



Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations  
Union des associations des professeurs des universités de l'Ontario

## **Faculty appalled there's no money for Laurentian in new government funding for postsecondary education**

TORONTO, Mar 19, 2021 — Ontario's faculty and academic librarians are appalled and dismayed that none of the \$106.4 million in new postsecondary funding announced by the Ontario government has been allocated to Laurentian University. This funding is purportedly designed to go to institutions most severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, but it excludes the only postsecondary institution currently facing insolvency. This announcement demonstrates this government's callous disregard for the people of Sudbury and the students, faculty, and staff who work at Laurentian.

"The crisis at Laurentian University would have been avoided if this government did its job and properly funded Ontario's universities," said Rahul Sapra, President of the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations. "Not only did the policies of this government push Laurentian over the edge, but Minister Romano knew about Laurentian's precarious financial position at least six months beforehand, which gave him more than enough time to provide the university with the financial support it needed to avoid insolvency."

Laurentian University is the first and only public university to experience financial distress and not receive financial assistance from the Ontario government. The financial crisis that Laurentian is facing could have been avoided if the government took action. After all, Laurentian's financial difficulties should have become obvious to the government in fall 2018, when the Ontario Treasury Board conducted a review of university reserves. Minister of Colleges and Universities Ross Romano has publicly admitted that he knew about the university's precarious financial position at least six months before the university filed for insolvency. This government *knew* that Laurentian was in trouble and chose to do nothing. Romano needs to step in now to secure the future of the university before it's too late.

"It is beyond comprehension that this government would allocate \$106.4 million to public postsecondary institutions in Ontario and not spend a single penny to support the only public postsecondary institution in Ontario currently facing insolvency," said Sapra. "If it wasn't clear before today, the Ford government is completely out of touch with the needs of Ontario's public postsecondary education system."

From day one, the Ford government has been ignoring the voices of faculty, staff, and students as it carelessly mismanages Ontario's public postsecondary education system. It started by enforcing a needless campus free speech policy. It cut tuition fees by 10 per cent without making up for the shortfall with additional funding, putting the squeeze on university revenues. It cut almost \$700 million dollars from student financial assistance, making it harder for students to get a postsecondary education. It attacked students with its unlawful Student Choice Initiative. And its performance-based funding framework will further destabilize Ontario's universities by putting billions of dollars of funding in jeopardy.

Furthermore, today's funding announcement will only provide a partial relief to universities experiencing financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and previous policies introduced by this government. The \$44 million allocated to universities falls well short of the \$500 million in funding Ontario universities have said they need.

As the organization representing Ontario's faculty and academic librarians, OCUFA has consistently offered to meet with the Minister of Colleges and Universities to offer solutions to the challenges facing Ontario's universities. The Minister has repeatedly ignored or refused OCUFA's invitations. Minister Romano's commitment to the financial health of Ontario's universities cannot be taken seriously until he starts listening to faculty and provides funding to secure the future of Laurentian and its vital role in Northern Ontario.

*Founded in 1964, OCUFA represents 17,000 professors and academic librarians in 30 faculty associations across Ontario. It is committed to enhancing the quality of higher education in Ontario and recognizing the outstanding contributions of its members towards creating a world-class university system. For more information, please visit the OCUFA website at [www.ocufa.on.ca](http://www.ocufa.on.ca).*

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