



Newfoundland and Labrador  
New Democratic Party

Robin Whitaker, President  
MUNFA  
ER 4049, Alexander Murray Bldg.  
St. John's, NL A1B 3X5

May 5, 2019

Dear Ms. Whitaker:

Thank you for your questionnaire outlining MUNFA's concerns during this election. Our responses are below.

**Will your party commit to increased investments in core operating funding for Memorial to support quality research and education?**

The NDP has been a vocal opponent of the government's continued cuts to Memorial University's core operating grants. We have questioned government on how repeatedly cutting MUN's budget squares with their stated plan to invest in the future of Newfoundland and Labrador and retain young, skilled people in the province.

The NDP sees the future of the province rooted in a well-educated workforce, people who choose to remain in their home province. Cutting funds to Memorial, adding to their infrastructure deficit, and putting pressure on academic and support staff, is not the way to go. The NDP commits to reinstating adequate grants to MUN, as well as to assisting them in addressing their serious infrastructure deficit and investing in more research and development.

**What will your party do to address the deferred maintenance, repair and renewal needs of Memorial University?**

Deferred maintenance is a growing problem at MUN. In 2016, the Senate was informed that deferred maintenance issues on campus were a health and safety concern. Three years later, this situation has become worse and the deferred maintenance requirement is now \$445-million.

Memorial is attempted to provide high quality post-secondary education to the next generation of students under increasingly constrained circumstances. The NDP commits to ensuring Memorial's core funding is returned to an adequate level, and commits to working with them to address the deferred maintenance problem and bring facilities up to a higher standard.

**What will your party do to ensure Memorial University's pension deficit (\$416.5M) is addressed and a smooth transition to a jointly sponsored pension plan occurs?**

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The transformation to a jointly sponsored pension plan is long overdue. The NDP commits to ensuring this work — which has already been successfully completed with several of government's pension plans — is quickly and successfully completed. The template for addressing pension plan deficits is already in place, and while the Memorial Pension Plan deficit has been allowed to grow large, the NDP is confident an agreement is possible and can be implemented in a timely fashion, putting the pension plan on a firm footing for the future.

**What will your party do in its commitment to improving the collegial governance and autonomy of Memorial University?**

For over a decade, MUN's senior administration, Senate and Board of Regents have been waiting for governments to make significant changes to the institution's governance. These changes have not been made. It is unacceptable that our university ranks at the bottom among Canadian universities for shared/collegial governance practices and is the only university in Canada with no faculty representation on its governing board.

The NL NDP is firmly committed to ensuring a new form of governance is developed and implemented to make our university lead the nation in governance.

**How does your party view the role of Memorial University in the social, political, cultural, and economic life of NL? What will your party do to strengthen of this role?**

The official vision of Memorial University states it will be one of the most distinguished public universities in Canada and beyond, and will fulfill its special obligations to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

As the highest degree-granting institution in the province, MUN holds a unique position. The NDP believes government has an obligation to ensure this vision continues and improves. Memorial cannot be diminished because of budgetary concerns or because of outdated governance. The campus and its staff represent the best chance for the future of this province, in educating the young people who will be that future. The NDP is committed to ensuring that the vision of Memorial University becomes, and remains, a reality.

Thank you for your interest in the policies of the NL NDP.

Sincerely,



Alison Coffin, Leader  
NL New Democratic Party