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An Open Letter to Algonquin College, Carleton University, St. Paul University and the University of Ottawa

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Carleton University

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St. Paul University

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University of Ottawa

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November 21, 2024

On the Proposed Increases to the Price of the Student U-Pass

To college and university administrators, student associations and campus communities:

The City of Ottawa has recently proposed to increase the price of OC Transpo's U-Pass by 5% to \$240.52 per semester.

This is above and beyond the signed agreement between the city and the college and universities. Those four agreements limit annual price increases to 2.5%. Anything beyond that would require agreement between the city and the post-secondary schools.

Currently, Ottawa's U-Pass is among the highest in the country at \$229.07 per semester. For comparison, Winnipeg charges \$223.30; British Columbia charges \$184.00; Edmonton, \$180.00; Mississauga, \$154.65; Durham, \$150; and Regina \$90.

The proposed increase to \$240.52 would further exacerbate this disparity and place an unjust and detrimental burden on the students attending Algonquin College, Carleton University, St. Paul University and the University of Ottawa.

First introduced for the Fall Term of 2010, the U-Pass program provides most students of these four institutions with universal access to transit throughout the school year. This program is a significant win-win for the city and the schools.

Students are able to get around our city without buying daily or monthly passes, and schools are able to bring costs down by making it a bulk purchase. Meanwhile, OC Transpo is guaranteed a consistent, reliable revenue source—in fact, the U-Pass tends to make up approximately 20% of OC Transpo’s total fare revenue, annually. For the period of September 2023 to August 2024, U-Pass revenue was 27% of total fare revenue.

As the administrators and student associations of the affected institutions, you are within your rights to hold the city to the agreed-upon 2.5% increase, at most, and we will fully support your decision to do so.

Signed,

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