



Canadian Association of University Teachers
Association canadienne des professeures et professeurs d'université

Memorandum 21:22

Date: April 12, 2021

To: Presidents and Administrative Officers
Local, Federated and Provincial Associations

From: Brenda Austin-Smith, CAUT President

Re: **Laurentian University – an Update**

Today, lay-off notices were issued to tenured and contract academic staff members of Laurentian University Faculty Association (LUFA). Although the details of the mediation agreement at Laurentian University remain confidential, Radio-Canada has reported that more than 60 programs are being cut. We also know that LUFA worked tirelessly under enormous pressure within an incredibly short timeline to save as many jobs as possible, defend the principles of tenure, academic freedom, and collegial governance, and seek accountability for the financial crisis.

CAUT advocated for emergency funding in meeting with MPs from all parties, engaged members to undertake MP outreach, and worked alongside the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations to support and amplify local organizing efforts, and assisted LUFA in media outreach.

The program cuts, job losses, and the decision by Laurentian University to sever ties with the federated institutions endanger its unique tricultural and bilingual mandate and its place as a northern centre of research and education excellence. It is devastating for staff and students, and the community.

We will continue to:

- *Press the provincial and federal governments to step up with emergency grants and increased core funding to support Laurentian's tricultural and bilingual mandate.* A significant immediate investment in the University is needed to stabilize programming, to retain staff and students from the region, and signal that both levels of government are committed to the continuation of Laurentian's important mandate and a thriving north.
- *Call for accountability and improved collegial governance and guard against intrusions on institutional autonomy.* There needs to be more oversight of governance from the academic community. The Board of Governors must include greater campus representation — including academic staff and students — and fewer corporate and provincial government appointees.

Governance and accountability must be improved by bringing the provisions of the Laurentian Act up to the standards of other university statutes.

- *Work to ensure that normal processes and procedures in cases of financial exigency are followed.* The failure of financial transparency and accountability and the administration's refusal to use the tools and procedures that would have avoided this crisis are a betrayal of all stakeholders.

This is a heart-breaking, outrageous process and outcome. It did not have to be this way. Together we must unite to support our colleagues and strive to address the failings that led to this crisis of public policy and governance.