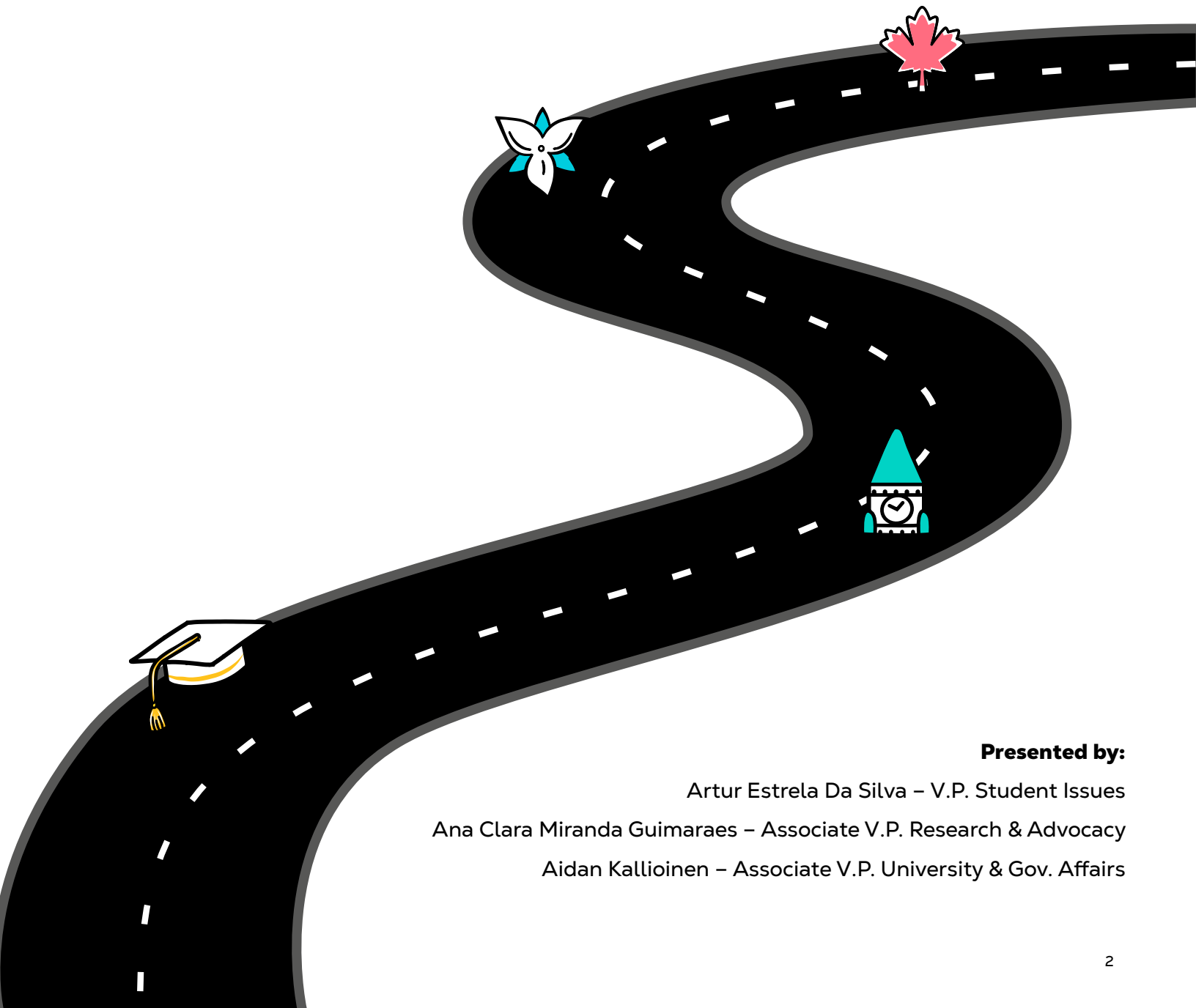




# 2024-2025 ADVOCACY ROADMAP



# **Student consultation, priorities, and policy recommendations**



**Presented by:**

Artur Estrela Da Silva – V.P. Student Issues

Ana Clara Miranda Guimaraes – Associate V.P. Research & Advocacy

Aidan Kallioinen – Associate V.P. University & Gov. Affairs

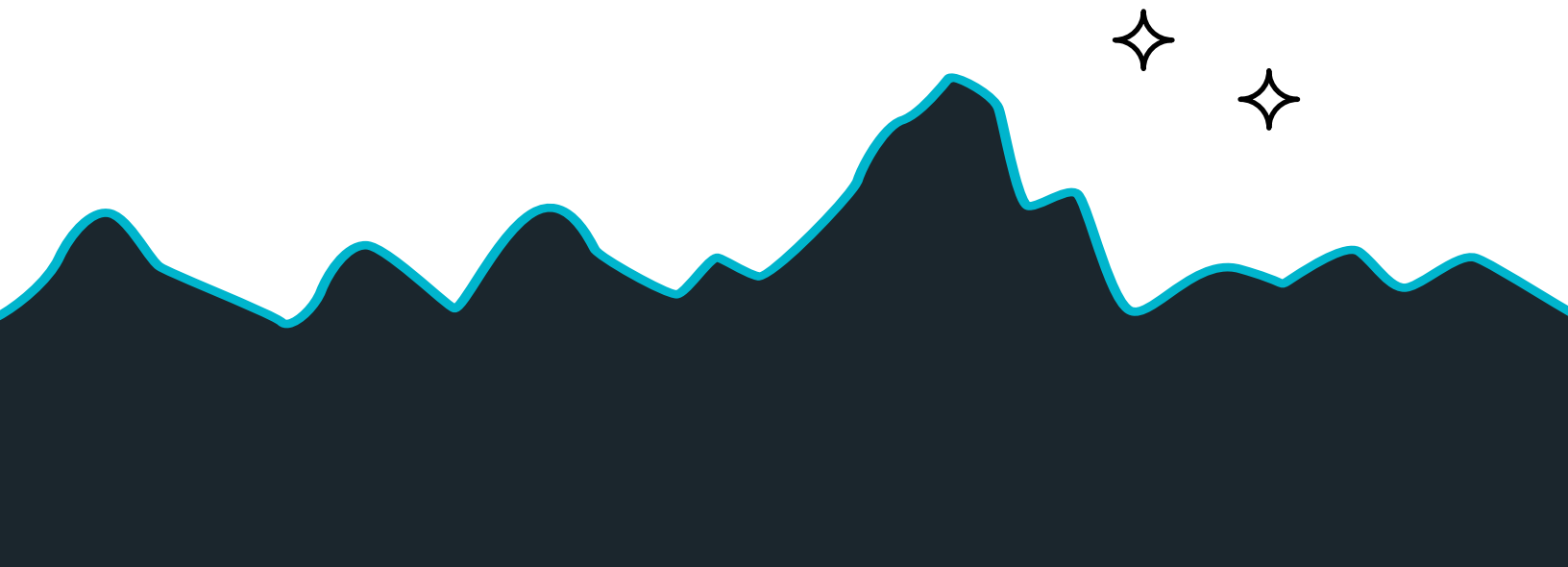
# Land Acknowledgement Statement

CUSA acknowledges that our offices, service centres and businesses are situated today on the traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe, lands never ceded or surrendered in peace to the Crown of Canada. Indigenous peoples living under the modern colonial state of Canada have suffered disproportionate injustice and marginalisation.

A mere land acknowledgement is not enough to make reconciliation and reparation to the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island. We must stand in solidarity against colonialism and remember our responsibility to the land and the peoples who have kept it for generations— which means affirming their call for the free and unencumbered return to their ancestral land. It is also fitting, for this body of lawmakers, to remember the spirit and wisdom of Indigenous governance models—from the collaborative bicameralism of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy to the consensus-based government of the Inuit—to deliver to students a better student union.

We recognize that our presence on this land is the result of a history marked by injustice, and we are dedicated to honouring and strengthening our relationships with Indigenous nations across Turtle Island. This includes acknowledging and respecting the diverse First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples who call this land home.

We encourage all students to learn about current movements to support Indigenous self- determination and self-governance. To learn more about the stolen land you live on and the movements occurring on that land, visit [www.native-land.ca](http://www.native-land.ca) or CUSA's Mawandoseg Centre located at 426 Nideyìnàn (formerly University Centre).



# Foreword

Hello/Bonjour/Aanii Ravens,

With the academic year underway, our team is proud to present the results of this year's advocacy consultation strategy, summarized for you in this year's Advocacy Roadmap.

Your feedback, concerns, comments, and suggestions help shape the priorities of the CUSA Advocacy Team, and the direction we take when meeting with key stakeholders in both university administration, and the municipal, provincial, and federal governments. It was clear to us, speaking with hundreds of students from across all faculties, experiences, and backgrounds, that the Carleton University undergraduate community are champions of an affordable, equitable, and inclusive environment for all students, whether on or off the campus.

An overwhelming amount of you turned out to advise and guide our strategy this year. Over **330 students** took part in either in-person or online consultation, as well as the feedback we received from those in Carleton University administration, CUSA Council, and the wider Ottawa community. Your feedback and work is invaluable and made this possible.

Thus, we are confident the methodology, strategies, and calls to action we present in this report give the best outline possible for the priorities of Carleton University's undergraduate students. We hope these priorities will be taken to heart by those whose policy directly impacts students most: lawmakers, educators, and those in positions to facilitate real and positive change for students.

Should you have any questions, we encourage you to reach out to our Advocacy Team at [ypsi@cusaonline.ca](mailto:ypsi@cusaonline.ca).

Sincerely,  
The CUSA's Advocacy Team



**Artur Estrela Da Silva**  
V.P. Student Issues



**Ana Clara Miranda Guimaraes**  
Associate V.P.  
Research & Advocacy



**Aidan Kallioinen**  
Associate V.P.  
University & Gov. Affairs

# Methodology

In order to begin CUSA's advocacy strategy, our team began identifying those in our association, among undergraduate students and the university, as well as those in our wider community that would be necessary to produce a thorough report on the issues and recommendations of students. Our Advocacy Team identified a short-list of ten (10) key priorities:

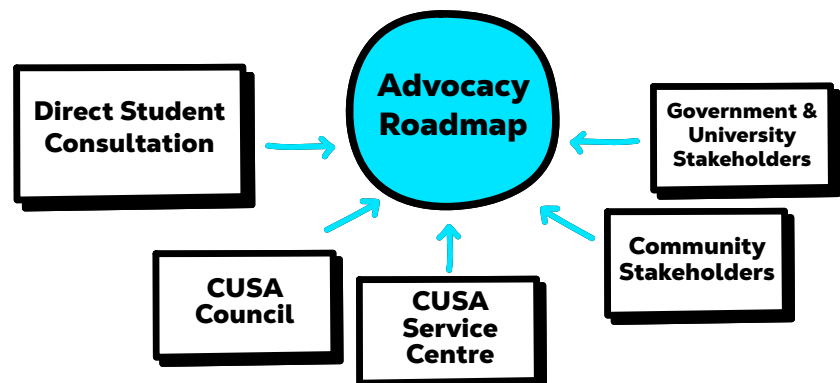
- Transit
- Accessibility
- The Cost of Education
- Housing & Affordability
- Student Healthcare (including Mental Healthcare)
- EDI & International Student Support
- Climate Change & Environmental Sustainability
- Research Opportunities
- Indigenous Student Support & Reconciliation
- Sexual Violence Prevention

The end-result was a combination of in-person interviews with key stakeholders, an online consultation form for all undergraduate students and CUSA Council, as well as three days of in-person consultation sessions and tabling held in The Wing (Nideyinàn). Our in-person tabling sessions involved students writing a series of comments or suggestions and their name on a whiteboard/sticky note, with the prompt: "Tell us what student issues matter to you." The results of the consultation were compiled and synthesized.

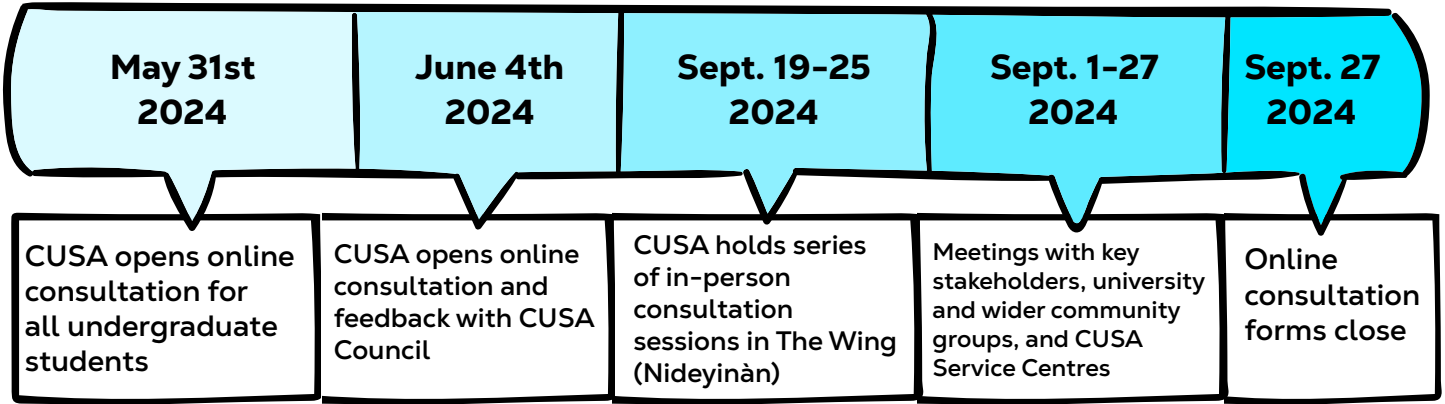
Other notable consultation partners include representatives from:

- Horizon Ottawa
- Free Transit Ottawa
- Centre for Indigenous Support and Community Engagement (Carleton)
- Mawandoseg Centre (CUSA)
- StudentCare

The online consultation form involved respondents ranking the ten identified priorities, as well as providing additional comments for consideration.

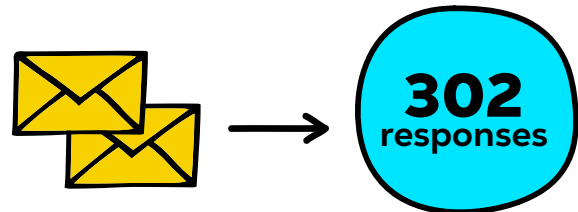


# Timeline



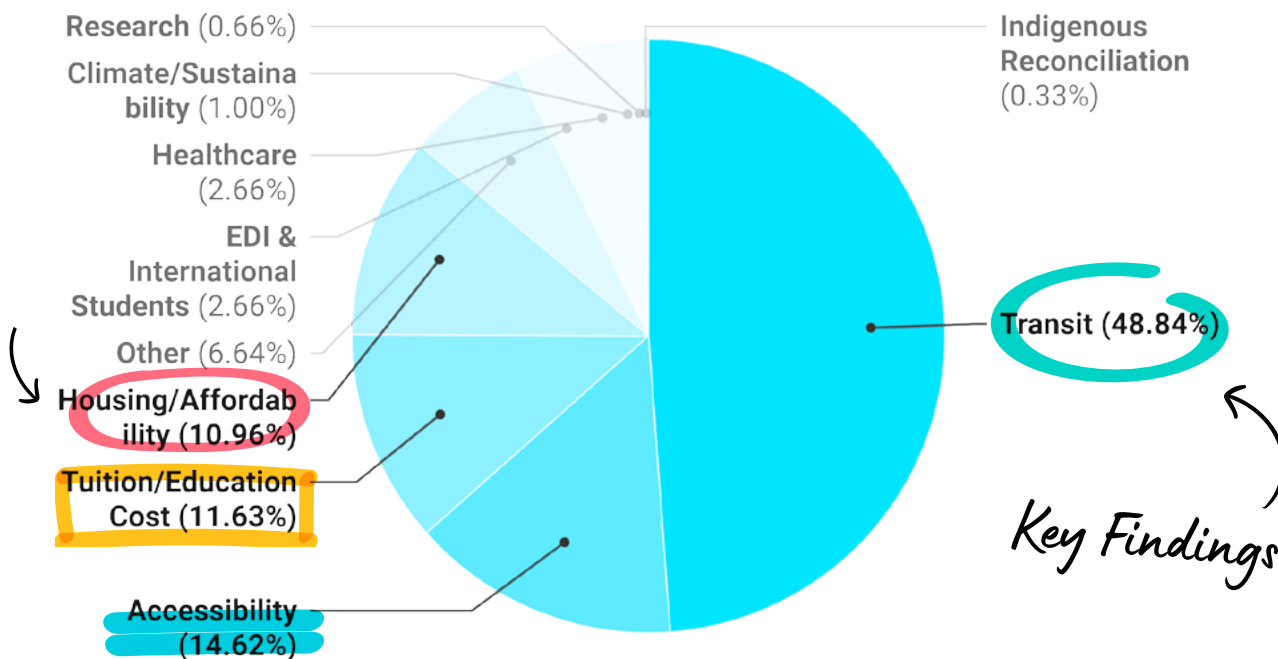
# Response

CUSA's in-person consultation sessions on Sept. 19, Sept. 24, and Sept. 25 garnered 302 total responses from students.



Our Advocacy Team consulted over a dozen university staff, community activists and organizers, officials at all levels of government. CUSA also received a total of **36 responses** to our online consultation form during the time it was active, including responses from CUSA Councillors and the wider undergraduate community.

# In-Person Consultation Results



- Just under half of all consulted students identified issues relating to Transit as their primary concern
- Concerns relating to Transit, Accessibility, The Cost of Education, and Housing & Affordability, or “The Big 4” make up a collective 86.05% of total responses
- “Other” concerns, mostly related to campus events, Clubs Oversight, or Dining Services, constituted 6.6% of total responses

## Priority: Transit



Municipal, Provincial

### Preface

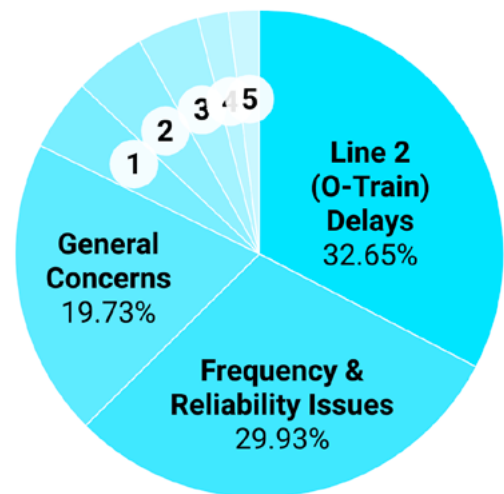
Having a working transit system is an essential part of student life in Ottawa. Sustainable transit infrastructure and a variety of transportation options ensures students have the mobility they need to socialize, exercise, work, and get to essential appointments. Collectively, 25,700 student rides using U-Pass services were recorded last year, and Carleton undergraduate students paid just shy of \$12 million last year for access to transit services in Ottawa. Decisions regarding the transit network in Ottawa must take into account student perspectives, and serve student needs.

### Results

The single-largest issue identified by students was the delay in the opening of the Trillium Line (LRT) rail to Carleton Station. This project, originally scheduled to open in September of 2022, has been delayed for over two years, and is at the forefront of student frustration with regard to OC Transpo services.

The second-largest pool of concerns related primarily to issues of frequency and reliability, with respondents overwhelmingly focusing on examples of delayed buses/trains, confusing or contradictory schedules, and the design of bus routes.

Other priorities identified by students include communication issues (Bookings/customer support), accessibility issues, U-Pass Services (Due in-part to the recent issues in Sept. 2024 with student card activation), as well as the availability and safety of service during off-peak (Night) hours.



- 1 Route-specific Concerns
- 2 Communication & Accessibility Issues
- 3 U-Pass Issues
- 4 Cost
- 5 Night Service

## Recommendations

- **Clear Consultation:** Advocate that OC Transpo and City Councillors engage in frequent and clear communication to students through CUSA; especially with regard to route planning, accessibility changes, ongoing construction, bus delays, and the opening of Line 2 service to Carleton Station
- **Increase Service Frequency:** Work with community stakeholders and transit operators to reduce, mitigate, or reverse cuts to service frequency brought on by city-wide budgetary pressures, especially on routes with high student ridership and on-campus connections (Routes 2, 7, 10, 111)
- **Fair Fares:** Create a streamlined application process for student EquiPass recipients (Those not enrolled in U-Pass but qualify for EquiPass) and support current proposals to offer free or reduced fare transit on specific high-capacity routes
- **City Infrastructure:** Champion new developments in alternative forms of transportation (e.g. Biking) and encourage the city to incorporate sustainable decisions in traffic management planning, including the procurement of transit-specific infrastructure (Bus lanes)
- **Reliable Schedules:** Campaign for an increase in transit capacity (More busses) during off-peak service periods, and increase awareness and the practical implementation of night-stop services in student neighbourhoods

## Priority: Accessibility



*University, Municipal*

### Preface

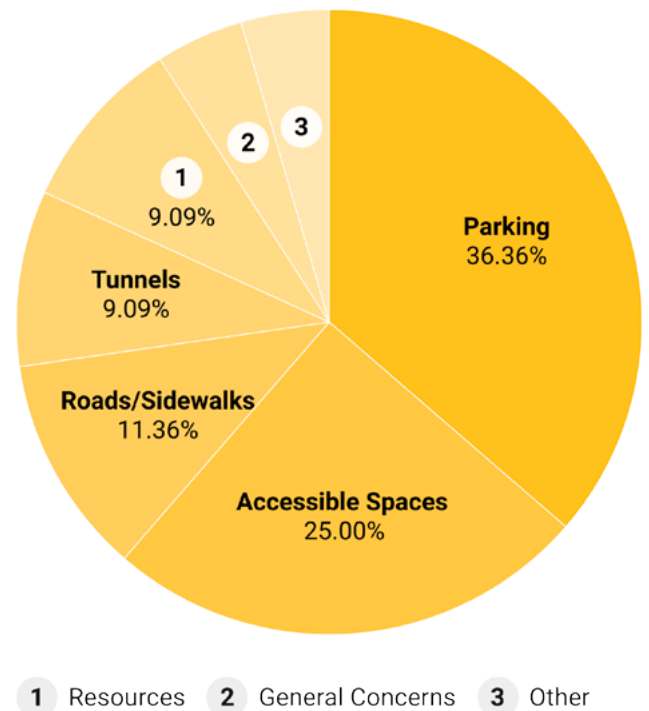
Accessibility, both on and off Carleton's campus, means shaping both our built and non-physical environments to a degree in which they are equitable for students with a variety of specific needs. For students with and without disabilities, this means exploring ways our campus can be easier to navigate, resources easier to obtain, and services more known and available. Through the Carleton Disability Awareness Centre (CDAC), CUSA has been able to host accessibility-focused events, obtain rental equipment for those with mobility needs, and provide referral services.



## Results

Students consistently identified both the availability, cost, maintenance, enforcement, and relative distance of parking on campus as their primary accessibility concern. With the ongoing demolition of the P9 Parking Garage, many students are concerned about how the absence of new purpose-built parking will affect accessibility to campus buildings.

Other student priorities include both a lack of variety and availability with regard to accessible spaces for students on campus, especially classrooms and workspaces. Other students cited a lack of proper maintenance and regard for accessibility on campus roads and sidewalks, as well as accessibility issues regarding Carleton's extensive tunnel network. Furthermore, students noted the general availability of accessibility resources and information from the university as concerns.



## Recommendations

- **A Formal Parking Review:** Work with Carleton Parking Services and accessibility advocates to conduct a review of student needs and identify issues of access related to parking locations, capacity, and availability on campus
- **Accessible Spaces:** Advocate alongside partners in CDAC, the Paul Menton Centre, and the Accessibility Institute, among others, to identify and compile specific accessibility issues and create a working strategy to increase the number of accessible spaces at Carleton
- **Tunnels, Buildings, and Sidewalks:** Engage in additional consultation with student stakeholders and work with Carleton's Operations and Maintenance to engage in deterioration modeling, as well as identifying at-risk or locations on campus such as elevators, stairwells, and sidewalks which pose challenges to accessibility
- **An Accessible Ottawa:** Coordinate with off-campus stakeholders in the Ottawa-Gatineau Metropolitan Area to advocate for greater awareness and action on student-specific accessibility concerns
- **Resources:** Work with on and off campus service providers to compile an easily accessible and wide-reaching list of campus resources and referrals

# Priority: The Cost of Education



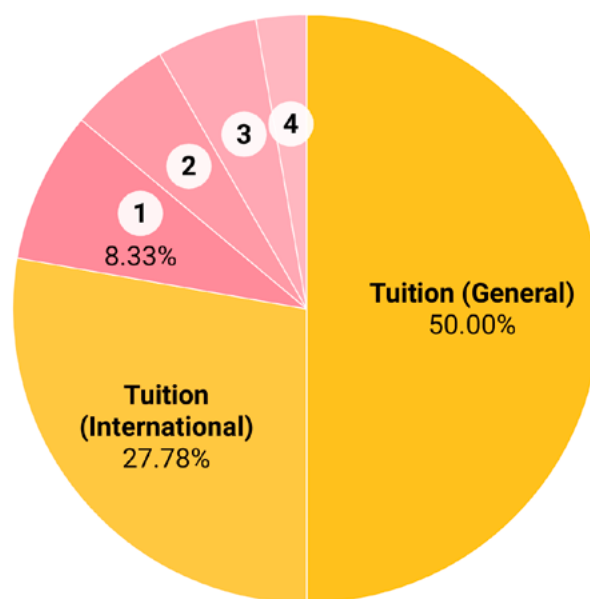
## Preface

Affordable education helps to break down financial barriers and realize a students' full potential. Carleton students fundamentally deserve financial stability and a solid understanding of the costs of their education the moment they attend university. Affordable education also means greater social mobility for Carleton graduates, allowing them considerable financial advantages and job-readiness. An affordable education model also makes Carleton University more attractive to both domestic and international students, allotting a significant competitive advantage over other universities in Canada.

## Results

Concerns relating to the cost of a students' tuition made up the vast majority of responses. This is split between comments made regarding domestic tuition (or general concerns thereof) and the specific mention of international tuition fees. With a freeze in domestic tuition provincially since 2019, coupled with universities' increasing reliance on international student fees, students are anxious about the rising costs of their degree program.

Other highlighted responses, though constituting well below a quarter of all replies, related to issues such as the cost of textbooks, the quantity and amount of scholarship opportunities, as well as concerns on OSAP's payment structure.



- 1 General Concerns
- 2 Textbooks
- 3 Scholarships
- 4 Loans

## Recommendations

- **A Tuition Guarantee:** Strongly support and coordinate efforts both at the provincial and national level to advocate for a tuition guarantee model (fixed-rate tuition plan) for a duration of a students' education, including but not limited to international students
- **Scholarships for High-cost Programs:** Work with university administration to increase the quantity and amount of long-term scholarships for programs with more demanding tuition, such as those in the Science, Engineering, Technology, and Math (STEM) streams

- **Canada Student Grants:** Advocate the federal government double the existing Canada Student Grant for Full-Time Students with Dependents, and increase the Canada Student Grant for Persons with Permanent Disabilities
- **Tax Credits:** Advocate the federal government reintroduce a dedicated federal education and textbook tax credit, and create a tax credit for students enrolled in sanctioned extracurricular/developmental activities
- **End the International Cap:** Support the immediate end of the federal international student enrollment cap, currently in-place for the next two years

## Priority: Housing & Affordability



*Municipal, Provincial, Federal*

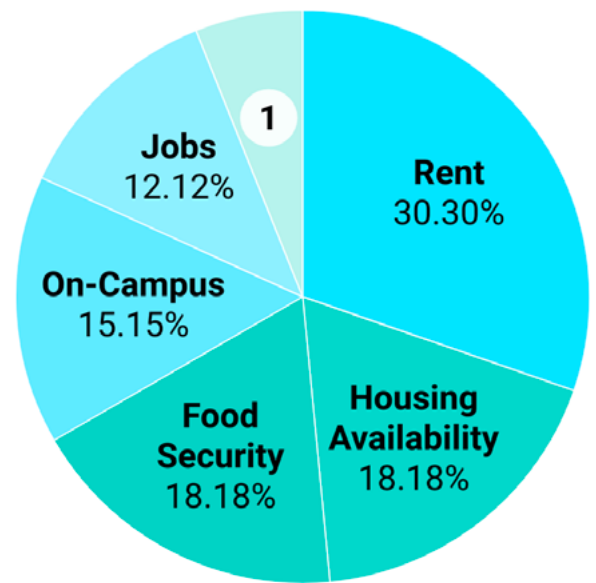
### Preface

Being able to afford your education extends outside of the campus. The ability of students to cover basic expenses (ie. rent, groceries, and transportation) significantly influences their postsecondary experience. Recent cost-of-living pressures, the rising price of essential goods, as well as unsustainable long-term housing options, are felt especially by low-income populations, not least of which include students.

### Results

Student anxieties over the cost of housing in Ottawa made up just shy of a majority of total respondents, with the largest share of responses relating to the increasing cost of rent in Ottawa, made worse by a nationwide housing shortage. Students also shared concerns relating to a lack of affordable housing availability in and around the vicinity of campus.

Other significant responses include comments regarding the cost of food and the availability of food bank/food hamper services on and off campus. Other students shared more general comments relating to the costs of specific services/businesses on campus, and how those costs should better align with student budgets. A portion of students also mentioned the availability and lack thereof of reliable student employment from CUSA and the University.



1 General Concerns

## Recommendations

- **Matching Contributions on FHSAs to OSAP Loans:** Support proposals from the Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA) which advocate for a dollar-for-dollar matching contribution on a reduction of a students' loan portion when they contribute that amount to a First-Home Savings Account (FHSA)
- **Landlord Responsibility:** Strongly advocate for anti “renoviction” legislation (Cases in which landlords evict tenants for basic repairs or few cosmetic updates in order to drive up rent prices) in Ottawa alongside community partners, and increase penalties for landlords who violate a tenants' rights under the *Provincial Tenancies Act*
- **Mixed-Use Zoning:** Advocate with provincial and municipal partners to deliver a comprehensive review of the Provincial Planning Statement, and Ottawa Zoning By-law, specifically to advocate for greater mixed-use development and a shortage of “Missing Middle” housing options for students
- **Universal Basic Income (UBI):** Work with federal partners to research and introduce a nationwide program for universal basic income, in order to help student afford essential goods and services
- **Rent Stabilization:** Support provincial proposals for the introduction of rent stabilization measures, ensuring current occupants pay the same amount as previous tenants.

## Priority: Student Healthcare



University, Provincial

A system of healthcare in Ontario that works for students means collaborating alongside the provincial government, insurance providers, and essential services to ensure equitable, affordable, and quick access to essential student medical needs. CUSA will strongly advocate that: (a) The provincial government set clear, measurable **target wait times for clinics specifically at postsecondary institutions**; (b) The province act on recommendations from the Ontario Council of Universities to update Ontario's Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy to **formally recognize post-secondary students as a distinct cohort**; (c) Advocate to the province and the university for the **elimination of medical documentation for academic accommodations**.

## Priority: EDI & International Student Support



*University, Provincial, Federal*

A fulsome commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion on campus comes with supporting our international students, many of whom are experiencing their first home away from home. CUSA commits itself to: (a) Lead initiatives and efforts that **help students of marginalized and international backgrounds to address key issues and concerns** while improving their **access to information and quality of life**, (b) Advocate at various levels of government collaborate for further **funding and training for culturally competent mental healthcare**; (c) Work collaboratively with the University to **increase the number of intercultural learning opportunities and safe-spaces**; (d) Advocate that universities across Ontario **increase the amount of senior administrative officers with EDI explicitly mentioned** in their title or job mandate.

## Priority: Climate Change & Environmental Sustainability



*University, Municipal, Provincial, Federal*

Students are keenly aware of environmental sustainability and climate-conscious in their decision-making. CUSA recognizes the need to immediately act and implement measures both at the local and national levels to mitigate a global rise in temperatures above 1.5 degrees celsius. CUSA will: (a) **Lead on-campus initiatives that promote student involvement and action in fighting climate injustice**, such as bottle drives and thrift events; (b) Advocate that the **University develop a more comprehensive recycling system in Residence buildings**; (c) CUSA strongly endorse a **Fossil-Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty**.

## Priority: EDI & International Student Support



*University, Provincial, Federal*

University provides the opportunity for students to engage in real-world research that has far-reaching, positive impacts on their communities. CUSA will (a) Work with the university to advocate the province increase **funding for research grants in specific areas of need, and as a total % of the University's operating income**; (b) Provide more **opportunities within our Executive Team** and internally to support student research; (c) Create a volunteer research team – **the CUSA Think Tank** – in which, students will have the opportunity to hone their research skills and collaborate on large research projects led by the Advocacy Team.

## Priority: Indigenous Student Support & TRC Calls to Action



*University, Municipal, Provincial, Federal*

CUSA recognizes that our advocacy, actions, and services are all situated on the traditional, unceded lands of the Algonquin Anishnaabeg People, and that our organization, as a product of a settler-colonial system of repression, must act in concrete ways to address inequities in our local Indigenous communities. CUSA will: (a) Work with stakeholders in the community and the University to **develop a comprehensive Indigenous Action Plan**, which would involve a concrete list of Calls to Action for our organization; (b) Advocate that the **province increase funding for university and college programs in Indigenous Languages**, in-line with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action; (c) Increase **training requirements and learning opportunities for CUSA staff, and student Councillors** with regard to the legacy of residential schools and Indigenous inequity; (d) **Connect with Elders** in our community to learn more about Indigenous cultures, to hone our work in truth and reconciliation, and give back to the Indigenous community.

## Priority: Sexual Violence Prevention



*University*

Ensuring a campus free from sexual violence means addressing the root cause of incidents and supporting survivors on their recovery journey. CUSA shall: (a) Strive to partner with Health and Counseling, as well as Carleton's Department of Equity and Inclusive Communities on initiatives that **show support and solidarity to survivors of sexual assault, raise awareness about sexual and gender-based violence, and provide services and a safe space for students seeking to disclose an incident**; (b) Actively represent the student population in the process of **review of the Sexual Violence Policy**; (c) Work to **help students get connected with legal clinics, or searching for support** from peers; (d) Work alongside CUSA Women's Centre to make **emergency contraception more accessible and available on campus**.

## Conclusion

We sincerely hope that this document offers meaningful insight into what are the concerns we will be (and has been) advocating on your behalf! By the end of the academic year, you will have a chance to read an **Advocacy Recap** outlining all of our advocacy work, initiatives, and meetings held this year. Keep an eye out for this Recap document and for our posts on social media and on our website updating you on pressing issues, relevant news, and our success stories. If you would like to learn more about our work, any of our past and upcoming initiatives, or if you would like to discuss a concern, reach out to [vpsi@cusaonline.ca](mailto:vpsi@cusaonline.ca). We are here to support you in every way we can!

