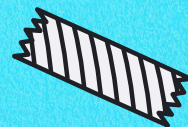




Advocacy Recap 2024-2025



cusa
Advocacy

Foreword

Hello/Bonjour/Aanii Ravens!

We are incredibly proud to present to you the results of CUSA's Advocacy work over the past term, in the form of our 2025 Advocacy Recap. This document serves as testament to how we incorporate feedback and advocate for student priorities as a result. In each of our 12 key advocacy areas, CUSA has been able to make marketed improvements to student quality of life, whether indirectly or directly, on and off the Carleton campus.

The results of our Advocacy Roadmap this year indicated a strong desire from students for more aggressive advocacy on transit. We're proud to say with the opening of Line 2, a first-of-its-kind CUSA Transit Panel, and through general advocacy with both the provincial and municipal governments, we have been able to make strides towards a better transit system for all in Ottawa, especially student riders.

On housing and affordability concerns, we pushed strongly for universal basic income (UBI) at the federal level, received endorsement from local politicians concerning a student loan and FHSA-matching contribution scheme, and supported a first-of-its-kind renoviction by-law here in Ottawa, designed to protect student tenants from bad faith evictions.

In acknowledging our achievements also comes with acknowledging areas where we can improve. CUSA's Advocacy Team needs to take a clearer lead on other priorities, such as environmental sustainability, student healthcare needs, accessibility, and Indigenous reconciliation. It is our hope that into the next executive term these issues will be amplified and solutions addressed.

None of this would be possible without the support of students here at Carleton. We are indebted to you for your continued contributions, support, and guidance in our advocacy efforts.

Sincerely,
CUSA's Advocacy Team



Artur Estrela Da Silva
V.P. Student Issues



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



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

Incoming Councillor Survey: Results

Beginning on March 31, 2025, both incoming and outgoing members of CUSA Council were asked to voluntarily fill out a short survey regarding the performance of the Advocacy Team this academic year. The survey asked questions surrounding the perception and performance of the organization's advocacy in specific areas, determined by the priorities indicated in our Advocacy Roadmap.

Findings

Councillors felt overwhelmingly positive about the Advocacy Team's work on transit-specific priorities. Over 80% of respondents indicated that CUSA's transit advocacy over the last year had met the needs and expectations of the student body, compared with just under 20% that did not.

In areas where the Advocacy Team could improve or expand the scope of its advocacy, 73.3% of respondents indicated that they would like to see CUSA advocate more strongly for housing and affordability, and a further 60% wished to see further advocacy with regard to accessibility concerns.

Communication & Effectiveness

Just over half of respondents "Strongly agreed" or "Agreed" that CUSA's Advocacy Team consistently communicated in correspondence with students' needs. The remaining respondents indicated either neutrality or "Disagreed" with the statement.

CUSA Council members were also asked to describe the work of the CUSA Advocacy Team throughout the year in a single word, the results of which are displayed on the word cloud below. The vast majority of the words reflected a generally positive or adequate response to Advocacy this year, with words such as "Effective" and "Dedicated" being most common. Some preference towards describing the work as "Hidden" or "Overshadowed" is also noted. Responses where more than one word was included are not shown.



Reflections

The results of this survey indicated that the perception of CUSA's Advocacy Team among members of CUSA Council remains generally positive, though the diversity and communication of advocacy remain an issue. Council members overwhelmingly believed that CUSA's Advocacy was too heavily concentrated on transit-related matters, and that more work should be done to broaden the scope of our advocacy initiatives. As evidenced by feelings on the communication of priorities and the work of the advocacy team overall, more work should be done to better communicate and scope and reach of CUSA's Advocacy achievements throughout the year.

Priority: Transit



Municipal, Provincial



Overview

Following consultation for [CUSA's 2024-2025 Advocacy Roadmap](#), transit emerged as CUSA's top priority for the Academic Year, with nearly 50% of students reporting it as their top concern. Throughout the year, CUSA met several times with OC Transpo officials, University administration staff, and NGOs to discuss students' concerns and coordinate advocacy efforts.

Achievements

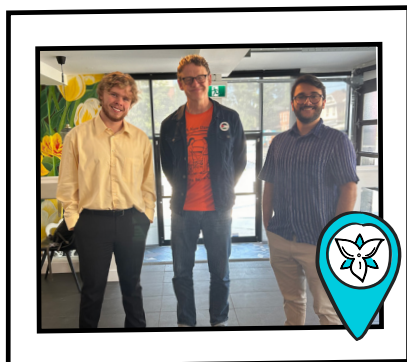
The 111: Delivered on continued 111 bus service for students, guaranteeing its extension to Carleton and continued weekday transit connections to Billings Bridge until at least the end of the academic year.

O-Train: Regularly communicated with OC Transpo regarding Line 2 openings and phased-in service, in-time for the winter semester to address existing capacity challenges during peak campus hours.

Transit Forum: Worked with community partners, local politicians, and advocates to host a student-led Transit Forum/Q&A on Carleton campus.

Fair Fares: Continued advocacy on fair U-Pass and EquiPass prices – ensuring students aren't paying more, for less service – by meeting with OC Transpo and delegating at the City Council's Transit Committee.

Provincial Funding: Met with Members of Provincial Parliament and City Councilors to advocate for a fair, dollar-for-dollar transit deal for Ottawa, advocating provincial partners contribute to the future sustainability of Ottawa's transit system.



Challenges

Lack of Clear Communication: OC Transpo and City Council continue to make decisions that affect student transit riders without direct consultation or communication with students, especially on campus.

Unreliable Schedules: OC Transpo's service continues to leave students behind, especially on estimated wait times, despite current metrics.

Off-Peak Services: OC Transpo service continues to prioritize the 9-5, a model that simply doesn't work for the vast majority of student commuters.

Next Steps/Future Recommendations

Continue to Fight for U-Pass: Continue negotiating to ensure students are getting a fair deal, not paying more for less, and that any increase comes with noticeable improvements to the state of Ottawa's transit system.

Reverse the Cuts: Advocate to OC Transpo and the City to reverse many of the cuts to rural and suburban service routes made during the 2023 Bus Route Review, including many 200-series routes and off-peak Line 1 service.

Service After Dark: Work with OC Transpo for overnight rapid bus service direct to Carleton University, and ensure that Safe Stop services are well-promoted and utilized after 7:00 p.m.

Priority: Accessibility



University, Municipal

Overview

Accessibility was broadly reported in our consultations as a top priority to students, with 14.62% of students reporting it as their top priority. Questions concerning the overall accessibility of campus infrastructure and parking, were some of the main concerns.

Achievements

A Formal Parking Report: Surveyed over 200 students and worked on a first-of-its-kind student-led parking survey, with key recommendations on improving the parking situation on Carleton's campus. This survey will be published this summer!

Accessibility Funding: Distributed over \$30,000 for accessibility-related initiatives and concerns through CUSA's Accessibility Fund Committee.

Braille Signage Initiative: Worked with the Carleton Disability Awareness Centre – a CUSA Service Centre – to plan a Braille Signage Initiative to improve campus accessibility. Funding for the initiative has been secured and it will start pending Carleton’s Facilities Management Planning (FMP) approval.

Accessibility in the City: Provided recommendations through EngageOttawa regarding the development of the City of Ottawa’s 2025-2029 Municipal Accessibility Plan (COMAP), including accessibility features on transit and in pedestrian infrastructure.

Challenges

A Constrained University Budget: Difficulty in funding major infrastructure improvements (elevators, tunnels, sidewalks) on Carleton’s campus, due to an increasingly challenging financial situation.



The Parking Squeeze: Parking is expensive and in short supply on Carleton’s campus, especially following the demolition of P9, leaving many who drive to campus, without proper parking options.

AODA Implementation: Full implementation of an “Accessible Ontario by 2025” has yet to be realized, leaving many Carleton students without the proper support or resources from the provincial government.

Next Steps/Future Recommendations

Opening the Conversation: Engaging more students and on-campus services about accessibility, broadening the conversation through feedback forms, town halls, and support for student-led grassroots advocacy.

Coordinating with Campus Services: Greater collaboration between the Advocacy Team, CDAC, PMC, and other campus stakeholders in accessibility.

A Physical Infrastructure Review: A complete and comprehensive review of all campus infrastructure, identifying key problem areas for folks with accessibility issues.

Priority: Tuition



University, Provincial, Federal

Overview

The cost of education has been another key area of concern to students, 11.63% of consulted students reported it as their top priority. Half of concerns pertained to tuition costs and a fourth pertained specifically to International tuition. The other fourth of replies reported general concerns, such as the costs of textbooks and the availability of scholarships and loans.

Achievements

Tuition Guarantee Advocacy: Held meetings with Carleton University administration to explore the possibility of implementing a tuition guarantee for students, advocating for predictable and stable tuition rates throughout a student's education.

International Tuition Freeze Advocacy: Advocated to the university and to government officials to push for a freeze on international tuition rates, addressing concerns over the increasing financial burden placed on international students.



Challenges

Competing Financial Interests: Struggled to address competing financial interests of the university and government policies, with growing dependence on international student tuition fees and budget concerns complicating discussions on affordability and accessibility.

Resistance to Policy Change: Encountered resistance from both university administration and government officials in implementing a tuition guarantee and freezing international student tuition rates, with concerns about the financial sustainability of the institution.

Next Steps/Future Recommendations

Expansion of Scholarships for High-Cost Programs: Work with university administration to increase the availability and value of scholarships for high-demand programs such as STEM, ensuring that students in these fields have access to financial support.

Tuition Guarantee Implementation: Continue advocating for the implementation of a fixed-rate tuition model, pushing for further conversations with both provincial and national governments to ensure long-term affordability.

Priority: Housing & Affordability



Municipal, Provincial, Federal

Overview

Closing off CUSA's top 4 advocacy priorities for the academic year was Housing & Affordability, the top concern of 11% of surveyed students. Reported concerns were well-distributed between the cost of rent, housing availability on and off campus, food insecurity, and job insecurity.

Achievements

A Student Housing Guide: Developed "Housing 101" alongside the CUSA Think Tank, a first-of-its-kind student housing guide including external resources, tenant rights and responsibilities, and accessibility considerations.

FHSA-Student Loan Matching: Received endorsement from several federal politicians regarding the development of a FHSA contribution matching program for Canada Student Loans, allowing for students to make a dollar-for-dollar investment in their education and their first home.

The Fight Against "Renovictions:" Worked with local city councillors to pass a Renoviction by-law, the first-of-its-kind in Ottawa, to help protect students from unjust evictions or rental price-gouging.

Consultation for Students: Worked with the City of Ottawa to provide feedback and develop a renewed Housing Needs Assessment, including provisions specific to student needs.

Universal Basic Income: Supported and advocated for the first nationwide UBI bill brought to the House of Commons by MP Leah Gazan, including on-campus petitioning, awareness campaigns, and a press conference.

Housing Advocacy Connections: Met with several city councilors, MPPs, MPs, and partner NGOs to present, discuss, and strategize on housing advocacy on behalf of students.



Challenges

The Homelessness Emergency: The City of Ottawa declared a homelessness emergency in 2020. Despite this, thousands of young people across the city remain homeless and providers such as the Ottawa Mission are at the forefront of catastrophic housing and food insecurity.

The Cost of Living Surge: Being a student is more expensive than ever, whether it's rent, groceries, or transportation, limiting where and how students live in Ottawa, and further driving up prices as a result.

Restrictive Zoning: The City of Ottawa's zoning by-law continues to remain relatively inflexible for mixed-use or mixed density zoning, leaving many students to pay exorbitant rents in neighbourhoods zoned exclusively for single-family density.

Next Steps/Future Recommendations

Focus on the Essentials: Focus on policies and resources that explicitly address the surge in the price of groceries, clothing, hygiene products, and other household goods.

Better Transitional Resources: Continue to look for ways to expand CUSA's external partnerships and provide for resources as students transition off-campus.

A Review of On-Campus Housing Options: A comprehensive review of current housing availability on residence, future recommendations and the impacts of a new residence building.

Priority: Student Healthcare



University, Municipal

Overview

This year, CUSA has committed to addressing student healthcare, particularly focusing on mental health and wellness. One of our major achievements was the creation of the **Student Mental Health and Wellness Catalogue**, developed by the CUSA Think Tank.

This comprehensive report incorporated student testimonies, data from **Health and Wellness, FITA**, and **Campus Safety Services**, as well as academic research, to provide valuable insights into the

mental health challenges students face and the resources available to support them. Additionally, CUSA has worked closely with **key university departments** to assess current conditions and identify opportunities for **improvement in student healthcare services**, ensuring that students have access to the support they need.



Next Steps

CUSA is committed to advocating for a **more accessible and effective healthcare system** for students. We will push the provincial government to establish clear, measurable target wait times for clinics at postsecondary institutions, ensuring timely care for students. Furthermore, CUSA will advocate for updates to the Ontario Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy to officially recognize postsecondary students as a distinct cohort with specific needs. Additionally, we will continue to push for **the elimination of medical documentation requirements for academic accommodations**, helping to reduce barriers to support for students seeking mental health assistance.

Priority: EDI & International Students



Overview

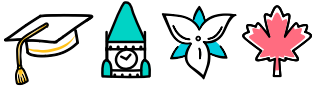
CUSA has made significant achievements this year in advocating for **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)** and the **needs of international students**. One of our key achievements was the publication of the **International Student Welcome Guide**, a comprehensive support guide that provides students with support and essential information. Additionally, CUSA hosted the **International Student Breakfast**, offering students a unique opportunity to network with politicians, embassy representatives, organizations, and the ISSO. Our Advocacy Team also advocated for the lowering or **freezing of tuition fees for international students and the adoption of a tuition guarantee model**, bringing this issue to government and university officials. Regarding Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, following consultation, CUSA produced the **Anti-Arab and Palestinian Discrimination Report**, which included student survey results and testimonies, alongside actionable policy recommendations. Additionally, our advocacy team prepared the relaunch of CUSA's **Social Justice Hub** to provide resources for students facing discrimination, which will be published on our website soon.

Next Steps

Looking forward, CUSA is committed to further enhancing support for marginalized and international students, working to improve their access to information and quality of life. Additionally, CUSA will advocate for more **culturally competent mental healthcare**, promote more **intercultural learning opportunities and safe spaces**, and push for the appointment of **senior university administrators with EDI explicitly included in their roles**, ensuring that these critical issues are prioritized at all levels of governance.



Priority: Sustainability



University, Municipal, Provincial, Federal

Overview

During 2024-25, CUSA was successful in obtaining **student representation on the City's Solid Waste Management Stakeholder Sounding Board** and provided invaluable feedback from students on sustainability best practices and innovative solutions. Before the holidays, **CUSA hosted a "Thrift the Trends" event** in Nideyinan, helping hundreds of students find sustainable alternatives to new clothing and helping to reduce textile waste. CUSA also introduced a new **personal blue bin program**, allowing students living in multi-residential buildings to receive a complementary blue bin and recycling resources, free of charge.



Next Steps

In the future, CUSA can work to expand both the **scale and scope of its sustainability-related programming** on campus, and the extent to which CUSA is **vocal in the wider Ottawa community** on sustainability concerns. CUSA can also work to undertake more extensive consultation with the University waste contractor, and openly **endorse fossil-fuel non-proliferation** policies.

Priority: Research



University, Provincial, Federal

Overview

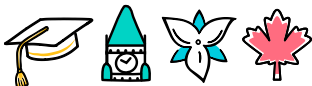
Throughout the year, CUSA has successfully provided students with research opportunities and made research an essential component of CUSA's services and advocacy on behalf of students. A key achievement has been the creation of the **CUSA Think Tank**, which consists of six dedicated volunteers who have contributed to various research projects aimed at addressing students' needs. This group has played a central role in developing valuable resources such as the **Housing 101 Guide**, the **Anti-Arab and Palestinian Discrimination Report**, and the **Mental Health and Wellness Catalogue**.



Next Steps

In the future, CUSA will continue to strengthen its efforts to enhance research opportunities for students. We will advocate for **increased provincial funding for research grants**, focusing on areas of critical need, and push for a higher percentage of university operating income to be allocated to research. Additionally, we will provide more opportunities within our Executive Team to **support student-led research initiatives**, as well as create a platform for students to collaborate on large-scale research projects through the continued **growth of the CUSA Think Tank**.

Priority: Indigenous Reconciliation



University, Municipal, Provincial, Federal

Overview

This year, CUSA began developing an **Indigenous Action Plan**, a roadmap that focuses specifically on Indigenous students and matters, created in collaboration with Mawandoseg (CUSA's Indigenous Service Centre), the Department of Equity and Inclusive Communities, Elders in the community, and Carleton's Centre for Indigenous Support and Community. CUSA also took steps to build relationships with Indigenous Elders in our community, engaging in meaningful dialogue to better understand Indigenous cultures and inform our work in truth and reconciliation. Furthermore, our Mawandoseg Service Centre hosted several events to celebrate and raise awareness of Indigenous cultures, helping to foster a more inclusive and supportive campus environment for Indigenous students.



Next Steps

In the future, CUSA will continue to collaborate with stakeholders, including the University and community members, to finalize a comprehensive Indigenous Action Plan, identifying concrete Calls to Action for our organization. Additionally, we will advocate for increased provincial funding for Indigenous language programs at universities and colleges, in alignment with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. CUSA will also work to enhance training for our staff and student Councillors to deepen their understanding of the legacy of residential schools and ongoing Indigenous inequities, ensuring our work is rooted in education and awareness.

Priority: Sexual Violence Prevention



Overview

Over the past year, CUSA was committed in taking significant steps in addressing sexual violence on campus. Through the university's Sexual Violence Prevention and Education Committee, CUSA contributed valuable input to the **university's sexual violence policy review**, advocating for crucial changes and improvements in the university's approach to handling these issues. CUSA's recommendations were **published in a report format**, available in the LinkTree in our Instagram's bio. Additionally, CUSA helped plan and execute the **Sexual Assault Awareness Week**, collaborating with the **Department of Equity and Inclusive Communities** and hosting events that offered vital support through the **GSRC Service Centre**. These initiatives have helped raise awareness and provide resources for students affected by sexual violence.

Next Steps

Moving forward, CUSA is committed to deepening its efforts to combat sexual violence. We will continue to collaborate with **Health and Counseling**, as well as the **Department of Equity and Inclusive Communities**, to create initiatives that offer support and solidarity to survivors. CUSA will remain actively engaged in the review process of the university's **Sexual Violence Policy**, work to connect students with **legal resources**, and support the **accessibility of emergency contraception in partnership with the Women's Centre**.





 cusaonline.ca

     @cusaonline