

UM Faculty Association members authorize strike vote

Vote to take place October 16-18

October 6, 2021

For Immediate Release

Winnipeg — At 8:00pm members of the University of Manitoba Faculty Association authorized the union to conduct a strike vote because collective agreement negotiations have stalled. The union is asking for salaries more in line with similar institutions across the country, as well as more equitable hiring, tenure, and promotion processes. These changes will improve faculty recruitment and retention at the U of M and reinforce the quality of its top-tier education and research.

The salaries at the U of M are some of the lowest in the country, making recruitment and retention a problem at the province's premiere research institution. Some of the province's best and brightest faculty are leaving because they can find better opportunities in other provinces, with better pay and better working conditions. Faculty members across the university have reported candidates who reject job offers, and colleagues who leave the university because salaries are not competitive. This negatively impacts students' education, and they deserve better.

"Students rely on us every day in classrooms, libraries, and labs. We want the University of Manitoba to continue being a great university. That means attracting great instructors, professors and librarians, and keeping the talent we have," said UMFA President Orvie Dingwall. "It's hard to attract new staff and keep existing staff when they can work elsewhere for fewer hours and more money."

At a meeting of the University Senate earlier in the day, UM President Michael Benarroch confirmed for the first time that the wage offer currently on the table has been mandated by the Provincial Government. The offer closely resembles the wage freeze restrictions forced upon the public sector by former Premier Brian Pallister in 2016 under the Public Services Sustainability Act (PSSA), which in June 2020 were deemed "draconian" and unconstitutional by the Manitoba Court of Queen's Bench.

Benarroch did not state who gave the mandate to the University, however, or when it was communicated. Negotiations began in August, 2021. Brian Pallister resigned as premier effective September 1.

"This provincial government needs to stop interfering in negotiations" added Dingwall,. "And we need the university to come to the bargaining table with a reasonable salary offer so we can negotiate a fair deal."

The strike vote will take place October 16-18, with results reported the morning of October 19.

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