

NAITSA EXTERNAL RELATIONS & ADVOCACY 2025–26



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 long-term 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 with an advocacy approach.

ISSUES FACING NAIT STUDENTS

MANDATORY NON-INSTRUCTIONAL FEES

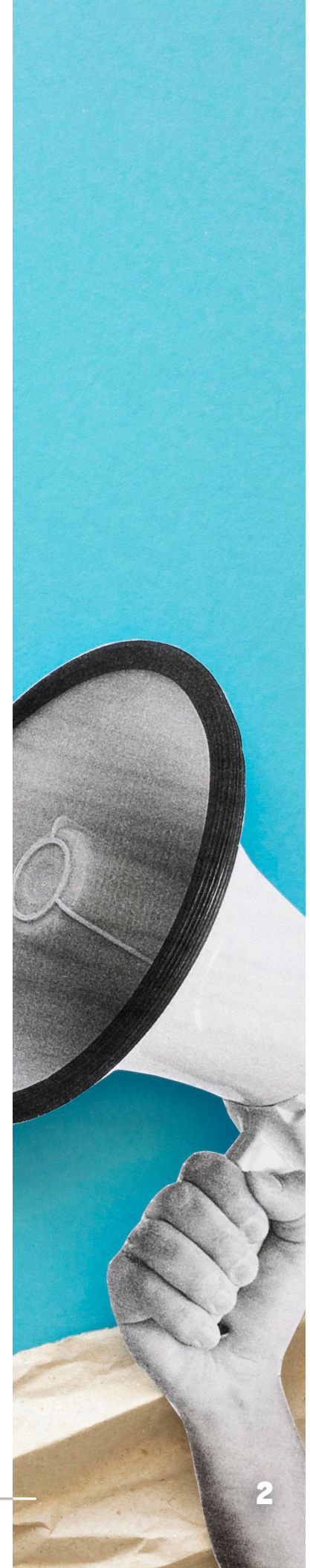
Mandatory non-instructional fees are fees charged outside of tuition. The Government of Alberta requires that students' associations approve new mandatory non-instructional fees. This vetting of fees requires that NAITSA examine the case for need made by NAIT. NAITSA has produced a standardized procedure 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, once these fees have been approved, they can be raised without restriction in subsequent years.

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

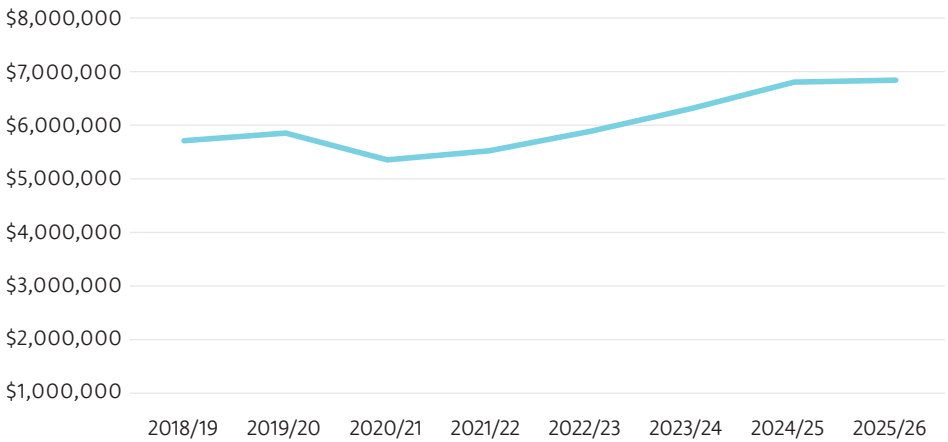
NAITSA works to ensure that apprenticeship students have their voice heard and the services they deserve. NAITSA has also, along with other students' associations, lobbied the federal government for more apprenticeship incentive grants.



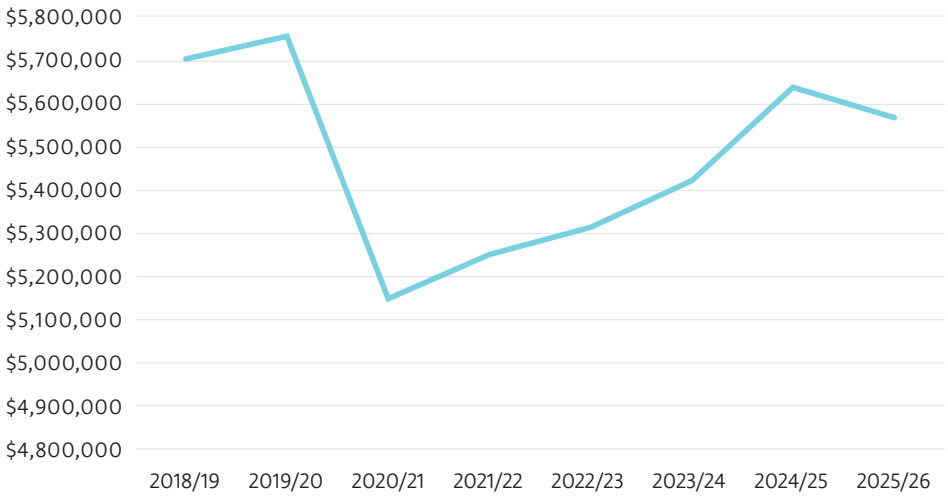
BUDGET CUTS

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.

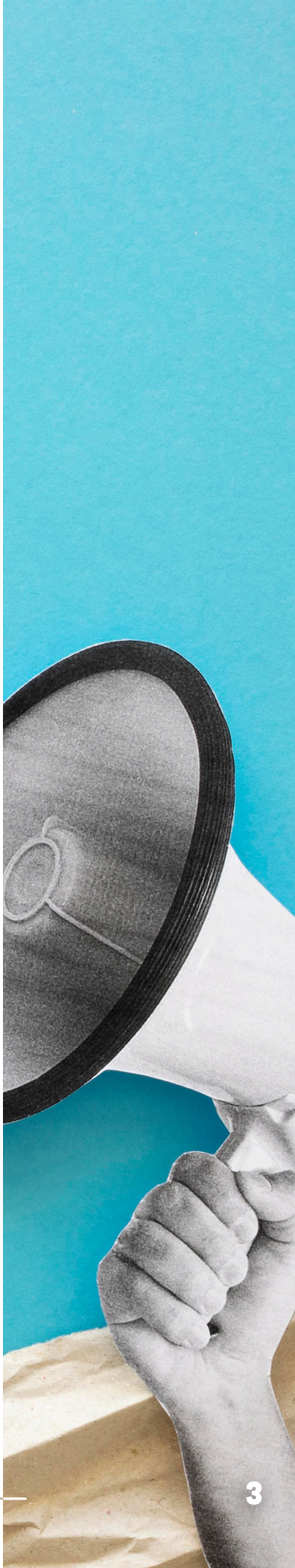
Post-Secondary Operations



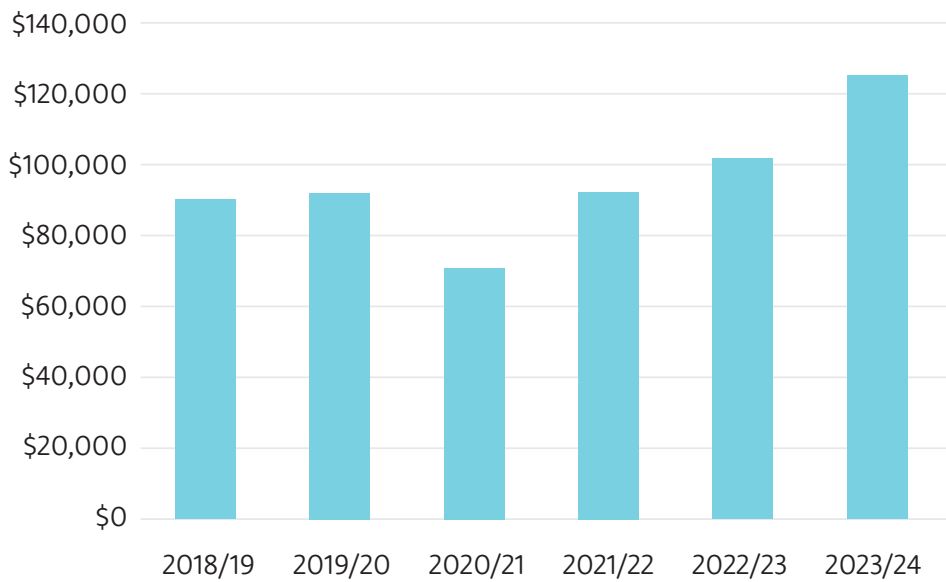
Post-Secondary Operations 2018 Chained Dollars



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%. Students have made up more than their share of the shortfall, as NAIT’s revenue from student tuition and fees has risen by almost 39% since 2018-19. Therefore, while NAIT may need to find revenue, it shouldn’t be looking to students to find it.

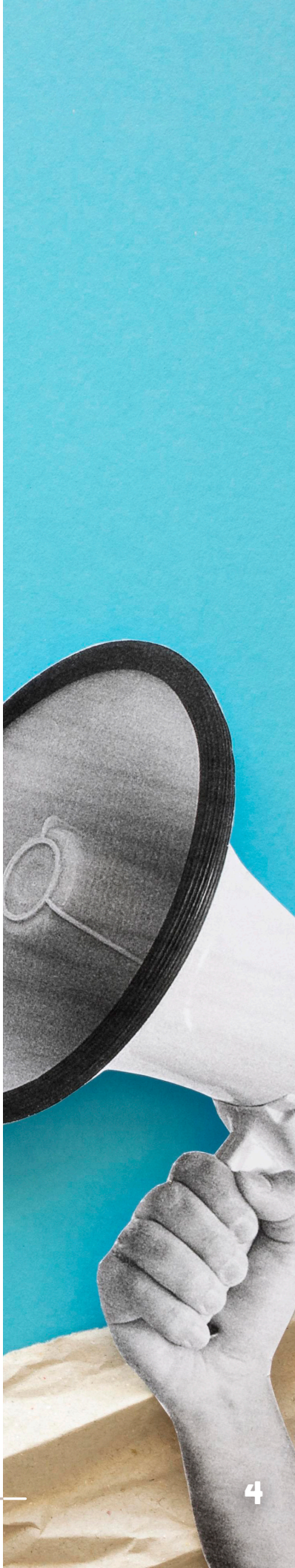
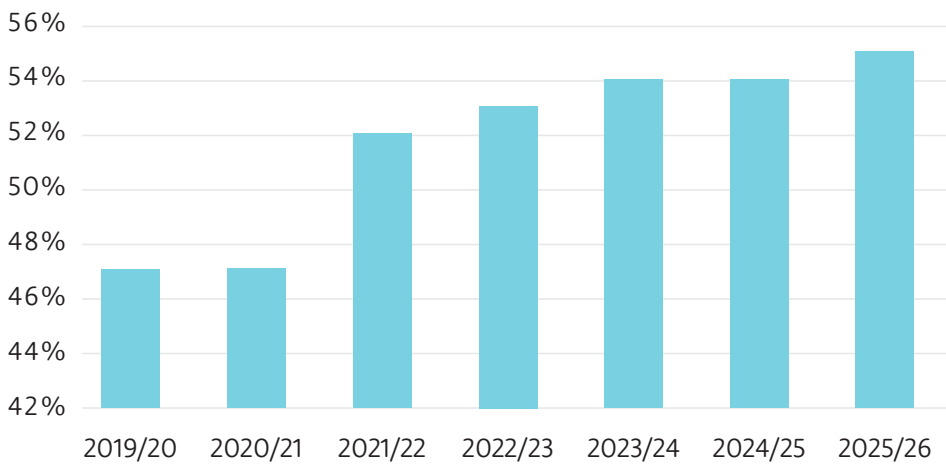


Student Tuition and Related Fees (thousands of dollars)



The current government believes that post-secondary institutions should find the majority of their funding by themselves. NAITSA fundamentally disagrees with this position as it will negatively impact the quality of education. It is unsustainable for NAIT, a public post-secondary, to find more than half of their own revenue. 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 negotiated a new U-Pass contract for 2025 in the summer of 2024 and added the Spring and Summer months to the U-Pass program, starting in 2026. NAIT students overwhelmingly supported U-Pass via referendum and see the value in the program. However, there are still issues that NAITSA continues to work with our transit partners on such as issues of safety, cleanliness and service quality.

HOUSING

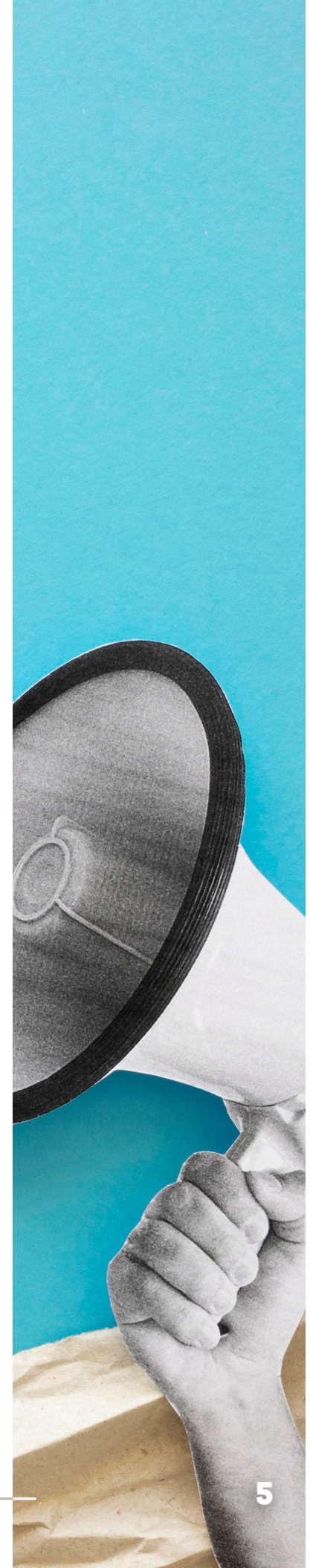
NAITSA has been working with NAIT for a number of years on concepts for an on-campus residence. NAIT is the only post-secondary of its size in Alberta that does not have student housing. NAIT is pursuing an on-campus residence, but without student input. NAITSA has met with the government regarding this issue and will continue to champion this goal in the future.

WIL STUDENT SUPPORTS

Most programs offered at NAIT include Work Integrated Learning (WIL) which includes co-ops, internships, practicums, fieldwork and work placements that build technical proficiency, employability and essential soft skills. We want to ensure that WIL students receive the same level of academic, wellness, and logistical support they would on campus. This includes advocating for housing assistance when students must relocate or work in remote areas, ensuring they have access to mental health and wellness regardless of location. We aim to strengthen communication between students, instructors and placement managers to address issues and maximize their learning or (create the best possible learning experience). By improving these supports, WIL opportunities can become more accessible, equitable and beneficial for all students.

NAIT'S ADVANCED SKILLS CENTRE

As part of a multi-year project to consolidate and modernize NAIT's campuses, Advanced Education has started funding planning for a new Advanced Skills Centre at NAIT's main campus. NAITSA supports this essential project, but remains concerned that food services are not currently being planned for. Without those services students would not have any readily accessible food services without a long walk. This would overwhelm food services in other parts of campus. NAITSA also wants to ensure that adequate study spaces are available for students who attend classes there.



FOOD SERVICES

NAITSA owns and operates The Nest Eatery that provides students with high quality and affordable options while also allowing students to get together and relax. This is NAITSA's only food and beverage option on campus. Unfortunately, some other food services on campus provided by NAIT have not been satisfactory to students, both in terms of price and quality. NAITSA continues to push NAIT towards improving food services on campus and making it affordable for all students.

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 support that takes Indigenous culture into account.

NAITSA has introduced a new bursary to support indigenous students that will begin in 2026.

METHODS

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH ADVOCACY, NOT ACTIVISM

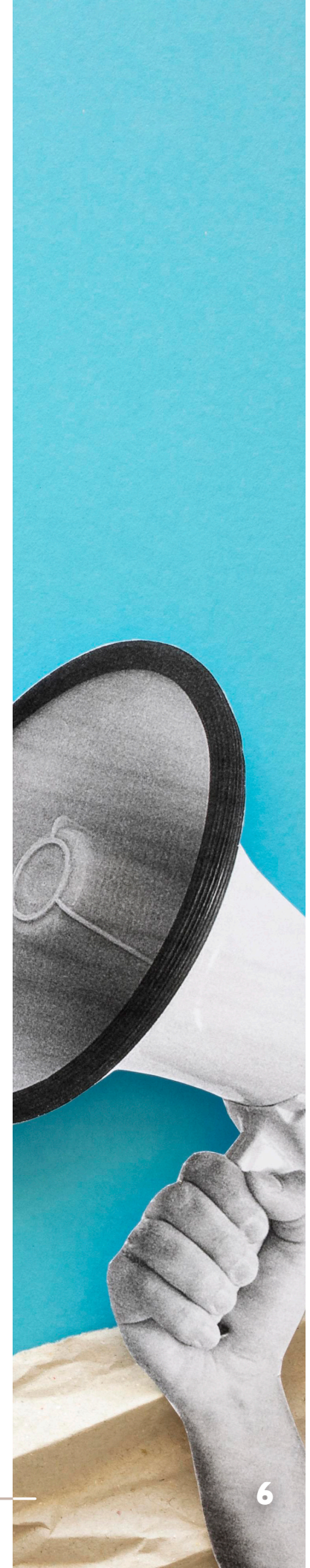
NAITSA's default advocacy method is to build relationships rather than be adversarial. While NAITSA may not always agree with the government's actions and policies, it is far more effective to discuss our issues with them in person rather than organize demonstrations that distance ourselves from them 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 taxpayers and the community at large informed of important post-secondary issues.



PARTNERSHIPS

ASEC

The Alberta Students' Executive Council is a student-led advocacy organization that includes fourteen student associations from across Alberta, collectively representing over 90,000 post-secondary students. By pooling our resources and coordinating our efforts, we amplify students' voices and more effectively engage with the government on their behalf.

U-PASS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

NAITSA, along with our colleagues from Macewan University, the University of Alberta and NorQuest College have a strong partnership with Edmonton Transit Service and the transit providers of Strathcona County, Fort Saskatchewan, St. Albert, Leduc, Beaumont, and Spruce Grove. Together we discuss and work on transit issues that affect students.

EDMONTON STUDENT ALLIANCE

The students' associations and unions of Edmonton's public post-secondaries have formed the Edmonton Student Alliance to coordinate research and lobbying efforts with respect to municipal issues. These issues include transit, housing, youth employment, and sustainability.

