

CAUT

# 2004 Election Kit

“This will be a *pivotal* election.”

Canadian Association  
of University Teachers

May 2004

Dear Colleagues,

A federal election presents us with an opportunity to focus public attention on important issues and to educate political candidates on the priorities of Canadians. As Canadians prepare to go to the polls this year, CAUT needs your help to make sure post-secondary education is on the agenda.

Our non-partisan election strategy has two main goals: to build local and national alliances so that we can raise public awareness about the challenges facing universities and colleges in Canada; and to present our solutions to these challenges.

This will be a pivotal election for universities and colleges. That's why it's important for those of us committed to improving the quality and accessibility of post-secondary education to get involved in the upcoming campaign. Please join with me and with colleagues across the country in making sure our common message will be heard this election.

Yours sincerely,

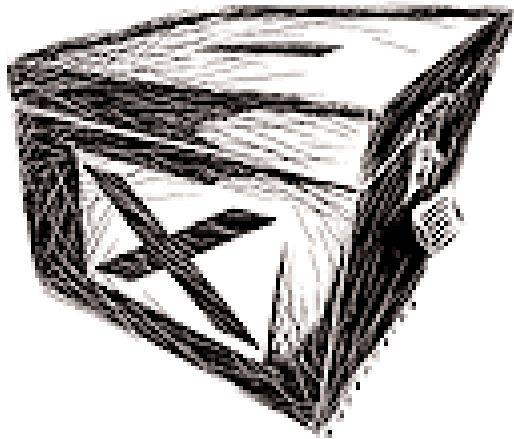


Loretta Czernis  
President, CAUT

**CAUT**

# 2004 Election Kit

## Make the most of this kit



### 3 things you can do right now to get involved!

**1** Give copies of this kit to members of your executive.

**2** Include information in this kit in your next newsletter.

**3** Copy and distribute the election fact sheets included with this kit.

### Inside

- ♦ Getting organized...step by step
- ♦ Campaign tools and tactics
- ♦ Hosting an all-candidates debate
- ♦ Creative campaign tools and tactics
- ♦ Sample questions for candidates
- ♦ Contacts and resources
- ♦ Allies and partners
- ♦ CAUT Election Fact Sheets

*University & College Revenues*

*Operating Grants*

*Tuition Fees*

*Tuition and Income*

*Labour Market Trends*

*Research Funding*

*University Libraries*

*University Faculty*

*Faculty Renewal*



"Why are you complaining? You didn't vote in the last election, remember?"

## Getting organized...step by step

**A**t first, getting involved locally in a federal election campaign can seem an overwhelming task. A successful campaign requires careful planning, coordination and, most of all, commitment. By spending a little time getting organized, you'll be surprised at what you will be able to accomplish.

### Step 1: Identify your goals

*Having a clear sense of what you hope to achieve during the campaign is the first step in successful planning. Some goals you may consider include:*

- To ensure all candidates are informed about post-secondary education issues.
- To ensure your members and the university and college community are informed about the issues.
- To ensure community leaders, the media and the public are aware of the importance of local colleges and universities.
- To obtain commitments from candidates for better support of colleges and universities.

### Step 2: Identify your strategies

*Once you have identified your goals, you then need to think of the best ways they can be achieved. For example, what will you need to do so that your members, the candidates and the public are aware of post-secondary education issues? Some strategies you might consider include:*

- Providing members, the media and the public with support and information during the campaign.
- Working with local labour, student and community groups.
- Using existing communication tools like newsletters to make members more aware of the issues.
- Developing a media and communications strategy to inform the public of the issues facing universities and colleges.



### Quick Tip

Save time and get more people involved by sharing the work.

Set up an election campaign committee through your faculty association.

You might also form a coalition with student groups and other organizations on campus to plan a coordinated campaign.

## Campaign tools and tactics

**T**ools and tactics are the actions and activities you take to implement your strategy. These can be something as simple as talking to your members about the election, or as ambitious as organizing an all-candidates forum.

Depending upon what time, resources and volunteers you have, here are some tools and tactics you might employ.

### Talking to your candidates at the doorstep

When candidates come canvassing, ask them about their position on post-secondary education issues.

Explain the challenges your institution faces and suggest what the federal government should be doing to better support universities and colleges. Use the sample questions provided in this kit.

### Meeting the candidates

A private meeting with local candidates can be an effective way of educating them on the issues. Report on the results of your meeting to your members and the media.

### Issuing an election newsletter

Use your faculty association newsletter to inform your members about the key issues affecting post-secondary education in the election. You can provide information about

where the parties stand. Also, inform members about how they can ensure they are on the voters' list and encourage them to vote.

### Holding a sector meeting with candidates

A sector meeting is one where a coalition of education organizations (K-12 teachers, public school unions, faculty associations, support staff and students) meets as a group with each candidate. These meetings can be private, but often reporters are invited to attend.

### Organizing telephone calls to candidates

Recruit members and allies to make telephone calls to the offices of local candidates to express concern about post-secondary education issues. During an election campaign, each telephone call to a candidate is logged by issue --- the more calls a candidate receives on an issue, the more likely he or she will see it as a priority.

### Attending all-candidates meetings

Several all-candidates meetings will likely be held in your local riding during the election campaign. Use these opportunities to organize a group to attend and ask questions about where the candidates stand on key post-secondary education issues.



# Hosting an all-candidates debate

One of the best ways to get your local candidates interested in post-secondary education issues is to organize an all-candidates debate on the subject. This requires some careful planning.

## 1. Look for co-sponsors

The more groups you can involve in planning the debate, the more volunteers you'll have and the more people you will likely get to attend the event.

## 2. Pick a date and time

To help ensure good attendance, it's best to schedule the debate on a weekday evening or a Saturday afternoon. Pick three possible dates so that the candidates have a choice. It makes it harder for them to turn down your invitation.

## 3. Contact the candidates

Call the candidates' offices and ask to speak with the campaign manager or scheduling assistant. Tell them that you will be sending an invitation to the debate. Fax or deliver a written invitation. Give the candidates 3 to 4 days to respond.

## 4. What if a candidate says no?

If a candidate refuses to take part in the debate, publicize their refusal with the media.

At the debate, have an empty chair on display to highlight a candidate's absence. Have the moderator of the debate begin by explaining why the candidate is absent.

## 5. Find a location

The ideal location is one that is easy for the media and the public to get to by car or public transit. It should also be wheelchair accessible. Some possible venues you should consider include the public library, City Hall, a public school, your campus, a community centre or a union hall.

## 6. Getting people to attend

Once the date, time and location have been confirmed, send out an advisory to the media. Re-send the advisory 2 to 3 days before the debate. Other ways you can publicize your event is by distributing flyers, sending out e-mail notices to members and placing announcements in campus and community media.

## 7. Find a moderator

The moderator of the debate should be someone who is well-known and respected in the community and who is viewed as non-partisan. Religious leaders, community workers, journalists and doctors are all potential moderators.

## 8. Prepare questions for the candidates

Before the meeting, prepare questions that you would like asked (see *Sample Questions for Candidates* in this kit). Encourage friends and colleagues who will be attending the meeting to ask your questions.

## 9. Follow-up

After the debate, send out a news release that highlights what happened. Send thank-you letters to the candidates.



## Quick Tip

Before contacting the candidates, decide on a format and agenda for the debate. A simple agenda would look like the following: 1) moderator introduces candidates; 2) candidates give a 5 minute opening statement; 3) moderator invites questions; 4) moderator adjourns meeting.

# Creative campaign tools & tactics

## Campus Canvas

The most effective means of getting our message across is through face-to-face communication. You can organize a fairly effective canvas on campus by using regular meetings, conferences and social gatherings to underline the importance of post-secondary education issues in the election.

## Pledge Cards

A more creative way to make sure post-secondary education is an issue in your riding is to ask candidates to sign a pledge about what they would do, if elected, to assist universities and colleges. Such a pledge might be to support CAUT's proposed *Post-Secondary Education Act* and to implement a national tuition freeze.

If a candidate agrees to sign a pledge, turn the signing into a media event. Publicize who has and who hasn't signed the pledge card.

## Report Cards

Many groups find that an effective way to highlight their concerns during an election is to grade the candidates on where they stand on the issues. You may find it useful to issue a report card on your candidates' positions on post-secondary education. You can submit written questions to candidates, asking them what they would do to deal with the main

issues of concern to colleges and universities – accessibility, research funding, federal transfers, infrastructure, faculty retention and renewal, and other issues of concern to your members.

Based on the responses you receive, give each candidate a grade. Publicize the report card with the media and with your members.

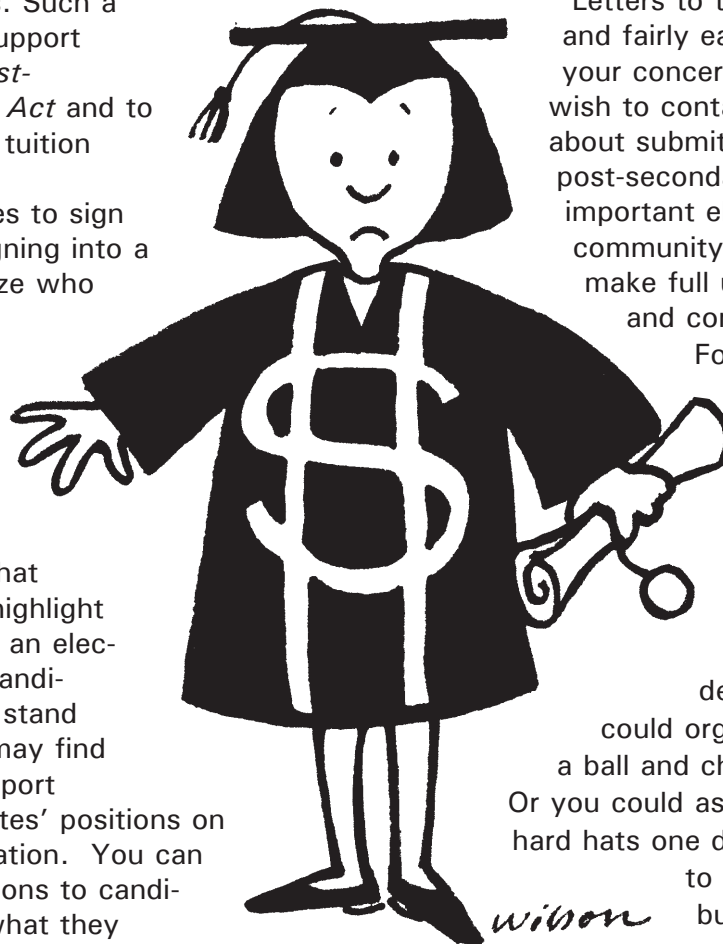
## Winning Media Coverage

Competition for media attention during an election campaign can be intense. However, with some creativity and planning, you'll find there are a number of ways you can win media coverage for your issues.

Letters to the editor are a simple and fairly easy way to highlight your concerns. You may also wish to contact your local paper about submitting an op-ed on why post-secondary education is an important election issue in your community. Don't forget to make full use of your campus and community media.

For the truly brave, there are events and actions that can be specifically organized to grab the attention of the media.

To highlight the issue of student debt, for instance, you could organize a group to pull a ball and chain across campus. Or you could ask members to wear hard hats one day to draw attention to the poor state of buildings on campus. Be creative!



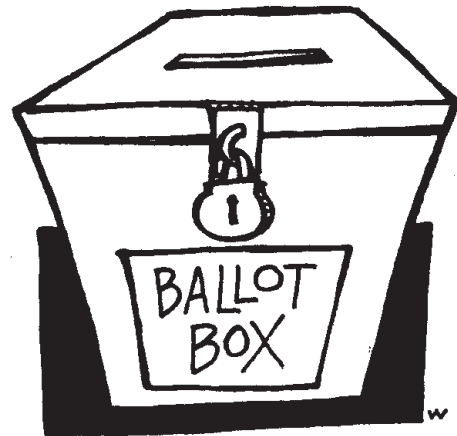
## Sample questions for candidates

**1** Average undergraduate tuition fees have more than doubled in the past 10 years, putting the promise of an education beyond the reach of more and more Canadians. If elected, what steps would you take to make post-secondary education more affordable?

**2** Upon graduation, the average student in Canada now owes more than \$25,000. What, in your view, is the best way to reduce this burden?

**3** In 1996, the federal government cut nearly \$7 billion in cash transfers to the provinces in support of health care, social assistance and post-secondary education. Today, when adjusted for inflation and population growth, the value of these cash transfers for post-secondary education remain well below that of 10 years ago. Do you support an increase in federal cash transfers for post-secondary education? If so, by how much?

**4** CAUT has proposed that the federal government implement a *Post-Secondary Education Act*, modelled after the *Canada Health Act*. The purpose would be to provide stable federal funding for post-secondary education in exchange for greater



provincial accountability over how funds are spent. Would you support this Act? Why or why not?

**5** Demographic changes and rising demand mean enrolments are expected to increase steadily over the next decade. What would you do to make sure there are enough spaces and academic staff to meet this demand without compromising the quality of education students receive?

**6** As core funding for universities and colleges has been reduced, the infrastructure of campuses across Canada has fallen into serious disrepair. Classrooms are over-crowded, library acquisitions have been reduced, research facilities are inadequate and many buildings are unsafe. What would you do to ensure universities and colleges have the funding needed to deal with these urgent problems?

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## Contacts and Resources

### The Main Political Parties

**Liberal Party**  
tel: 613-237-0740  
[www.liberal.ca](http://www.liberal.ca)

**Conservative Party**  
tel: 1-866-808-8407  
[www.conservative.ca](http://www.conservative.ca)

**New Democratic Party**  
tel: 613-236-3613  
[www.ndp.ca](http://www.ndp.ca)

**Bloc Québécois**  
tel: 514-526-3000  
[www.bloc.org](http://www.bloc.org)



### Canadian Association of University Teachers

For more copies of this kit and for help in organizing local events during the election, contact the CAUT national office.

**[www.caut.ca](http://www.caut.ca)**

**tel: 613-820-2270**

**fax: 613-820-7244**

**e-mail: [acppu@caut.ca](mailto:acppu@caut.ca)**

### Elections Canada

The agency responsible for the conduct of federal elections provides information on how to get on the voters' list, Canada's election laws and detailed riding-by-riding results of the last general election.

**[www.elections.ca](http://www.elections.ca)**

**tel: 1-800-463-6868**

**tty: 1-800-361-8935**

**fax: 1-888-524-1444**

### Parliament of Canada

Information about current party standings in the House of Commons, all Members of Parliament by ridings and results of all general elections since 1867.

**[www.parl.gc.ca](http://www.parl.gc.ca)**



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## Allies & Partners

### Election Web Links

#### **betterchoice.ca**

The election site of the Canadian Labour Congress with information and fact sheets on the key issues.

#### **voteeducation.ca**

The national election centre of the Canadian Federation of Students.

#### **voteforachange.ca**

An on-line voter education campaign coordinated by the Centre for Social Justice.

#### **rushthevote.ca**

Site dedicated to raising the political awareness of students and youth.

### **Canadian Federation of Students**

The largest student organization in Canada with more than 450,000 members from colleges and universities across the country.

National Office:  
170 Metcalfe Street, Suite 500  
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 1P3

tel: (613) 232-7394  
fax: (613) 232-0276  
e-mail: [info@cfs-fcee.ca](mailto:info@cfs-fcee.ca)  
[www.cfs-fcee.ca](http://www.cfs-fcee.ca)

### **Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives**

Canada's foremost progressive think-tank which each year produces an alternative federal budget offering practical and responsible ways to re-invest in public programs.

National Office:  
Suite 410, 75 Albert Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5E7

tel: (613) 563-1341  
fax: (613) 233-1458  
e-mail: [ccpa@policyalternatives.ca](mailto:ccpa@policyalternatives.ca)  
[www.policyalternatives.ca](http://www.policyalternatives.ca)