



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

May 6, 2021

By Email: ised.minister-ministre.isde@canada.ca

The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry
235 Queen Street
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0H5

RE: Meeting request to discuss the urgent situation unfolding at Laurentian University and Canada's post-secondary institutions

Dear Minister Champagne,

I write to request a meeting to discuss a federal response to the situation unfolding at Laurentian and ways the government can strengthen the post-secondary and research sector as key to a strong post-pandemic recovery.

The unprecedented situation taking place at Laurentian University is having a devastating impact on students, workers and the regional economy. The loss of critical research programs and millions of dollars in research funding also affects Canada's reputation for innovation and research collaboration.

At CAUT's April Council meeting, academic staff associations, representing 72,000 members from across the country, passed motions in support of Laurentian calling for accountability and changes to the *Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act* (CCAA) to exclude publicly funded bodies from this legislation. Universities and their academic staff associations have negotiated procedures to deal with financial exigency matters, procedures that are collegial and respectful of the principles of academic freedom and tenure. These procedures – not legislation designed for private companies – should have been followed in Laurentian's case.

In addition, Council is united in calling for increased federal emergency and long-term support for public universities and colleges. Budget 2021's increase of \$121 million for minority language education is a welcome step forward. However, more federal leadership is needed to sustain our public post-secondary education system.

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I look forward to meeting with you at your earliest convenience to discuss the federal opportunities to reform the CCAA, support Laurentian and sustain and improve the affordability, accessibility and quality of universities and colleges in Canada.

Sincerely,



Brenda Austin-Smith
President

cc. Paul Lefebvre, M.P. (paul.lefebvre@parl.gc.ca)