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OPEN LETTER

Honorable Minister Ross Romano
Minister of Colleges and Universities
5th Floor
438 University Ave.
Toronto, ON M7A 2A5

Email: ross.romano@pc.ola.org

Dear Minister Romano,

We, the undersigned presidents of university faculty associations in the Golden Horseshoe area, are writing to you today to urgently request that you intervene to secure Laurentian University's future.

We recognize that as Canada's only university with a tricultural mandate, Laurentian University offers outstanding higher education in English and French, with a comprehensive approach to Indigenous education. It is the only university offering francophone programs in Northern Ontario. The Indigenous programming offered at Laurentian University is vital for students and is part of the collective commitment to Indigenous communities.

Alongside the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) and the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Association (OCUFA), our faculty associations have been protesting the Ontario government's mishandling of Laurentian's financial and governance crisis for months. We are dismayed to watch Laurentian University's Administration violate the core principle of collegial decision-making and instead continue to make unilateral decisions about the university's future with little notice to students, faculty, librarians, and staff.

We believe it is our responsibility to speak up for many reasons. We see it as consistent with obligations under the Truth and Reconciliation Commission given Laurentian University's tri-mandate. Laurentian is not alone in being vulnerable to the financial crisis because the Ontario government's funding model puts many universities in the north and throughout the province at risk. The Ontario government's funding model is unsustainable and inequitable because, amongst many reasons, it requires universities to overly rely on student tuition and increasingly on international students to make up for shortfalls in provincial education funding.

Laurentian is the canary in the coal mine.

Tomorrow, the Laurentian Senate will hold an in-camera (confidential) meeting to vote on a plan that will likely cut jobs and programs. We are troubled by the lack of transparency and accountability in the process so far.

While we disagree with the structure of the legal proceedings more broadly, today we are asking that you fulfil your responsibilities as the Minister of Colleges and Universities to specifically:

- Acknowledge that the Senate vote is a deeply flawed process that has occurred without any meaningful consultation with faculty, staff, students, and their elected representatives;
- Establish a transparent, collaborative process including sharing key documents with parties;
- Recognize the need for greater financial support from the province to support Laurentian University;
- Allow Laurentian University's federated colleges to finish the spring term, at minimum; and,
- Make a clear, legal commitment to recognize and maintain Laurentian University's tri-mandate.

We urge you to respect the community's wishes for a transparent and collaborative process. The Ontario government must guarantee long-term and stable funding for Laurentian University to ensure that no student's education and no jobs will be sacrificed. Laurentian University is a provincial treasure that must be preserved.

In solidarity,

Mikael Eklund
President, UOIT Faculty Association

Arthur Hilliker
President, York University Faculty Association

Min Sook Lee
President, Ontario College Art & Design University

Ian Sakinofsky
President, Ryerson Faculty Association

Michelle Webber
President, Brock University Faculty Association

Terezia Zorić
President, University of Toronto Faculty Association