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## [News Roundup](#)

# Pay your way

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Economic conditions for students continue to be difficult in this climate of economic uncertainty. With the Alberta government renegeing on its commitment to raise the minimum wage this past February, students organized to present at the minimum wage review committee set up by the Minister of Employment and Immigration. Students asked that the provincial government look to raise the minimum wage from \$8.80 to \$9/hr and to set increases annually according to the average weekly earnings. Alberta has the third highest tuition and the fourth lowest minimum wage in the country, meaning Alberta students would have to work longer than a student in Ontario to make their tuition commitments. According to a recent labour survey by the Canadian Education Project one third of working students surveyed work in the service and sales sector.

The survey only adds to concerns about the economic hardship of students. Student unemployment was at nearly 20 percent which is double what Statistics Canada reported the levels to be at in their Labour Force Survey. This is due to definitional differences between Statistics Canada and the Canadian Education Project, differences which the founding members of the Canadian Education Project believe need to be addressed. Statistics Canada measures labour force participation in a way that excludes university students who choose to study rather than work. This results in a student unemployment level comparable to the national average at just over 10 percent, while if you include students who are studying or who could not find work it doubles the unemployment rate. The Canadian Education Project believes this has an impact on the development of student loan policy and the expectation of students to contribute to their education.