

November 1, 2020

Dear Members of the University of Manitoba History Students Association,

On the evening of October 30, 2020, the Executive of the University of Manitoba History Students Association voted unanimously to support the University of Manitoba Faculty Association in their current labour dispute. UMHiSA strongly believes in the right to collective bargaining, and the ability to push for fair wages through good-faith negotiations free from external interference. Our association recognizes the failure of previous UMFA collective bargaining to be resolved as a result of illegal and unconstitutional actions undertaken by the Government of Manitoba in 2016 as a direct contributory factor to the current potential job action.

We recognize the possible immediate negative consequences a passing strike motion may have on students. We further recognize that these consequences will likely be compounded by the ongoing transition to online learning, and a lack of institutional supports for students. However, we cannot in good conscience condone the moralistic assignment of blame upon UMFA for the overall degradation of the student experience and educational standards. As of August 2020, the Faculty Association has made continuous unsuccessful attempts to negotiate with the University Administration, including repeated attempts to initiate binding arbitration.

Attempts to prevent job action will create long-term effects that outweigh the immediate negative impacts on staff and students. Continued cuts to wages will undercut the University's ability to attract and retain qualified faculty members. Efforts to defund post-secondary education by the Pallister Government have a direct impact on the ability of faculty members, and members of other campus unions, to complete necessary and student-supporting work.

Further, the outcomes of this labour action will have substantive implications on workers' rights beyond the University. As one of Manitoba's strongest unions, the ability of UMFA to engage in fair and unobstructive negotiations must be maintained. Failure to keep up the most fundamental labour standards would signify a clear diminishment in the significance of unions, and their ability to protect and represent workers throughout the province.

As such, we feel it is necessary for us to use our position as a student executive to support the reaffirmation of workers' rights outlined in Canadian Labour law. This is the position of the UMHiSA Executive, and we urge other student groups and our own members to make their voices heard on this matter through direct channels of social activism.

Best,

UMHiSA Executive