

Possible Liberal stand on education becomes clearer

Liberal policies on education emerge

A survey on education that the Student Union Vice President External mailed out to candidates has produced more information on education being released by the Liberal party. That information is reported here not as a sign of any sort of favouritism but as important information, since the likelihood of at least a minority Liberal government appears

to increasing. Two statements were released by the Liberals in response to the questionnaire, one from the Liberal Youth and the other from the campaign director, speaking on behalf of the four P.E.I. members of parliament.

The statement from the Liberal Youth (by far the most detailed of the two) reported notably that a Liberal government would reinstate

the six month interest-free grace period that students used to receive upon graduation (this was eliminated by the Federal government this past spring despite spirited opposition from students all over the country in concert with Canadian Federation of Students lobbying).

The statement goes on to explain that a Liberal government would reform the Canada Student Loans program in such a way as to "address the general issues of accessibility and university funding and the particular concerns of cost-of-living criteria, loan administration fees, interest relief, loan defaults, and address the specific concerns of all types of students including full and part-time, single parents, aboriginal Canadians" While specific details are not overly abundant (unlike the Conservative education platform statements), the statement does go on to address the crushing debt loads of some students and the fact that "Students this year face 1993 cost-of-living expenses with 1984 cost-of-living based student loans.

The area of federal financing of education is also addressed. The Liberals report to being committed to "the renegotiating of the Established Programs Financing arrangements (EPF) [transfer payments] to ensure stability and predictability for post-secondary education..." They also mention that a Liberal government would (according to their statement) "work with universities and the private sector to increase Canada's investment in research and provide stable funding for the Granting Councils." Also mentioned are the proposal for a national apprenticeship program as a move to alleviate youth unemployment by providing people with work-based experience in various areas that apparently would include those of high technology and the proposal for a "Canadian Youth Service Corps" (only for people under 25). This corps would involve people doing environmental and social community work.

As some form of a Liberal government now seems likely, students should be looking for specific policies from Liberals. When the level of opposition that many students have had with the present Federal Government is considered, it becomes even more important that students find out what Liberals are saying about education during this election.

BRUCE DAVISON

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