



URSU Annual General Meeting

November 17th, 2021

## **VP EXTERNAL AFFAIRS EXECUTIVE REPORT**

### **DESCRIPTION OF POSITION**

The Vice President External Affairs deals primarily with the development and deployment of events, campaigns, elections and referendums of the students. They are also responsible for developing marketing and sponsorship opportunities for the URSU. They also educate students about important issues to students in Post-Secondary Education (PSE). The VP External also plays an important role in the development of Welcome Week's Programming and handles public and media relations in conjunction with the President. Finally, the VP External is responsible for overseeing and managing the URSU V-Team. URSU Executives generally work anywhere from 10-30 hours in meetings in addition to regular duties.

### **Link to Executive Committee and Executive Roles Policy for more information:**

<https://www.ursu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Executive-Committee-and-Executive-Roles-.pdf>

As the newly elected Vice President External, I have only just started the role. So instead of a report on what I've done so far, I'm instead going to focus on the priorities I'd like to complete this year for our members.

### **PRIORITIES**

#### **Campaigns**



### Anti-Asian racism and Anti-Islamophobia

Islamophobia and racism has a long history of dehumanization, discrimination and violence toward people of different cultural, and ethnic groups. These are serious issues that negatively impact our students, university and the society as a whole. Thus, we need to attempt to raise awareness and campaigns to eliminate the injustice that people from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds face.

In particular I will be working on developing campaigns challenging Islamophobia, and Anti Asian Racism in its many forms.

### **Fundraising**

One of the key programs of URSU is our Food Security efforts, such as the URSU Cares Pantry and our Community Fridge. But these programs require significant donations.

### **Volunteer Program**

To thrive our student life and sustain our programs/services, it is important to build a team of student volunteers to empower them in the experience of contributing their dedications and learning organizational, leadership skills with professional knowledge for their future.

This term, we are aiming to build a brand new volunteer program with better and comprehensive training opportunities and experience. In the collaboration of URSU programs like Community Roots Garden, Community Fridge, and Cares Pantry, we are looking forward to building a volunteer program to support the passions of every student on campus.

### **Winter Welcome Week**

We are planning a full event schedule for a Winter Welcome Week in January. There will be many events to try and cater to our diverse membership's needs. In particular we are having a keynote with Senator **Mobina Jaffer** who will give an address to members.



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## VP Student Affairs REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF POSITION

The Vice President Student Affairs deals with matters relating to the student experience, student advocacy, and student representation on campus. The Vice President Student Affairs is also the primary contact point for clubs and oversees the development of URSU club programming. The Vice-President Student Affairs also plays an important role as a student representative by sitting on committees relating to academic and non-academic misconduct, and by representing URSU to URSU's Student Centres; this includes the Womens' Centre, URPrize, RPIRG, and more. URSU Executives generally work anywhere from 10-30 hours in meetings in addition to regular duties.

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### PRIORITIES & PROGRESS

#### **Sustainability- Food Security**

The University of Regina Students' Union is dedicated to leading positive sustainable change around students' lives.

In 2015, the United Nations adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals that address global challenges everyone faces, hunger, quality education, sustainable communities, etc. As a students' union, we believe the goals are interconnected and important to every country, community, and the blueprint of URSU.

Our approach to sustainability is mainly focused on student life, since hunger, quality education, and sustainable campus are significant issues across most Canadian Universities.

The Students' Union is committed to building a diverse and inclusive organization with the trust and partnership of our memberships and community as our mission is "We were created by students for students."

In the term of 2020-2021, we have started to seek for local sponsors/donors to sustain our URSU cares pantry program. With the support of Save on Foods and Regina Food Bank, we are able to



expand the capacity, frequency of our program and provide more free groceries to the students in need.

In addition, we have established the Community Roots Garden in the collaboration with Regina Food Bank and South Zone Community Garden. We built a volunteer team to grow the garden and provide all the organic produce to our student community.

Another exciting news is the establishment of our community fridge program located in the Riddle Centre and First Nations University, it is the first program to provide free, fresh food to our students who struggle with food insecurity on a 24/7 basis, especially it is the first URSU program that fully relies on the sponsor and support of our community. We are very thankful to the local collaborative donors such as Freshco, Redhead Equipment, and Cathedral Community Fridge, they support and inspire us to be more dedicated to striking on food insecurity on campus.

In the past summer, we founded the Sustainable Community Volunteer Scholarship to inspire and encourage students to participate in our gardening experience while learning about building a sustainable community with certain grants opportunity.

### **New Student Advocacy and Campaign Department**

This term, we have initiated the new student advocacy department with the collective effort of the general manager and board members. The purpose of the new department is to:

- “To provide political action and campaigns support to URSU's Executive and student groups we are allied with on campus, at the direction of URSU's executive and senior leadership
- To plan and implement non-partisan political action and advocacy campaigns with the Executive and our allies in order to win victories
- To organize our government relations efforts so we can re-engage municipally, provincially, and federally, and secure victories for members
- To provide a specific department that takes on advocacy and campaigns, alleviating pressure on other departments” (Advocacy Department proposal drafted by GM).

### **Improving the fairness procedure regarding academic/non-academic misconduct for students**

From my experience of fulfilling the student advocate role in the past several months, I have recognized there is an unfair hearing process between the faculty representatives and students.



Students who are either guilty or not guilty struggle to collect enough evidence to defend themselves when faculties do not provide sufficient opportunities before the meeting starts. We have discussed this concern with the provost and work on further logistics to support the rights of our students.

### **New Constitution**

We are aiming to create the opportunities to consult with our members, then conduct a multi-level analysis on our current governance structure and constitution, then propose our collective draft to the coming special general meeting according to the governance master plan.

### **The Handbooks and Guide to Student Clubs/Associations**

We are working on the handbook for the new student organization and new student leaders, it will provide them with a better understanding of running an organization.

We will also design the organizational, leadership training for the new executive members of the organization.

## **External Relations**

### **University Administration**

Monthly meetings with Provost

Throughout the regular meetings with Dr. Gregory, I have discussed several students' concerns with him such as the unfair procedure to students, the University reopening plan, and individual student cases. With our collective effort, we are building a new initiative on anti-racism and anti-oppression.

### **Students' Union Development Summit**

In October, URSU executives attended the Students' Union Development Summit to connect and train with fellow executives from other students' unions. We had several amazing speakers present their knowledge and insights to support our vision, and their professional training really brings our understandings of the students' union to the next level.

Afterward, we are organizing monthly VPSA meetings to share our development and experience with each other.

## **Student Experience**

### **Coffee with Executives**

Since 2020, we have connected with more than 15 emerging student leaders through the Coffee with Executives event. Any student who has questions about URSU or is passionate about student issues is welcome to reach out to us, we would love to hear from you.

**Halloween Events**

In collaboration with Korean Student Association, we organized the squid game event during Halloween week. It is a very engaging event that brought about 100 students together, we had safe and fun activities.

**Community Service Month**

The Community Service Month is the project established by my previous team and ended by the beginning of my new term, it is seeking U of R student individuals/groups who are inspired with ideas and ready to take the initiative/expand. Until the end of April, we have inspired and supported more than 13 community projects initiated by our students. Example of the projects is events for senior centers, care packages for St. Joseph's Hospital, and care packages for the homeless people. It was a great success for us, and we are looking forward to starting again this term.

**Indigenous Engagement**

In this term, we are dedicative to rebuilding the relationship with our First Nations University Students' Association by providing the community fridge program on the FNUniv campus, connecting with their executive members regularly regarding the fee share agreement, and strategies to support our First Nations students in a comprehensive way.

**Student Advocacy****VPSA & Student Advocate Role**

Since the student advocate position has been vacant since May, I have committed my additional time to fulfill the partial role of the student advocate.

I have attended more than 20 meetings between students and faculty to defend students who were mistakenly accused on certain issues and processed many emergency bursaries for students who extremely struggled in their financial situation.

When the new term of executives started in May, we continued the Covid-19 Student Relief Grant and Disability Student Grant to support the students who were under financial hardship due to the pandemic.

**ONGOING & FUTURE PLAN**

- New Constitution
- New URSU Volunteer Program
- Peer Mentorship Program
- Reverse Vending Machine for bottle recycling on campus with monetary rewards



- Expansion on URSU Garden program
- Large fundraising events for URSU cares programs (Cares Pantry, Community Fridge, Threads, Garden)
- Building a network and training programs for student leaders on campus
- Working on Tuition campaigns for students



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Harveer Singh

**VICE PRESIDENT OPERATIONS AND FINANCE  
EXECUTIVE REPORT**

The Vice President Operations and Finance is primarily responsible for the matters pertaining to human resources, developing and maintaining the budget, and administering the finances of URSU. This can include hiring, connecting with students on a variety of issues, PEC funding and several other issues.

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**PRIORITIES & PROGRESS****General Student Support**

One of the key issues around being an executive is that many students approach you for support. This can often lead to different executives supporting students on various issues. I had to support students around tuition advocacy and how to proceed for specific problems they had. Students needed support in applying for emergency funding. This took a lot of my time.

**The Lazy Owl**

I have been working on strategies for the Lazy Owl which opened in September with a new menu and a mostly new staff. The Lazy Owl has been a part of campus for a long time but COVID-19 made it very difficult on opening, and we had to delay opening in September to make sure we could open properly

**Fee Levies and Partnership Agreements**

We have had many meetings around partnership agreements and fee levies to sort them out. I still have a bit of work to do on these but we have made much progress in





rebuilding our relationships with service centres. We had very productive conversations with changing the fee structure for FNUnivSA Northern Campus Association and Saskatoon Campus Association.

### **Budget Planning Process**

With our great administration and finance team I helped create the URSU 2021 budget and brought it to our Board for approval.

### **Human Resources and Hiring**

A big part of my job is helping with hiring and human resources. As such I sat on many different hiring committees and process. Hiring and interviews can take up to 10 or more hours per week and with my role I have had to sit on many of these position interviews.

### **Advocacy Department**

We are all very excited about the new Advocacy Department. My role in this in addition to supporting this project was helping with job descriptions and helping with hiring for the positions with Advocacy Department.

### **PEC Funding**

I have been working on PEC funding issue. We have had some trouble with students not being able to find the form or not knowing how to get funding. I get a lot of calls and emails about funding from PEC and have had to support as many as I can in this process.

### **COVID Bursary Distribution**

We had some COVID Bursary Distribution issues during the summer. We had to work a lot to make sure the process was followed and that bursaries were sent out to all approved applicants.

### **Health Plan Meetings**

I have had a few meetings with our insurance Provider, Gallivan with other members of the team to talk about the service and what the future services might be.



### **Senior Manager and Staff Meetings**

URSU has regular meetings with Senior Management team and staff. I have been attending and presenting my ideas to improve URSU.

### **Ralph Nader famous American Activist event**

Our team organized an event with Ralph Nader who is a very famous American Activist. He helped create many organizations including PIRGs like RPIRG. He also did a lot of work on car safety and environmentalism. This event had over 150 registrations and 89 people came to the meeting itself.

### **Anti Racism support for students**

During the summer and ongoing I have been meeting with students about racism and supporting on racism in the classroom.

## **ONGOING & FUTURE PLAN**

### **The Lazy Owl:**

The Lazy Owl has been something I have been thinking about a lot. I would like to create more signage and better displays to help students know where the Lazy Owl is, what they can get from it, and where it is. I am also working on ideas for vegetarian options.

### **International Student Tuition Fees Rally**

With support from the team, I will be working on a rally for international students on reducing tuition fees in February. We need to rally to defend our rights. I hope you will join me in this and help fight against high tuition fees. As tuition fees keep getting higher, we need to work to bring them down.



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Hannah Tait

## **PRESIDENT'S EXECUTIVE REPORT**

### **DESCRIPTION OF POSITION**

The President of URSU acts as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the URSU and is responsible for the overall strategic vision of the organization. The President also sits on the Board of Governors and represents the interests of the U of R students there. The President interacts with and influences University administration and builds relationships with all levels of government in order to promote policies that are in the best interests of students. Advancing and maintaining a good working relationship with members of URSU, University administration, the municipal, provincial and federal governments, the private sector and the nonprofit sector. Organizing and planning the new board member orientation and training activities. They are also the Chair of a number of internal and external groups including PAC and the Executive Committee. Finally, the President plays an important role in developing and maintaining the [URSU Constitution](#) and its [bylaws and policies](#). URSU Executives generally work anywhere from 10-30 hours in meetings in addition to regular duties.

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### **PRIORITIES & PROGRESS**

#### **URSU Board**

##### **Training**

The proper functioning of URSU's board and ensuring fiduciary responsibility has been a priority. Over the summer we held six training sessions for the board that covered Robert's Rules of Order, financial statements, URSU Operations, the history of student unions, URSU's governance structure and policy overview. Developing and encouraging future leaders has been a priority. ULead, a leadership and governance program to prepare board members and future student leaders for positions within URSU and the community is set to launch in Winter semester.



### **General Governance**

We have ensured maintenance of governing documents and small changes to ensure good governance until the governance master plan has been done. We also proposed and passed changes to the agenda item deadline to ensure there is three days to review meeting agenda materials. We have been preparing for a thorough review of the constitution and bylaws. Consultations with members and stakeholders will be taking place in conjunction with work of Policy Analyst and Governance Committees.

### **Committees**

URSU has many board committees such as the Human Resource Committee, Sustainability and Social Responsibility, Governance, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility, Events, Finance, Investment and Digital Advisory. To increase members' voice, provide more expertise, and develop members for board and executive positions in the future, the URSU Board approved my proposed increase to the number of members at large serving on our committees. In addition to the elected board members, we have appointed 18 members at large to our committees that help provide expertise and guidance to our committee that then advises the board. I spent summer and early fall orientating the new committees and ensuring there is efficient committee support. I have also worked on facilitating updating committee policy and terms of reference as well as introducing an annual planning process to committees to ensure greater understanding of the responsibilities of committees and ease the transition process. Our committees are extremely strong and have started undertaking many new projects demonstrating the positive impact of the new approach to committees.

### **New Digital Advisory Committee**

Students are facing largely unconsidered challenges in the increasingly digital learning environment. Even with the return to campus, digital spaces and tools must be considered to protect students rights to quality education, privacy, confidentiality. Digital advocacy will shape the universities strategy to ensure equity through removal of institutional barriers instead of creating new ones.. Over the summer we established the first of its kind Digital Advisory Committee to address the challenges and opportunities to student learning in the digital environment.

### **External Relations**

#### **University Administration**

We have developed relationships with administration which help solve student issues, and provide opportunities for advocacy. After being stalled for many years, I reengaged UR International to partner on an emergency fund specifically for International students. I have represented URSU and members at various university functions to improve URSU's recognition. Monthly meetings with the University President and the University Executive team have ensured efficient service to students by pursuing common goals. We have connected individually with



many of the University Executive team to deal with issues as they arise. Recently, MyCreds was launched and was charging students between \$10-\$15 per document. We worked with Dr. Keshen and James D'Arcy to reduce the fees to be at cost of \$6.35 plus taxes. Over the past months we have also been asked to consult on equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives in various university departments. There was a lot of consultation around the return to campus and vaccination policy in early fall, with a slight decrease in communications the second half of the semester.

### **Government Relations**

Our government relations efforts have been off to a great start. I have been able to meet with multiple Members of the Legislative Assembly, Members of Parliament and Mayor Masters over the past months to advocate for affordable tuition for domestic and international students, addiction supports, mental health, the climate crises, gender gaps, minimum wage, sexual violence prevention, sustainability, democratic engagement and building community. URSU partnered with UR Polis to present a candidates forum for the Wascana riding in the recent federal election to ensure students had access to the candidate of their riding. Providing elected officials opportunities to hear student perspectives through formal and informal channels has been important to my work.

### **Student Union Networks**

Developing partners and relationships with the community have been going well. Early on in my term I began meeting with University of Saskatchewan Students Union President and Saskatchewan Polytechnic Student Union President. This fall, the Executive team attended the Student Union Develop Summit where we built relationships with Student Unions from across Canada. These relationships provide support networks for executives, access to new ideas, stronger voices in advocacy.

### **Media and Communications**

I have represented students in various radio, tv and print media on issues related to return to campus, covid-19, tuition, racism on campus and our sustainability initiatives. I have also been releasing bi-weekly President's updates through social media and YouTube to update members and the community about what URSU has been working on.

### **Local Non-Profits**

Connecting with local non profits with similar values and goals to serve people has improved URSU's reputation and clarified our purpose to the broader community. We have also supported awareness and fundraising campaigns that relate to our goals through publicity, volunteering and financial support.



## **Non-URSU Committees and Board**

### **Board of Governors**

The Board of Governors meetings are roughly every two months. At my first meeting on my first day in office I had raised concerns with the meeting in the first week of May impacting the newly elected URSU President's ability to engage fully with the most impactful meeting for students, tuition increases. The dates have now been adjusted to ensure student representatives are able to fully engage with the process around tuition increases. Other concerns and ideas I brought to the Board of Governors were around international student tuition costs, racism on campus, student innovation, academic misconduct, and on campus learning in addition to other issues. I sit on the Finance and Facilities Committee.

### **President's Advisory Committee on Sustainability**

The President's Advisory Committee on Sustainability meets monthly to guide the University President in sustainability strategies and initiatives. This committee has also allowed URSU to promote our initiatives and share our ideas for a more sustainable future. Collaborating with the university has streamlined initiatives to respond to time sensitive climate crises concerns, in addition to pursuing our individual projects.

### **Taskforce on the Future of Technology**

I am the undergraduate student representative on the Taskforce on the Future of Technology which is working on understanding delivery of education and planning for the future. I have assisted the University of Regina's Taskforce on the Future of Technology in Higher Education project. I raised ethical concerns that were addressed, then have been able to provide insight into student needs and experience.

### **Provost Search Committee**

I am serving on the Provost Search Committee for finding an individual to recommend for the Provost position.

### **Academic Incremental Recovery**

Monthly meetings to plan and prepare for different phases of return to campus. We discuss priorities, student and staff needs and safety precautions. This committee provides an opportunity to give updates and voice concerns, as well as hear updates.

### **University of Regina Alumni Association**

URAA's mission to create a community aligns with URSU's in some ways which has led to partnerships and a strong relationship to serve current and past students. We were invited to attend the Extraordinary Alumni Celebration hosted by URAA. I organized sponsorship for Welcome Week activities from URAA.



## **Student Experience**

### **Return to Campus**

The return to campus has been a priority for URSU. There have been nearly weekly consultations and discussions at multiple levels to advocate for students' needs. It was important to ensure that students felt safe with a fall return to campus during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the quality of education as the adjustments were made have been of concern.

### **President's Advisory Committee**

This fall, we reconvened the President's Advisory Committee made up of society presidents of all the faculties. Moving forward, we are hoping to build a better relationship between URSU and Societies. As student leaders it is important that we can support each other through challenges, learning and transitions. I alerted student leadership in the Faculty of Arts that there was no society representing arts students, and will help establish the Arts Students Society in any way I can. I am very excited, motivated and impressed by the Society's leaders who have done great work to keep students engaged during tough times.

### **Welcome Week**

Welcome Week in September was integral to student engagement and building a community. Events we are hosting are Carnival, Lil' Olympics, Movie night, free breakfast, 3 day vaccination clinic in partnership with Wellness Clinic, Prof Talks, Partying 101 (a panel to speak about the risks and mitigations for sex, drinking, drugs and covid while students are out socializing), scavenger hunt, terrarium workshop, and club fair. We coordinated with the university to plan the event to ensure public safety.

### **Events**

We have held multiple events in collaboration with student groups and independently. In addition to meeting with individual members, our events allow us to connect with members and have fun. Candy Cane Exec Connect this summer allowed us to meet and connect outdoors with members in a socially distanced way. I help serve food at the Free Breakfasts in the Lazy Owl. We also held a fun movie night for Halloween, then URSU Squid Games.

## **Operations**

### **Senior Management Hiring**

I played a big role in multiple Senior Management roles hired over the last 6 months. Ensuring permanent staff understand the direction and organizational culture is very important. We have had a strong focus on equitable hiring practises to ensure we are representative of our membership and encourage EDIA within our operations.

### **Advocacy Department**

New initiative to increase advocacy abilities of URSU resulted in the board approving a proposal





for a new Advocacy Department. This department will support the board and executives in campaign planning, research and creating actionable strategies. A stronger focus on advocacy means URSU will be able to change systemic and institutional challenges for our members.

### **Health Insurance**

I have been able to help students with health and dental insurance questions in addition to providing details on the plan during Orientation week in various orientation sessions has improved student understanding of our health and dental plan. We have also met with providers multiple times to check on service and what can be improved.

### **Equitable Student Employment**

I have paid special attention to our hiring practises. I initiated conversations to employ more students in general, but also students with equity considerations. Coordinating with Campus for All has allowed URSU to work with members of our community. I also led URSU's Career Fair Booth and student employment events to improve members' understanding of employment opportunities.

### **Social Justice and Advocacy**

#### **Truth and Reconciliation**

We hope to integrate Indigenous governance and traditional practises to URSU's governance structures to better serve our Indigenous members. We have worked with First Nations University Student Associations in Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon to ensure a balance of autonomy, while still accessing URSU's services and programs. URSU Executives, staff and board have also been attending learning opportunities and have been getting involved in events celebrating and recognising Indigenous culture, as well as mourning after the unmarked graves.

#### **Addictions**

During Welcome Week I organized a panel discussion Party101: Stay safe and have fun where experts spoke about harm reduction in terms of drugs, sex, alcohol and COVID as the province reopened bars and students were more frequently going out and socializing. We have also been able to support local organizations with missions to advocate for proper addictions support. I attended a local rally on Overdose Awareness day.

#### **Child Care and Early Learning**

Over the summer I participated in numerous consultations on child care and early learning public policy for the Saskatchewan Government. Many student members with childcare responsibilities face high costs, low availability and inflexible hours which creates many challenges to academic success. Providing student perspectives was able to shape proposed policy changes.



**Sustainability**

Attending and speaking at local climate rallies have allowed URSU to engage on climate issues, learn more and demonstrate our commitment and initiatives. On campus, URSU also had a part in ensuring there were recycling bins being in the residences room, and we hope to facilitate more recycling options in the future.

**ONGOING & FUTURE PLAN****Fall Board Retreat**

In December URSU Board will be having a retreat to do board development. There will be a focus on Anti-Oppression and team bonding. This retreat will help ensure we can continue meeting fiduciary duties and good governance.

**Strategic Planning**

In December we will be doing our strategic planning. This process will involve board members, members at large, executives, staff and a facilitator. Formalizing the direction of the organization based on member needs is a priority. This strategic plan will be utilized to create work planning processes for executives and staff to coordinate to reach goals.

**ULead Launch**

The leadership and governance training program will be launched this Winter semester. This program will be open to members and board members. We hope to empower members to engage in URSU affairs and create change in and after school.

**Tuition Advocacy Taskforce**

This fall our board approved a terms of reference for a tuition advocacy taskforce to further research and understand the impact of high tuition costs, create a plan to address it and initiate strategies.

**Frost Week**

This winter semester the majority of students will be back on campus after many years. Our Frost Week activities in early January will provide a variety of fun experiences for everyone coming back to campus.

**Society Handbook and Guide**



In Collaboration with the President's Advisory Committee, I will establish a formal handbook to ensure URSU and Society relationships are mutually beneficial and supportive through information sharing, financial support, administrative support and other transition considerations.

**Saskatoon and Prince Albert Campus Visits**

URSU represents members from campuses in Saskatoon and Prince Albert. Historically, we have not been able to connect as we would like with these campuses and students. Building our relationship with rural and remote students will be a priority with hybrid program offerings, and in person visits for consultation and collaboration.

**Governance review and renew**

Updating the constitution and governance practises to meet the needs of students, and to ensure good governance to meet ethical and legal obligations.

**Scholarship, Bursary and Loan Committee**

The Committee was established to enable students and post-secondary institutions to provide input on issues regarding student financial assistance. The Committee's primary role is to make recommendations to the Minister of Advanced Education concerning the development and administration of scholarships, bursaries and loans, and other forms of assistance for post-secondary students under any program in which financial support for students is delivered.