

# Tuition shell game

BY CHRIS MULHALL, THE STARPHOENIX    OCTOBER 21, 2011

The Saskatchewan Party's announcement that it will provide \$500 per year and up to \$2,000 to each student pursuing a postsecondary education in the province may seem like a great relief to many.

However, look at the numbers to get a full sense of what's happened to tuition over just the past few years.

Statistics Canada data show that tuition in Saskatchewan for a general bachelor's degree in 2008-09 was \$5,064. After the government lifted the tuition freeze for 2009-10, the fee increased by 3.4 per cent, to \$5,238. For the 2010-11 school year, tuition jumped by 3.6 per cent to \$5,431, and in 2011-12 it increased again by 3.1 per cent to \$5,601.

This snapshot of four years shows tuition rising steadily.

For a student (Lucy) who completed a four-year degree in 2008, the total tuition cost would have been \$20,256. For someone (Peter) who started university in 2008, the four-year cost would reach \$21,334.

If we apply tuition hikes similar to those implemented since 2009-10 to a student (Paula) who begins university in 2011, her total for four years would be \$23,575. With the \$2,000 subsidy the Saskatchewan Party promises, Paula's total cost would be \$21,575. She ends up paying \$241 more than Peter for the same degree, and \$1,319 more than Lucy, who enjoyed the benefits of a tuition freeze.

Giving a tuition rebate with one hand, using money quietly taken from students with the other hand, is simply a shell game.

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