

# NAITSA ADVOCACY 2024



## INTRODUCTION

Established in 2008, NAITSA's External Relations Department pursues issues that affect NAIT students and Alberta's post-secondary education system. NAITSA works with other students' associations and the Alberta Student Executive Council (ASEC) to achieve both short and longterm advocacy goals. Through a collaborative approach with NAIT and NAIT students, NAITSA builds and strengthens our relationships with NAIT administration, local municipalities, the Province of Alberta and the Government of Canada. With strong relationships NAITSA can achieve more than with an activist approach.

## ISSUES FACING NAIT STUDENTS

### MANDATORY NON-INSTRUCTIONAL FEES

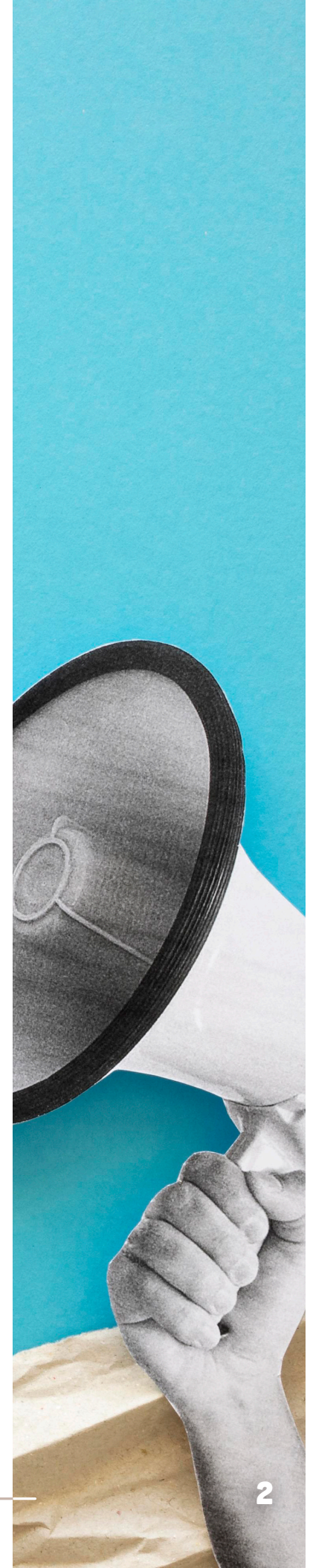
Mandatory non-instructional fees are fees charged outside of tuition. The Government of Alberta requires that students' associations approve new mandatory non-instructional fees. This vetting of fees requires that NAITSA examine the case for need made by NAIT. NAITSA has produced a standardized procedure by which new fees can be examined and decided upon. Along with ASEC, NAITSA is lobbying the Government of Alberta for regulations that restrict how these fees increase over time once approved. Currently these fees can be raised without restriction.

### INTERNATIONAL TUITION

International tuition still remains under-regulated. The government has set out guidelines for increases but does not enforce them. NAITSA will continue to work with ASEC to lobby the government for better regulation of international tuition. Alberta needs international students and the skilled labour they provide. They should be treated fairly, not just as a revenue source.

### APPRENTICESHIP

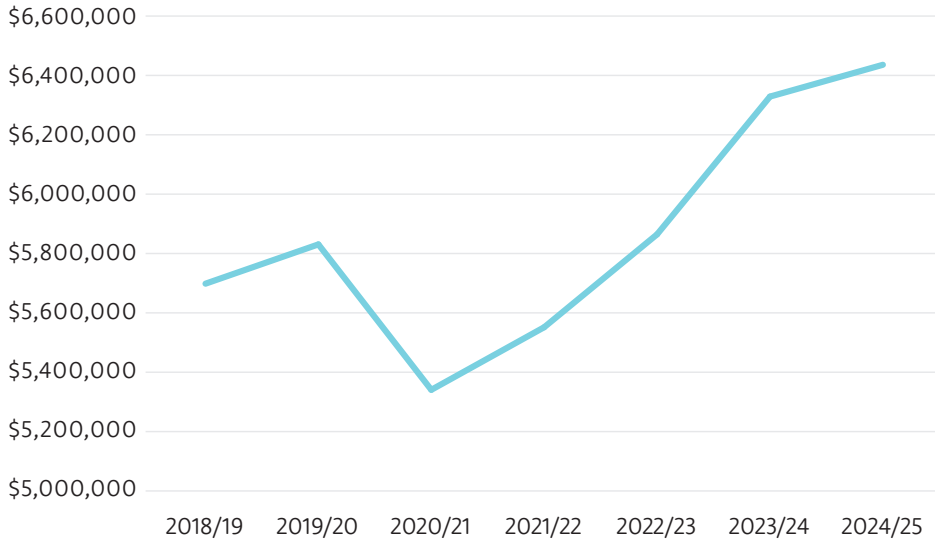
NAIT has seen its apprenticeship numbers drop significantly in recent years due to Alberta's slumping economy. As Alberta recovers those numbers should increase. As they do, NAITSA will ensure that apprenticeship students have their voice heard and the services they deserve. NAITSA has also, along with other students' associations, lobbied the federal government for more apprenticeship incentive grants.



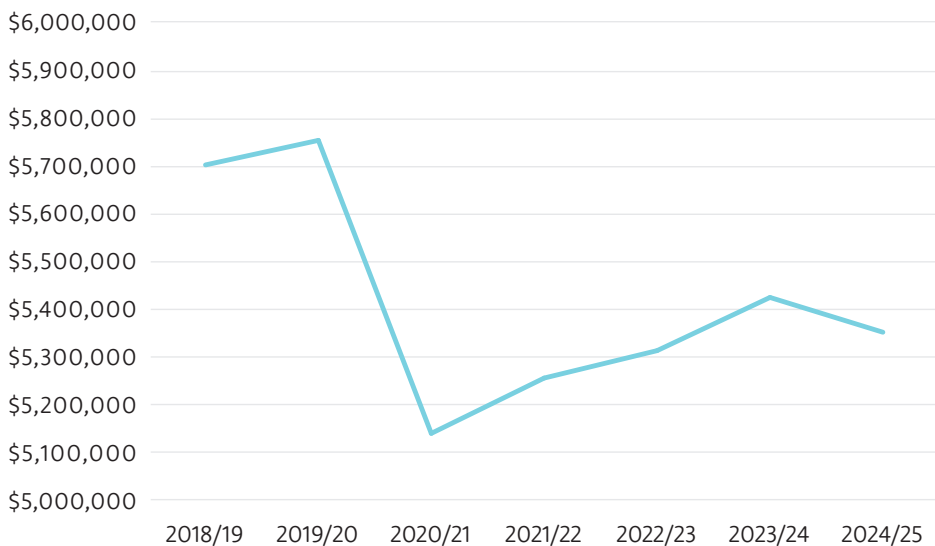
## BUDGET CUTS

Between 2019 and 2022 NAIT saw its funding from the Government of Alberta cut by over 20%. Funding for post-secondary operations has been inconsistent and unpredictable in recent years.

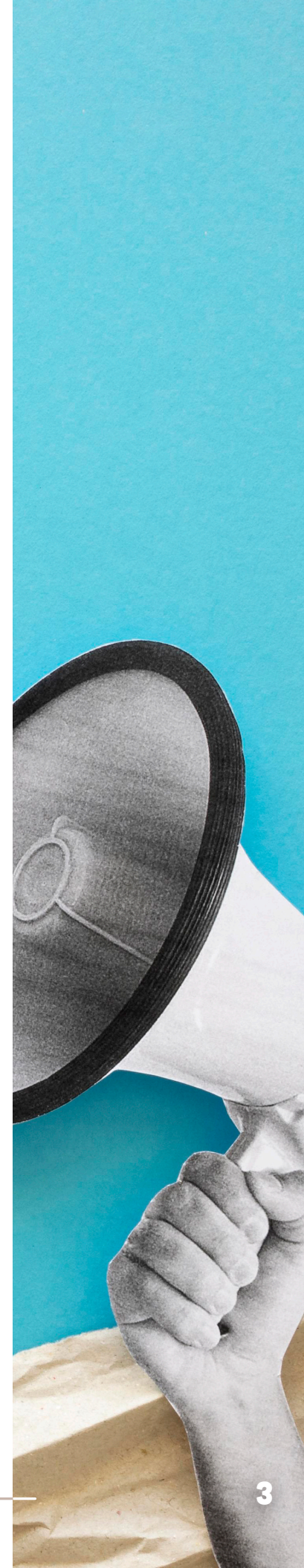
### Post-Secondary Operations



### Post-Secondary Operations 2018 Chained Dollars

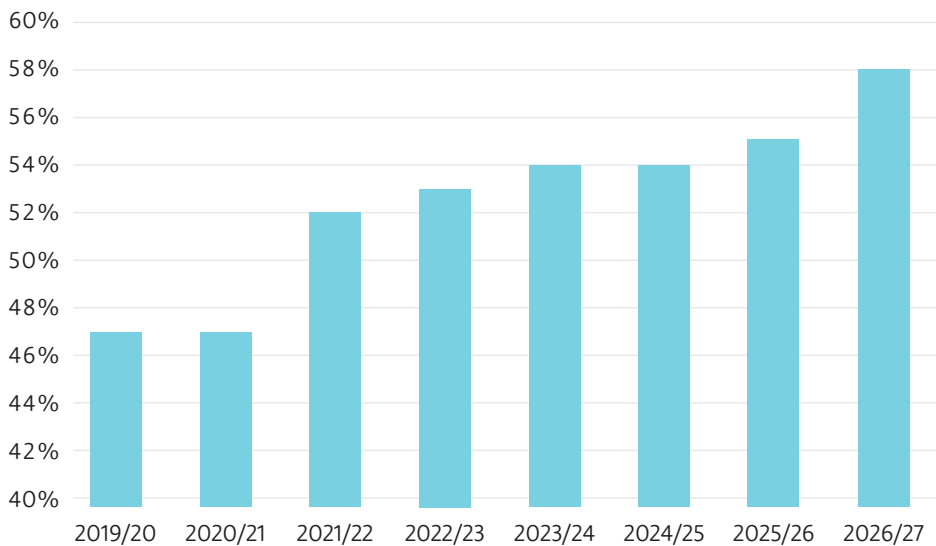


When inflation is considered, funding for post-secondary operations has fallen 14.3% since 2018-19. Total spending on Advanced Education is flat compared to 2018-19 and in real terms has fallen 11.4%.



The current government believes that post-secondary institutions should find the majority of their funding by themselves. NAITSA fundamentally disagrees with this position. NAITSA believes that it is only logical that a public post-secondary institution receives the vast majority of its funding from the public. We will continue to press for this in the coming years.

### Post-Secondary Own-Source Funding

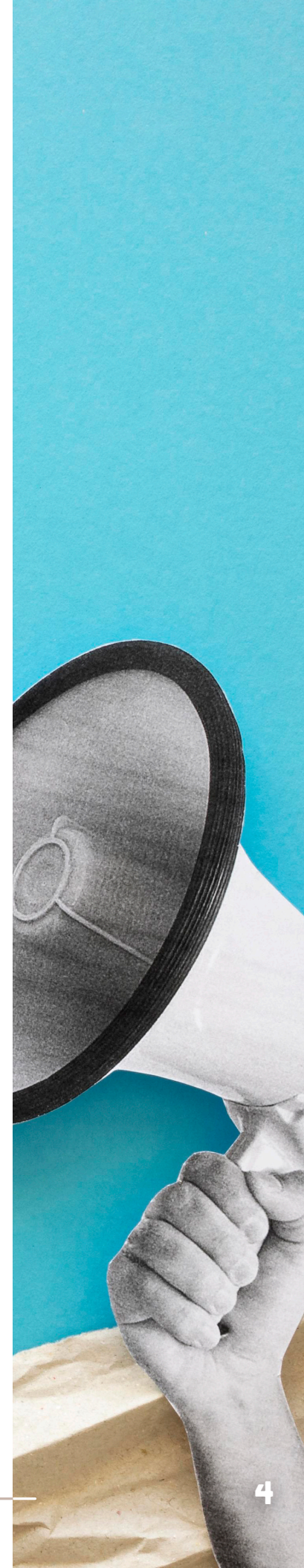


### TRANSIT AND TRANSPORTATION

NAITSA, along with other Edmonton students’ associations, will negotiate a new U-Pass contract for 2025 in the summer of 2024. NAITSA will work hard to achieve the best possible and most fair deal for NAIT students. NAITSA also continues to work with our transit partners on issues of safety, cleanliness and service quality.

### HOUSING

NAITSA has been working with NAIT for a number of years on concepts for an on-campus residence. NAIT is the only post-secondary of its size in Alberta that does not have student housing. NAITSA has met with government regarding this issue and will continue to champion this goal in the future.



## STUDENT SAFETY

There are several crosswalks around NAIT that are unsafe. NAITSA is working to have those crosswalks upgraded. Our lobbying efforts with the City of Edmonton have the goal of ensuring that poorly lit or obscured crosswalks will cease to be a safety issue around campus.

## TEXTBOOK COSTS

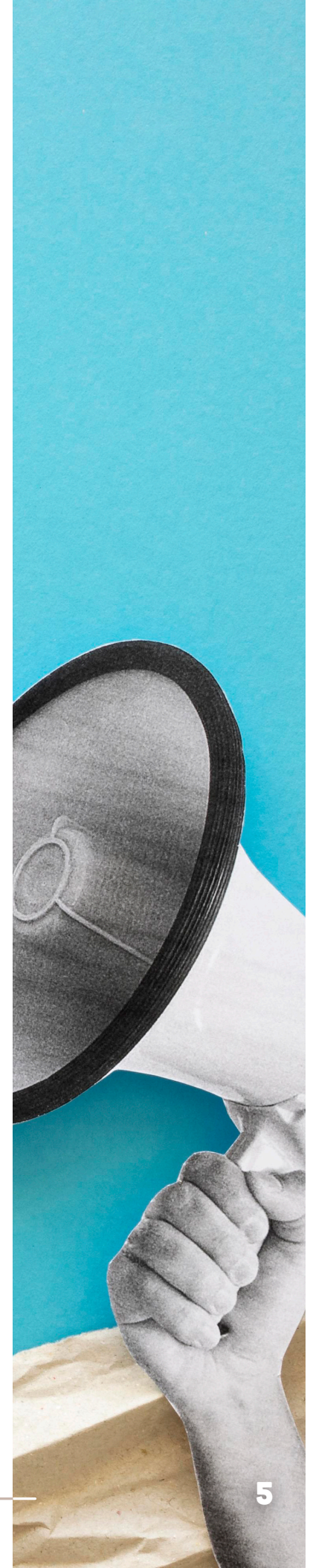
The cost of textbooks has risen at 2.5 times the rate of inflation since 1990. These inflated costs make Alberta post-secondary education much less affordable and reduce access to learning for those who are most vulnerable. NAITSA is working with both NAIT and the Government of Alberta to increase support for Open Educational Resources (OERs). NAITSA believes that OERs are an essential part of the future of learning in Alberta.

## STUDY SPACES

Students have advised NAITSA many times that there are not enough quiet study spaces on campus. While NAITSA understands that space on campus is at a premium, study spaces remain an important priority. As a polytechnic committed to student success, additional study spaces should be on NAIT's list of priorities.

## SUPPORTS FOR INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

NAITSA is committed to advocating for Indigenous students. This includes a goal to ensure that when NAIT expands that Indigenous culture and design is reflected in those buildings. NAITSA also is advocating for increased mental health supports that take Indigenous culture into account.



## METHODS

### BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH ADVOCACY, NOT ACTIVISM

NAITSA's default advocacy method is to build relationships rather than be adversarial. While NAITSA may not always agree with the government's actions and policies, it is far more effective to discuss our issues with them in person rather than organize demonstrations that distance ourselves from them and create animosity. If the default position is to protest, then it can create activist fatigue. There is a place for demonstrations in the advocacy toolbox, but it is not the tool we use unless absolutely necessary.

### SOCIAL MEDIA

It is important to inform students and the public about our advocacy efforts and the facts surrounding issues that are important to students. One of the ways that NAITSA communicates with students is through our various social media platforms.

### MEDIA RELATIONS

Occasionally NAITSA will need to get messages out to the public at large through press releases and press conferences. While NAITSA serves NAIT students, it is important for us to keep parents and taxpayers informed of important post-secondary issues.

## PARTNERSHIPS

### ASEC

The Alberta Students' Executive Council consists of 15 students' associations from across Alberta, representing more than 100,000 students. By combining our resources and efforts we can better make students voices heard to government.

