

Dr. Michael Mahon
University of Lethbridge
A762 (University Hall)
4401 University Dr W
Lethbridge, AB T1K 3M4

Dear Dr. Michael Mahon:

We, the undersigned, are the unions and associations representing 32,610 faculty, staff, and students at major post-secondary education institutions across Alberta, as well as non-post secondary education unions and associations representing 295,000 working Albertans. We are calling upon you, as the President and chair of the Board of Governors, to put forward a fair contract to the University of Lethbridge Faculty Association (ULFA). We remain united in solidarity with ULFA during their strike.

ULFA members have shown extraordinary commitment to their work throughout this pandemic. They stepped up to support their students through exemplary teaching and actively engaging in valuable academic research for the university. There is no doubt of the value of their work for their students, the University of Lethbridge, and the City of Lethbridge as a whole.

It is surprising to see that in return, the University of Lethbridge is not proposing a fair contract that recognizes their contribution and hard work. The Board of Governors has yet to offer them a fair deal after two years of bargaining. ULFA is asking for increased job security and benefits for its sessional instructors, modest salary increases that are still lower than comparator institutions, increased access to member contact information, and a non-voting position on decision making bodies. However, the Board of Governors has refused to grant these reasonable asks, forcing ULFA to turn towards job action.

During the recent strike by Concordia University of Edmonton Faculty Association, our organizations stepped up to demonstrate our active support for the striking members. We walked the picket line, we became active on social media, and we wrote a letter to the employer to voice our commitment to their cause. We recognize that solidarity is a verb, and are willing to show our support to ULFA members through direct action, especially during a strike.

Ultimately, it is the current provincial government that remains the root cause of difficult financial bargaining conditions facing unions in the post-secondary education sector. It is no secret that there are not two but three parties at the bargaining table - the employer, the union, and the government. It is the government's reckless policies that have resulted in the loss of over \$700 million of the post-secondary education budget over the past three years. Such a loss directly impacts faculty, staff, and students alike as we struggle under wage cuts, job losses, unfair working conditions, and rocketing tuition prices. We applaud ULFA's decision to fight back in defense of their members against such difficult conditions.

But the Board of Governors is not a bystander. ULFA is also proposing improvements to collegial governance, career opportunities for instructors, and support for your most vulnerable employees. All of these lie in the power of a "Destination University" to negotiate. We are concerned about the intransigence your side has shown on both money and language, and encourage you for the good of your community to come to the table willing to work with ULFA on these important issues.

In the end, ULFA's fight is our fight, and we remain committed to actively supporting them through their struggle. Regardless of the pressure by the government, the Board of Governors at the University of Lethbridge is ultimately the employer, making them responsible for their employees. As such, they make the final decisions regarding their employees' contracts. We ask the Board of Governors to do the right thing. Come back to the table and offer a fair deal to the ULFA members.

Sincerely,

Alberta Federation of Labour - coalition of unions representing 170,000 Albertans
Alberta Union of Provincial Employees - representing 95,000 workers in diverse sectors
Alberta University of the Arts Faculty Association - representing 99 faculty
Association of Academic Staff at the University of Alberta - representing 3,780 faculty
Athabasca University Faculty Association - representing 447 faculty and professional staff members
AUPE Local 039 - representing over 500 non-academic staff at SAIT
AUPE Local 052 - representing 5,200 non-academic staff at the University of Calgary
AUPE Local 053 - representing 500 non-academic staff at the University of Lethbridge
AUPE Local 071 - representing 2,800 non-academic staff at 11 Post Secondaries and 2 School Boards
Bow Valley College Faculty Association - represents 500 faculty
Concordia University of Edmonton Faculty Association - representing 82 faculty
CUPE Alberta - representing 40,000 members throughout Alberta
CUPE 3911 - representing 370 part time instructors at Athabasca University
Grant MacEwan University Faculty Association - representing 950 faculty
Lethbridge College Faculty Association - representing 328 faculty
Medicine Hat College Faculty Association - representing 165 faculty
Mount Royal Faculty Association - representing 800 faculty
Mount Royal University Staff Association - representing 800 staff
NAIT Academic Staff Association - representing 900 staff
Non-Academic Staff Association - representing 5,000 staff at the University of Alberta
NorQuest College Faculty Association - representing 400 faculty
Portage College Faculty Association - representing 113 faculty
SAIT Academic Faculty Association - representing over 1,200 faculty
The University of Calgary Faculty Association - representing 2,400 faculty
The University of Calgary Faculty of Arts Students' Association - representing over 8,000 students

cc: Kurt Schlacter

