving out loans, [...] fewer students will be able to have access to that help to pay for their tuition fees," said Dubois.

"We also have to think about the

impacts of increasing the ceiling, lifting or removing the ceiling, because that money eventually is just passed on to the backs of students in the form of student debt," she said.

In an email to *The McGill Daily*, a spokesperson from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada stated that, "The Government of Canada will ensure that students continue to have full access to student loans, now and into the future."

The representative stated in October that regulation of the lending portfolio, as opposed to legislation, provides greater flexibility and makes it easier for the government to ensure students will have full access to loans.

"Obviously there's a more long-term solution, which is to recognize that the federal government has a role to play in guaranteeing a minimum level of access to post-secondary education," said Dubois.

One solution—the Canadian Post-Secondary Education Act—is currently being debated in the House of Commons.

"We would see [that act] as a framework that would give the federal government some guidelines as to where the provincial governments should invest the money that's going to education, to pre-

vent cuts to education from the provinces, and to ensure that we reduce tuition fees."

Dubois added she saw tuition fees as "the main barrier" to post-secondary education. "It's reason number one why people may decide not to pursue their [university] degree."

Both FEUQ and Pedneault claim that the province's recent allocation of federal funds relating to the termination of Ottawa's Millennial Scholarships Program in January 2010 is contributing to its withdrawal of AFE funding.

The federal government's decision entitled Quebec to \$70 million annually from the federal government. According to the same FEUQ report, however, the Quebec government has yet to allocate the funds directly to financial aid.

"The government's refusal to allocate the additional money paid by the federal government [...] has the effect of reducing its own contribution" to the AFE, stated the FEUQ report.

In an email to *The Daily*, a spokesperson from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada wrote that, "Since the province operates its own program, independent of the federal government, it is fully accountable for its spending."