



Wednesday, November 14, 2017

Good Morning Everyone. My name is Naqi Hyder, and I am currently the President and Transition Manager at DCSI. Today I stand before you because I feel that we students lack a voice, and we need to be heard. It has been a long strike, and we should be the top priority. However, in the end, everyone seems to have forgotten how much this strike is affecting us. Today we stand together to protest with various college's across Ontario to have a voice, and to be heard.

As a student leader, it has been very difficult for me to watch the strike, and listen to the difficulties my fellow students are facing. Students are unable to attend the already paid classes, which for most students put themselves into debt. During this strike, students feel forgotten because there have been no answers given to feel secure. Strike is not only affecting their academic life, it has caused great stress on there economic, and personal well-being.

This strike has added immense additional pressure that should not exist. The mental health of students is affected, and this strike needs to end with a plan that supports students return to studies. This strike is bringing more uncertainty each day, and there is no assistance provided to the students to help get through this hard time.

Everyone is advocating and fighting for what they feel is correct, however students are forced to face the consequences, even though they should be the ones at the top of the priority list. The students need options having lesser tuitions, and reimbursements. It should be the students who are paid for all the time they spent watching the news to learn everything about the strike. It should be the students who should be paid for everything they lost with this strike!

Most students use college as a pathway to change their career, or to build a stronger one. However, with this strike most of the students are forced to rethink their entire lives, and are thrown into limbo. How is that fair?

DCSI has tried to do everything to support the student body that is affected at Durham College. We have worked with DC's staff to ensure students stay engaged, organized study groups, offered space, hosted a Q&A with VP, Student Affairs, we have rallied at Queen's park calling this strike to end, and we have also written a Letter to Deb Matthews (Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development encouraging the end of the strike. However, we are still continuing efforts to put an emphasis on how students should be first before anything else.

"We want in" is a student-led protest group created for tuition refund and a voice. The group started just merely two weeks ago have grown up to 1,600 members and have connected with five other sister colleges. The students at Durham, George Brown, Georgian Orillia and Barrie campus, Loyalist and Seneca Colleges has spoken and will stand united today to spread the message that we want back into the classrooms, we want our tuition refunded, and we want our voices heard! We the students from varying Colleges across the province are tired of being placed in the middle of this fight, and we will not sit by idly any longer. The province is creating a plan for funds to be allocated, that will bring further division to us the students, and we CANNOT

allow this to happen. We implore every student in Ontario to take a stand with us, have your voice heard and let all the parties involved know they we will NOT be overlooked any longer! We need to be a part of these conversations, so we know who is managing OUR money, who is making the decisions on what OUR NEEDS are and if we meet their criteria for hardship. We want fair and equal reimbursement of OUR funds, not another bureaucratic hand dictating what will happen with OUR money. Some Colleges will be protesting in front of Toronto City Hall, and others will be protesting at their local campuses. Today is the day we will be heard as one voice! Join and support to end this strike, and for all of us to have a voice. We students want in NOW.