

Tuesday, May 10, 2011

[NAME]
[TITLE]
[ADDRESS]

Dear [NAME]:

As representatives of over 4,000 graduate and professional students at Queen's University, Kingston, we are writing in collective objection to your recent and surreptitious decision to amalgamate Via Rail 'Youth' and 'Student' discount packages. This decision, which effectively eliminates the discounted provision for International Student Identity Card (ISIC) cardholders, adversely affects a significant proportion of our members, who are enrolled as post-secondary students of graduate or professional programs and who are over the age of 25.

As students in the province of Ontario, our tuition fees are currently higher than the national average, which itself is greater than it has ever been before. As our university is met with increasing financial challenges, we are faced with withering sources of funding, and growing tuition and ancillary fees as well as levels of student debt. These financial burdens are further exacerbated by the fact that many of us are currently enrolled in our second or third university degrees. As such, discounts on highly utilized services such as yours help to alleviate the financial stress with which we are faced. Conversely, their elimination signals additional costs to post-graduate education.

We appreciate many of the comforts which come with traveling by train. Indeed, our members utilize your services frequently and year-round to travel to and from home, or to conferences, practicums, and other scholarly endeavours. As such, we question the soundness, from a financial perspective, of changing your discount package in one such way as to disenfranchise such a large part of your client base, thus deterring them from using your services.

For all of the above stated reasons, we ask that you recognize that not all students are 'youths,' and that you reconsider your decision to replace the ISIC student discount with the 'youth' discount.

Respectfully yours,

The Council of the Society of Graduate and Professional Students
at Queen's University (SGPS)
Kingston, Ontario