

Centre for Education Resource and Policy
Ryerson Student Union
Christina Cummins, RA

**RSU Submission to the Standing Committee on
Industry, Science and Technology**

In Regard to the Statutory Review of the *Copyright
Act*



Ryerson Students' Union

Introduction

The Ryerson Students' Union (RSU) represents full-time undergraduate and graduate students in Toronto, Ontario. The RSU is committed to advocating on behalf of students to encourage their education to not only be of quality but also more financially accessible.

The Centre for Education Resource and Policy (CERP) is an office established by the RSU that is dedicated to providing research to increase accessibility to more affordable learning tools and opportunities. Both the RSU and CERP are fully committed to the 2012 *Copyright Act* amendments to include education under the fair dealing exemption. As tuition, course materials and transportation costs continue to rise, the RSU rejects blanket licensing agreements for post-secondary institutes and supports the continuation of fair dealing in university and college domains.

The Costs of being a Student at Ryerson

Commuter-based School

Demographic information regarding the Ryerson student population has seen a significant increase in the percentage of undergraduate students residing outside the city borders. From research collected by the RSU, the 2016-2017 year saw students residing outside of city limits officially surpassing those living in the downtown area. Therefore, since the survey was conducted, Ryerson now has more than half of their population spending daily money on either gas, parking or public transportation.

Affordability Dessert

In a survey published by the RSU in 2018, students were asked to rank their priorities out of 21 options. The results displayed the top two choices to be related to ongoing concerns of rising school-related costs for students attending Ryerson's campus. Both affordable food options on and surrounding the campus as well as demands for further efforts to promote both the use of Open Education Resources and advocating against increasing costs of textbooks. The 2018 priority survey displays that financial burdens, specifically those related to textbook costs, are and continue to be a major issue facing students.

Tuition Breakdown

Faculty	Domestic Tuition	International Tuition	Average textbook cost per academic year
Arts	\$7,600-7,800	\$26,000	\$1,100 - \$9,900
Communication and Design	7,600-8,400	\$26,000	\$1,100 - \$9,900
Community Services	\$7,700-\$8,300	\$26,000	\$1,100 - \$9,900
Engineering and Architectural Science	\$10,900-\$12,200	\$27,000-\$29,000	\$1,100 - \$9,900

Ted Rogers School of Management	\$9,700-10,400	\$27,000	\$1,100 - \$9,900
Science	\$7,600-\$10,500	\$26,000	\$1,100 - \$9,900

*Ryerson University. (2018). Tuition and Fees. Retrieved from <https://www.ryerson.ca/admissions/tuition-fees/>

As the above table displays, being a university student, specifically attending a Toronto-based school, has become increasingly difficult. With our diverse student population from first generation students to ones from out of country or province, collectively we have all felt the financial pressure to cut costs in order to obtain our next essential educational step. The increasingly difficult and crowded job market has created post-secondary education as a requirement rather than a choice. Therefore, when rent, transportation, textbooks and food costs are daily concerns, the inclusion of education in fair dealing exemption of the *Copyright Act* is a key effort that our organization will continue to protect. Even though the current *Copyright Act* only permits a short excerpt of content to be used under fair dealing, those few articles, poems, excerpts or chapters have become vitally important to students and their families in making the costs of post-secondary education more palatable. When a student is preoccupied with daily financial concerns as simple as lunch in between classes, that short excerpt of published works makes a key difference in how or even if a student is capable to engage with course materials.

Recommendations

Since the introduction of educational fair dealing, publishers have continued to argue that without a post-secondary blanket licensing agreement, their organizations are less likely to provide Canadian-specific content to post-secondary institutions. However, if the costs of blanket license agreements are introduced, outlets have reported that these costs would primarily be passed onto students. Although our organization supports the production of Canadian content, we believe there can be a balance between the publishers producing such content but not at the expense of students already struggling.

Keep education protected under Fair Dealings

Foremost, the Ryerson Students’ Union appeals to the Standing Committee to ensure that education remains protected under the fair dealing exception of the *Copyright Act*. Without this clause, universities and other post-secondary institutions are far more susceptible to having to purchase costly blanket-license agreements from publishers. Although at Ryerson University under the current fair dealing guideline the allotted 10% of license-free content may seem negligible over a four-year undergraduate or graduate degree, this 10% does significantly aid in an even more financially inaccessible education system. When a course is able to provide chapters, articles, and so forth cost-free it not only helps ease financial constraints but can also encourage students to engage with course content. It is common practice amongst Ryerson and other education institutes to weigh costs and benefits of purchasing course materials each semester. Publishers claim Canadian content has weakened under fair dealings, however what will truly diminish Canadian content is if future generations are unable to engage and be inspired by Canadian content simply due to their financial situation. When a student is not faced with a

daunting budget to balance either rent, transportation, tuition and textbooks, they can be free to digest their education without sacrificing daily, basic amenities. Our recommendation to maintain the educational exemption of fair dealings is done so to not only ensure post-secondary education remains more affordable but also to ensure students are not sacrificing quality education simply due to the expense.

Reviewing the Act with an intent to “balance”

The Ryerson Students’ Union believes that no student should have to sacrifice portions of their education simply due to financial restraints. While protecting the Ryerson Fair Dealing Guideline of 10% allowed for educational fair dealing doesn’t address the entirety of affordability issues of post-secondary education, it still remains a small, vital step towards accessible education. Furthermore, publishers’ complaints of loss of money and profits directed at fair dealing for education does not account for the amount of increasing money spent each year in library acquisitions. As displayed in the chart below, Ryerson University’s library acquisition budget has not decreased spending since the 2012 amendments but rather this budget has continued to rise with the most recent budget of around \$5.6million. Our organization recommends to the committee to review the amount of money post-secondary institutions already budget for acquisitions from publishers. If the main cause of concerns for publishers is the decreased profitability and consequential lack of Canadian content, efforts should be reviewed *outside* of the *Copyright Act* to analyze alternative avenues to support dedicated Canadian-content production like grants. The Ryerson Students’ Union believes this balance between those who distribute and those who utilize the content can be achieved without sacrificing the future generations and their paths to education.

Budget Year	Acquisition Budget
2016-2017	\$5,666,214.97
2015-2016	\$5,222,582.36
2014-2015	\$4,151,912.51
2013-2014	\$3,906,640.00
2012-2013	\$3,592,858.29

*Ryerson University: Library & Archives. (2017). Acquisitions Budget. Retrieved from <https://library.ryerson.ca/info/collections/budget/>

On behalf of the Ryerson Students’ Union and the Centre for Education Resource and Policy, our organization would like to thank the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology for taking the time to consider and review student concerns on the review of the *Copyright Act*.

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