

MEMO

To: Senate

From: Kyle Acierno, External Relations Officer, SFSS

Date: October 14, 2010



Re: **Academic Amnesty Motion – November 10, 2010**

The Province has not increased the base Full Time Equivalent funding grant for post-secondary institutions and has consistently under-funded actual enrollment with the application of this grant. This has resulted in an institutional reliance on increasing tuition fees and pursuit of private sector donations to cover the costs of providing post-secondary education at Canadian universities.

Not all students are able to afford the ever-increasing cost of tuition without negotiating a student loan in order to pay for their education and support themselves while they study. Currently students in BC have the highest student loan debt in all of Canada. The average indebted student will graduate with outstanding repayable loans of over \$27,000.

The failure to provide adequate public funding does not only affect students. Professors will feel this crunch as academic programs are cut, research money is re-directed, and competition increases for funding awards.

For the past month, the Simon Fraser Student Society has been lobbying the provincial government for more public post-secondary funding. The Minister of Education and various Members of the Legislative Assembly are sympathetic and even supportive of our position, but they have all expressed the need for students to come to together with a unified message.

In collaboration with the Graduate Student Society, Teaching Support Staff Union, and other clubs on campus, The Simon Fraser Student Society has been asking students to record their personal education loan amounts on paper bricks that will be used to build a Debt Wall on November 10th in Convocation Mall at SFU Burnaby.

I am putting the following motion forward to ask the Senate to enable students to attend this event on November 10th by approving an academic amnesty for those who will not be attending their classes, labs and tutorials for this reason. I am not asking that amnesty be granted to students who have exams or presentations in class that day, but for professors to levy no penalties against anyone who wishes to attend.

Motion:

Acierno/ _____

Senate requests that faculty and instructors make every effort to accommodate students who wish to participate in the November 10th rally and not penalize these students academically.