



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Contact:

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**SACKVILLE, NB** — On Thursday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, the abrupt and immediate discontinuation of the New Brunswick-Employment Insurance Connect (NB-EI Connect) program for post-secondary students was announced by the Government of New Brunswick.

**This program was utilized by almost 7000 students in New Brunswick to subsidize the cost of their studies. Furthermore, it acted as financial security for students vulnerable to fundamental issues such as food insecurity and lack of affordable housing.**

The MASU echoes the sentiment of the St. Thomas University Students' Union: "The timing and the lack of prior notice from the Government has created massive disruption and added additional barriers for students who are working hard full time during the summer to secure their financial sources for the upcoming school year. Furthermore, the termination of the program will disproportionately affect mature students, students with dependants, students with disabilities and students who belong to minority groups." – Press Release, STUSU, June 28<sup>th</sup> 2022<sup>1</sup>

The sudden and discrete manner in which this announcement was made **indicates a disregard for the foreseeable – and subsequently preventable – consequences of this decision for post-secondary students.**

"As seen by this abrupt announcement, I worry that the outcry and response from students on this issue falls upon deaf ears. The consequences of this decision were foreseeable, indicating a negligence in failing to address them prior. Students are worried and disappointed in our government; worried both about how they will fund their education and lives this coming year." says Rohin Minocha-McKenney, President & CEO of the MASU.

"As we are halfway through the summer already, I will have to completely overhaul and change plans for how I am not only going to pay for my tuition but my books, housing, groceries and student fees because of the sudden change in NB-EI. If the government is going to take this program away from students then there should have at the very least been notice!" says a MASU Member.

The justification provided for this decision does not hold. The Government of New Brunswick had previously made statements asserting they wished to motivate individuals to pursue work in the labour market. However, this discontinuation creates further barriers to the same rather than acting as remediation. Furthermore, the Government justified this decision by stating their intent to align with other provinces, as they too do not have such programs. However, the Governments of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island have the Fast Forward and Career Connect programs,

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<sup>1</sup> [stusu.ca/news/2022/6/28/stusu-response-to-the-termination-of-the-nb-ei-connect-program](https://stusu.ca/news/2022/6/28/stusu-response-to-the-termination-of-the-nb-ei-connect-program)

which the Government of New Brunswick can use as reference as a possible replacement to the NB-EI Connect program.

The MASU urges the Government of New Brunswick to take immediate and decisive action to curtail the negative consequences of this decision. **We echo and reassert the ask made by the New Brunswick Students' Alliance, to create a grace period of at least 1 more year to give students time to prepare for the change.** We hope for a long-term solution to address these issues and especially urge the government to create a consultation period before finalizing potentially deleterious decisions such as these in the future.

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The Mount Allison *Students' Union* represents all full- and part-time undergraduate and graduate students at Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick.