

University of Manitoba Faculty Association calls for clarity and honesty from the Government of Manitoba
UMFA members receive mixed messaging from government ministers

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Winnipeg- Members of the University Manitoba of Faculty Association (UMFA) are calling on the Government of Manitoba to be transparent regarding continued interference in collective bargaining which is jeopardizing the future of post-secondary education in Manitoba. University of Manitoba President Michael Bennaroch has stated that UMFA compensation has fallen behind by 8% on inflation alone, and that he is unable to properly compensate faculty for their work because of the ongoing wage mandate and interference by the provincial government.

On Tuesday, hundreds of UMFA members called the Minister of Advanced Education, Wayne Ewasko, to ask that he allow UMFA and the University to bargain in good faith, without a wage mandate. They received a wide range of responses from Minister Ewasko's office, including denials that the government is involved in bargaining. Other UMFA members reported that Minister Ewasko's staff turned the emphasis to Finance Minister Scott Fielding, stating that he was responsible for post-secondary education bargaining mandates. Minister Ewasko has refused to meet with concerned UMFA members, stating that he is too busy to find the time to prevent a strike at Manitoba's largest university.

"We have a recruitment and retention problem at the University of Manitoba, which directly affects the quality of education for students. When the government interferes in our bargaining and inhibits our ability to negotiate, those recruitment and retention problems can't be improved" said UMFA President Orvie Dingwall. "By design, universities are to be independent from the government, but this government continues to try to dictate the terms of the agreement. We need the University of Manitoba to exercise its independence to ensure quality education for students in Manitoba."

UMFA members are now calling Finance Minister Scott Fielding and urging him to do the right thing and prevent a faculty strike. UMFA is encouraging its members, students, and concerned Manitobans to call Minister Fielding and let him know that these heavy-handed attacks on the future of post-secondary education have proven to produce disastrous results. This is an opportunity to remind Minister Fielding that he has the ability to prevent another faculty strike.

"Our message to Minister Scott Fielding is simple: The University of Manitoba is able to address its recruitment and retention problems. It just needs the government to step out of the way," said Dingwall. "We're days away from the strike deadline, and students are rightfully worried that this government will continue to attack public education in Manitoba."

UMFA members continue to be the second-lowest compensated among the 15 leading universities across Canada, which has negatively affected the ability of the university to recruit and retain faculty. UMFA represents over 1,200 professors, instructors and librarians at the University of Manitoba.