

UM Professors, Instructors, Librarians, calling for Strike Vote as Fall Semester Begins *Union asking for better salary, improved equity in hiring and promotion practices*

September 29, 2021

For Immediate Release

Winnipeg — The union representing professors, instructors, and academic librarians at the University of Manitoba is calling for a strike vote because collective agreement negotiations with the University administration have stalled. The union is asking for salaries more in line with similar institutions across the country, more equitable hiring, tenure, and promotion processes, and the continued freedom to use their free time to offer their expertise to Manitobans. Meeting these demands will ensure a quality post-secondary education for Manitobans.

Today the heart of the University is at risk. New talent is less likely to come to Manitoba because they will be paid better elsewhere. Full-time academic staff at the University of Manitoba rank near the bottom when compared to salaries offered at other medical-doctoral research universities across the country. UM President Michael Benarroch has publicly stated that faculty salaries are 8% lower than they should be. This salary gap also means that existing talent leaves Winnipeg to pursue more lucrative work and better working conditions outside the province.

“We want the U of M to be a top school, and we need to attract and keep the best researchers and teachers to do that. Student experience, research, and innovation are diminished in this province every year because of recruitment and retention problems, even though the money is there” said Orvie Dingwall, President of UMFA. “We’ve been reaching out to PC MLAs for meetings, but haven’t heard back. We’ve been raising this issue since at least 2016, but still the administration and the province won’t take action.”

While it becomes harder to attract faculty, student enrolments have been going up at the UM for the past several years. Even during the pandemic student numbers have increased. Undergraduate credit-hours were up approximately 10 percent this summer, the University reported in June.

In addition, the province has allowed the university administration to increase tuition for the past three years. The most recent tuition-hike was on average 3.75%.

“We just want a fair deal at the bargaining table, but we need the university administration and the provincial government to partner with us to find real solutions”, Dingwall said.

The Collective Agreement between the Association and the University expired in April, and the parties have been in negotiations since August. Classes at the University started on September 8.

The Association is asking all members of the public to contact their MLAs, the acting-premier, and the University President and demand the University administration offer a fair deal to the University’s full-time academics.

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