



April 23, 2020

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UMFA compilation of resources re: cuts to universities

Last Tuesday the government announced that it wanted public sector employers, including the province's universities, to make 10%-30% cuts to their salary budgets. This has raised many flags – is this an economically sound strategy? How will it impact post-secondary education now and post-pandemic? What can we do to stop it? Below is a compilation of information to help answer some of these questions.

The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) and the Manitoba Organization of Faculty Associations (MOFA) have taken the first steps toward a campaign to resist the cuts. You'll see some of what's happened so far, below. One thing we can all do in the immediate term is let our elected representatives know that these cuts will be enormously damaging to research, students, and the Province's economy. Read through the information below and let them know what you think (links below).

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MLA contact info

Premier Brian Pallister
premier@leg.gov.mb.ca

Ralph Eichler, Minister of Economic Development and Training
minedt@leg.gov.mb.ca

Wab Kinew, Leader of the Official Opposition (NDP)
Wab.Kinew@leg.gov.mb.ca

Dougald Lamont, Leader of the Liberal Party of Manitoba
Dougald.Lamont@leg.gov.mb.ca

List of MLAs with contact information:
https://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/members/mla_list_constituency.html

Articles written by UMFA Members

Austerity is the wrong path for Manitoba during coronavirus pandemic: U of M professor (CBC – April 16, 2020)

In this article, UMFA member and Asper School of Business assistant professor Shiu-Yik Au writes that Premier Pallister and Mayor Bowman's plans for austerity measures will badly damage our economy. During this tumultuous time, Au says that governments should be spending MORE money, not making drastic cuts. Read more [here](#).

Work Life: Austerity, the economy and COVID-19...Manitoba Government creating, not solving problems (CCPA – April 21, 2020)

Lynne Fernandez, Errol Black Chair in Labour Issues and Jesse Hajer, UMFA Member in the Department of Economics and Labour Studies program and a research associate with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives write that the economic interventions in Manitoba are restrained compared to other responses across the country. Recent austerity measures are downright counterproductive doing the exact opposite of what would be suggested as a best approach in a recession. Read more [here](#).

Op-eds written by/featuring business leaders

Prominent Winnipeg business leader urges Pallister government to halt cost-cutting (CBC – April 21, 2020)

Sandy Riley, the CEO of Richardson Financial Group and the former chair of Manitoba Hydro, says that the Pallister government's plans to make cuts will have dire consequences. Read more [here](#).

Education key to post-pandemic recovery (Winnipeg Free Press – April 22, 2020)

Manitoba business leaders Barb Gamey and Bob Silver write that educational institutions are showing resiliency through the pandemic and governments must not be tempted to make cuts to the institutions that train and educate the people we need today and in the future. Read more [here](#).

Other articles

Manitoba Organization of Faculty Associations (MOFA) statement on the proposed cuts to Manitoba's public universities (April 20, 2020)

The Manitoba Organization of Faculty Associations (MOFA) is comprised of faculty associations from Brandon University, Université de Saint-Boniface, University of Manitoba, and University of Winnipeg representing approximately 1,600 individual academic staff. In a statement released on April 20, MOFA rejects Premier Pallister's calls for increased austerity, saying that it is "out of step with what is going on in most provinces, indeed across most of the western world, and with recommendations of economists about how to survive a recession" and will inflict permanent damage on Manitoba's public universities. Read more [here](#).

Critics fear long-term effects of Pallister order for staffing cuts at post-secondary facilities (Winnipeg Free Press – April 20, 2020)

This article features comments from unions, university leadership, and politicians on the negative impacts of the Pallister government's proposed cuts. Read [here](#).

Proposed cuts threaten to devastate Manitoba's universities (CAUT – April 21, 2020)

On April 21, CAUT issued a statement calling on the Pallister government to reverse demands that Manitoba universities cut into their budgets by as much as 30%. Read more [here](#).

Open Letter Against Cuts to Post Secondary Education in Manitoba From the Canadian Federation of Students Manitoba & the Manitoba Organization of Faculty Associations (April 21, 2020)

In a joint statement, the Canadian Federation of Students and MOFA say that the cuts being asked for by the province would be disastrous for our post-secondary institutions who are already struggling due to three consecutive years of reduced public funding from the province. They state that our post-secondary institutions will be vital to rebuilding our economy after the pandemic. Read more [here](#).

Petitions

A letter supporting Brandon University against proposed cuts

We are calling on individuals across the province to sign on to this open letter which will be delivered to Brian Pallister, Min. Eichler, Min. Fielding, Min. Len Isleifson, Min. Helwer, and Min. Cullen, and Brandon University calling on the Manitoba Government to reverse their proposed cuts to the public sector, and for Brandon University to protect its faculty and staff. (More [here](#)).

Stop The Covid Cuts to Education (Canadian Federation of Students – MB)

All sectors of Manitoba must unite to Stop the Covid Cuts! We need you to email the Premier, Minister Ralph Eichler and your MLA. We've made it easy for you using this online tool! (More [here](#)).

Tell Pallister to Keep Manitoba's Universities and Colleges OPEN (Manitoba Liberal Party email – April 21, 2020)

The Manitoba Liberal Party sent the following email on April 21, 2020:

Brian Pallister's panicky plan to cut \$1.25-billion from post-secondary institutions will leave deep scars on Manitoba's economy and threaten the closure of two of Manitoba's universities, the University of Winnipeg and Brandon University.

The province's recently released Treasury Board document asks post-secondary and other institutions to make budget cuts of up to 30%, claiming it's necessary to "help" health care workers with COVID-19. The document says that everyone should "row together" because everyone must "adapt" to the new reality.

Post-secondary institutions in Manitoba cannot run deficits, and The U of W and Brandon University do not have reserves to cover massive cuts. With cuts of 30%, they may have little choice but to close their doors.

The Treasury Board document is misleading and presents dangerously misguided recommendations. When the private sector is shedding jobs at a record pace, the last thing any government should do is make the recession deeper and longer - but that is exactly what the PCs proposed cuts will do.

This is not a rescue plan. Pallister's plan will make unemployment worse, make the recovery harder, and could close the doors of two public universities. No one should buy what the Premier is selling.

Universities are an essential part of Manitoba's economy and can play a critical role in getting Manitoba back out of the recession with education, training and research.

Pallister's plan to find \$1.25 billion in cuts during the worst recession since the Great Depression is reckless, says Lamont, because every single dollar the Premier claws back out of the hands of a public sector employee is a dollar lost to the economy.

Pallister is arguing that people have no choice but to take pay cuts and lose their jobs, and that is just not true.

The Premier doesn't have a problem with deficits when they are being used to lower his own taxes. It's the Premier who needs to adapt, not precarious workers.

We must pressure the government to reverse its directive for cuts to post-secondary institutions.

If you agree, you can email these [PC MLAs](#) to let them know you oppose these cuts and you want to keep Manitoba's universities OPEN:

Brian Pallister: premier@leg.gov.mb.ca

Ralph Eichler: minedt@leg.gov.mb.ca

Sarah Guillemard: contact@sarahguillemard.com

Scott Fielding: minfin@leg.gov.mb.ca

Len Isleifson: len.isleifson@leg.gov.mb.ca

Reg Helwer: mincentral@leg.gov.mb.ca

Cliff Cullen: minjus@leg.gov.mb.ca

NDP message and petition

You don't have to be an economist to know that governments need to keep people working in a crisis. In fact **there's a broad consensus across party lines that governments have a responsibility to keep the economy moving when times are hard.** That's why we've been calling on the Pallister government, in the media, and in the Legislature, to step up and provide supports to local businesses, direct financial aid to families, seniors and renters, and help for our most vulnerable.

But while Premiers across Canada are boosting provincial economies and protecting workers and families, **Brian Pallister is digging in his heels and sticking to his austerity agenda.** His response to this crisis – **more layoffs and more cuts.**

Earlier this week we learned that Pallister intends to bring back Filmon Fridays and force up to 90,000 front line public sector workers to take a pay cut or face massive layoffs. And on top of that, yesterday we found out that the province is now pushing municipalities across Manitoba to cut wages and jobs for tens of thousands of workers, a move that will undoubtedly impact services like public spaces, water and roads.

This will only make the recession worse for Manitoba and hurt more families. **It's simply bad economics.**

[Even card-carrying members of Pallister's own party are openly critical of his approach.](#)

The Manitoba NDP has a plan for a [Just Response to the Covid crisis](#) that strengthens the economy by protecting workers, providing financial relief for families, supports for small businesses and ensures vulnerable people are protected during this pandemic.

We need to stand together and to stand up against Pallister's attack on working people - [will you speak out and add your name to our petition?](#)

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*Wab Kinew
Leader of the Official Opposition*

Manitoba NDP

UMFA President's messages to Members (UMFA website – March 19, April 14, 15 and 20)

Messages from UMFA President Janet Morrill are on the UMFA website and contain information on modifying instruction for online methods, as well as updates on the government's proposals to change public sector employment. To read all recent messages, click [here](#).

If you have information or an event that you'd like to share in an upcoming issue, please email the item to umfa-communications@umfa.ca for consideration.