

## **University of Manitoba Faculty Association calls for the University of Manitoba to release the bargaining mandate**

*Minister of Advanced Education contradicts University of Manitoba President*

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**Winnipeg** - The University of Manitoba Faculty Association (UMFA) is calling on Premier Heather Stefanson and Advanced Education Minister Wayne Ewasko to pull the mandate that is preventing UMFA and the administration from reaching a resolution to the University's recruitment and retention problem. Earlier this week, Minister Ewasko claimed that there was no wage mandate, directly contradicting what University of Manitoba President Michael Benarroch has stated publicly. Ewasko later said there was a broad public sector mandate, but was unable to explain how this would apply to the University of Manitoba.

"Premier Stefanson and Minister Ewasko have actively interfered in our bargaining by imposing a wage mandate, which prolongs our strike, and affects our ability to recruit and retain faculty," said Orvie Dingwall, UMFA President. "We call on them to stop the interference, to help end this strike, and return students to their classes."

The current mandate is preventing UMFA and the administration from reaching an agreement that would prioritize recruitment and retention of faculty. UMFA is also concerned that the provincial government could be threatening funding cuts if the university's administration increases faculty compensation. This occurred in 2020 when the provincial government cut funding to the University of Manitoba after the administration provided a COVID-19 stipend to UMFA members.

"We know the administration has the ability to offer competitive compensation for our members. Students are paying more in tuition fees and getting less from their education as the University struggles to retain and recruit faculty," said Dingwall. "The future independence of our university depends on its president standing up for faculty and against government interference."

While guidelines have been previously used, only the current Progressive Conservative government has threatened to claw back and punish universities should they adequately compensate their faculty. This potential threat, coupled with previous cuts to post-secondary funding, is unprecedented in Manitoba history.

UMFA represents over 1,200 professors, instructors and librarians at the University of Manitoba.