

TO: All MUNFA Members

FROM: The MUNFA Executive Committee

DATE: April 25, 2017

SUBJECT: From the Core Mission to Corporatization

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MUNFA members will have noted the announcement by Memorial University President, Dr. Gary Kachanoski in the *Gazette* (April 7, 2017) that Government cutbacks amount to an \$11.9 million reduction in the University's budget. On April 10, [CBC reported](#) that Dr. Kachanoski was considering all forms of cost cutting and revenue generation, including tuition increases, saying: "I'm not giving guarantees for anything" in reference to tuition freezes. Since then, MUN's Provost/ Vice President Academic reiterated: "all options are up for discussion" (*Gazette* 19 April).

MUNFA is dismayed by the scope of these budget cuts and shares in the concern about their impact on the University. Rather than "no guarantees" however, MUNFA believes that the senior administration's budget decisions must guarantee foremost priority to the University's core mission: providing high quality and comprehensive post-secondary teaching and research. Access to information requests initiated by MUNFA show that, all too often, the University has diverted money from these core academic areas into the practices of an increasingly corporatized university.

Nothing exemplifies that corporate culture more than the use of executive search firms ("headhunters") to recruit academic administrators.

MUNFA has learned that Memorial has paid over \$3.1 million to mainland-based headhunting firms since 2008. It is not unusual for MUN to spend more than \$75,000 in headhunting fees to hire a single Dean. The 2015 Provost/VP Academic search cost \$92,780, and the search that hired the current President amounted to \$243,000.

While the provincial government has curtailed its use of headhunters, Memorial University continues to contract-out academic administrative hiring. Ongoing searches, including for the Grenfell Vice President and the Deans of Humanities and Social Sciences and Business Administration, directed applicants to email addresses at the headhunting firm Odgers-Berndtson. This practice clearly contravenes MUN's commitment last year to follow the provincial government's lead in looking for savings on consultants' fees.

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Memorial, along with many other Canadian universities, claim that use of headhunting firms is normal business practice. But universities are not businesses.

The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) and others have repeatedly called for the reversal of the corporatization of the academy. Memorial is well equipped to hire academic staff and academic administrators through long-standing search committee processes involving ASMs and its well-staffed Human Resources and Marketing and Communications divisions. Injecting private-sector headhunting firms into the process introduces bias into the make-up of academic administrators by offering up candidates from the “[self-proliferating managerial class](#)” and diminishing our collective responsibility for “[successful succession](#).”

MUNFA calls for an immediate moratorium on the use of headhunting firms and similar discretionary expenditures as a sign that our collective core mission will not be sacrificed to continued corporatization in these difficult economic times.

MUNFA has posted a full list of the search fees received through ATIPP requests on its website. Click here for details: <http://munfa.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/External-Searches-Information.pdf>.