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**Students are Disappointed in the Cancellation of the NB-EI Connects Program**

**Fredericton, NB** On Thursday, June 23rd, 2022, The New Brunswick Students Alliance [NBSA] was informed via email that the Government of New Brunswick will be immediately discontinuing the NB-EI Connects program which supported many students with financial help during the completion of their degrees. Students are disappointed with the abrupt decision to cut the NB-EI Connect program immediately before the start of the academic year. The timing of this decision adds an extra barrier to students planning their finances and obtaining other funding for their education.

“The cutting of NB-EI Connect so suddenly without consideration of other alternatives, lacking consultation from students, and based on recommendations from the federal government will affect large populations of students that the Government of New Brunswick has once said they wish to retain. Students are disappointed but willing to work on collaborative solutions to help all students and create a New Brunswick that is beneficial to all,” says Rohin Minocha Mckenney, Chair of the New Brunswick Students Alliance.

“This is also a terrible challenge to students who are vulnerable to facing food and housing insecurities during the academic year, especially considering the rate of inflation, glooming recession and increased cost of housing,” says Sydonia Chandon, Executive Director of the New Brunswick Student Alliance.

Cost of living overall has become more expensive and this is now one less source of income for students unable to work during the school year.

Also, for some students—like mature students with families—will have less income to make ends meet.

This decision demonstrates a lack of empathy towards students especially as we emerge from a pandemic.

Based on recent research, The board notes that there are other provinces that currently offer a similar program, in fact PEI and Nova Scotia currently have active EI programs that assist post-secondary students.

The New Brunswick Student Alliance is calling upon the Government of New Brunswick to create a grace period of at least 1 more year to give students time to prepare for the change. We are asking for a modification of the program to give a long-term solution, and create a consultation period before making important decisions like these in the future. The NBSA is currently consulting with students to gather more information that will create more alternative solutions to address the severe gap that is now present.