

Faculty Association

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Sent via email

Honorable Kelvin Goertzen
204 Legislative Building
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premier@leg.gov.mb.ca

Dear Honorable Premier Goertzen,

Congratulations on being appointed as Manitoba's 23rd Premier. This is a particularly challenging time for our Province on many fronts and your willingness to serve as Premier during this period while the leadership context is ongoing to select the next Premier is admirable. Thank you for your service.

As you know as an alumnus of several faculties, the University of Manitoba was established in 1877 as western Canada's first university. It occupies a particularly prominent place in the province, for it is the only medical/doctoral university in the province, where all of the other provinces in western Canada have more than one. The University of Manitoba has a strong and engaged community of students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors and community partners. With nearly 150,000 alumni living in 140 countries, our impact is global. Currently the University has over 30,000 students in over 100 programs serving the Province with graduates in a broad array of fields that support the local economy.

As one of the top research universities in the country and a part of the [U15 group of Canadian Research Universities](#) that undertake 80 percent of all competitive university research in Canada, the direct, indirect, and induced economic impact of the work done at the University of Manitoba represents upward of \$2.4 billion GDP annually. The University of Manitoba depends on being competitive with the U15 peer institutions to attract research funding from National granting councils and other national programs to ensure Manitoba obtains its fair share of federal funding in relation to the size and population of our Province. This means the University must offer competitive salaries and benefits to retain and attract the best and brightest academic faculty members, instructors and librarians.

In 2016 when we, the University of Manitoba Faculty Association, the certified bargaining agent for approximately 1200 full-time academic staff at the University of Manitoba, were in contract negotiations with the University administration, the government imposed a mandate that mirrored the soon-to-be Public Services Sustainability Act on the employer. The restrictions placed on the employer were not communicated to UMFA at the time and resulted in a finding from the Manitoba Labour Board that the administration acted in bad faith when they failed to inform UMFA that they had received instructions from the government to freeze salaries and

only offer a one-year contract. The PSSA was imposed on subsequent collective agreement negotiations in 2017.

These restraints have resulted in the salary levels at the University of Manitoba falling notably behind its U15 peer institutions. As a result the University of Manitoba have seen many top-tier faculty leaving the institution for other Universities and challenges with competing on hiring new faculty members. This has resulted in challenges for students with increased numbers of sessional instructors teaching courses in programs across the institution, larger class sizes, and reduction in course offerings. It also endangers the ability of the University of Manitoba to recruit innovative researchers, particularly in economically and socially important fields.

We are currently in another round of negotiations with the University administration. In an effort to correct the salary disparity with our peer institutions we are asking the government to commit to allowing UMFA and the employer to bargain without interference and forced restrictions on compensation terms. We believe that with the ability to negotiate without government-imposed restrictions we can achieve a fair and appropriate agreement that will ensure limited disruption to the academic school year for students and staff.

If you are able to respond to confirm that government will not interfere in the current negotiations that would go a long way to helping UMFA ensure the best approach to bargaining can continue.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your response, and **would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to further detail the issues faced by faculty at the University.**

Regards,

Erik Thomson
Acting UMFA President