

PRIVATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

ENTRANCE EXAM

F is for failure.

Some people want to let private colleges and universities open shop. This is the wrong answer.

Public colleges and universities are the right answer.

This should be obvious.

The facts

Canada's colleges and universities are funded mostly with

public money

private money

Graduates from Canada's public colleges and universities have done

more for Canada than graduates from private institutions

less for Canada than graduates from private institutions

The obvious answer

A quality college or university education for future generations depends on

a return to adequate funding for public colleges and universities

legalizing new private/for profit colleges and universities



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[THE CASE AGAINST PRIVATE COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES]

HARD LESSONS

TAKE THIS SIMPLE TEST

Private colleges and universities are part of a calculated attempt to:

Lower the wages of post-secondary education workers.

Undermine the working conditions of post-secondary education workers.

Eliminate education unions.

All of the above.

Private colleges and universities are part of a calculated attempt to:

Mask the deliberate under-funding of the public education system.

Paperover broken promises to provide a real chance at a quality post-secondary education to all Canadians who qualify.

All of the above.

Keep private colleges and universities out.

Privatization flunks again

EDUCATION is a right. Not a privilege. We Canadians believe that. We prove it with our tax money.

So, our grade schools are PUBLIC schools, and our high schools are PUBLIC schools. And our colleges and universities are PUBLIC too.

Our taxes cover all the costs of our grade schools and high schools—and most of the cost of our colleges and universities. It's our way of trying to even things out. To give every kid an equal opportunity to make the most of her or his own talents.

Some people want to change this. Their idea is that higher education should be a cash and carry deal—the best education reserved for those with the most cash.

This is a dumb idea. It doesn't take a genius to see why.

CRASHED COURSES

Private colleges and universities will do for education what McDonald's did for hamburgers: serve up a cheap imitation of the real thing to anyone ready to pay what they ask.

Private colleges and universities will also turn the jobs of education workers into McJobs: cheap imitations of real jobs, the kind that actually pay enough to live on.

LESSON 1

Less is not more. Never was. Never will be.

No matter how thin you slice it, less cannot turn into more. Not ever.

Allowing private/for profit colleges and universities a share of the pie can only mean less for public education.

Private/for profit colleges and universities will demand and get an unfair share of the dwindling funds, faculty and other resources now available to our public education system.

The more private/for profit colleges and universities take, the more our public colleges and universities will lose; the more education workers will lose; and the more our kids will lose. The more private/for profit colleges and universities take, the more we move toward a two tier education system: first class for some; second class for most.

No matter how thin you slice it, it's still baloney.

No more teachers
No more books
No more jobs
That's how bad it looks!

LESSON 2

The rich get the best, we get what's left.

Staying alive, while maintaining high standards for staff and students, is already tough enough for most small and/or regional colleges and universities in Canada. Private/for profit colleges and universities will make that task next to impossible.

Perhaps our biggest public colleges and universities will be able to survive the cutthroat competition from private/for profit institutions by continuous appeals for funds from alumni and by foraging for funds in corporate boardrooms. But there is little doubt about what we could finally be left with: just a handful of big public colleges and universities and a handful of big private colleges and universities, all located in our largest cities.

The rest of us will be left to learn to make do with whatever's left.

LESSON 3

Course load turns into debt load

It already takes a lot of money to get a college or university education—far too much money, far too often.

Private colleges and universities will not make it any easier. Attendance will be restricted: the students will have to be wealthy, or be willing to take on massive debt loads, just to buy themselves the education they hope will bring them a real chance at a real job and a real life of their own.

But even that choice won't last long. Finally, the choking off of support for public colleges and universities will bring a decline in the quality of a public education that will drive students to pay whatever it takes to get the quality of education they feel they need.

They will be held hostage forever by their own debt monster.

LESSON 4

Corporate control knows no bounds

Mike Harris and other promoters of private/for profit colleges and universities say Bond University in Australia fits their idea of the future.

Bond U has fewer than 2,000 students. It is wholly owned and run by the Bond Corporation. Students choose courses from a Bond-approved curriculum taught by professors Bond hires, in buildings Bond owns.

If knowledge is power, deciding what is knowledge is the greatest power. It is a realisation that reveals the Big Brother threat in this vision of our future.

A future where our children are taught by the graduates of Coca-Cola College, our surgeries are performed by alumni of Nike University and our resources are administered by graduates of Esso U.