

TO: All MUNFA members
FROM: MUNFA Executive
DATE: May 5, 2023
SUBJECT: MUNFA's Agenda for Reform at Memorial University

As members may be aware, the government has recently announced plans for changes to the *Memorial University Act* regarding the governance of the university, as well as plans to reconsider tuition increases and challenges regarding university funding.

Building on the solidarity our membership exhibited through our strike, the fallout from Dr. Vianne Timmons' removal, the appointment of a new interim president, and the crisis of leadership at the university compels MUNFA's executive to remind provincial leaders of our collective demands for reforming Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador — [our university](#) — into a workplace that is governed by principles of collegiality, integrity, and transparency.

Our goals, though routinely ignored by senior administrators, have remained clear and consistent.

1) Re-Funding the University

Government's base funding of Memorial peaked in 2014 at \$444.2 million (see, [MUN Finance Statements](#)) and has **declined every year** since that time. Assuming a conservative inflation rate of 2% per year, simply maintaining the 2014 level of support would have necessitated an increase in mean base funding to over \$525.5 million by 2022. Yet, the actual 2022 operating grant was \$430.9 million. That figure represents a nearly 20% decline in funding in constant dollar terms since 2014. NL's Budget 2023 made further cuts to Memorial's operating budget, bringing total funding declines close to 30%.

MUNFA has carefully outlined the negative consequences these cuts would have (see for example, [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)). Yet, cuts to Memorial's operating budget recur year after year, no matter what evidence is presented to governments about the substantial and positive economic benefits of this province's only university.

It is time for government to restore funding to Memorial's operating budget and commit to budgetary allocations that keep pace with real inflation.

2) Practicing Collegial Governance

The style of governance currently employed at MUNL is not working. We all know the reasons why: the creeping corporatization of the university, self-serving and exclusionary approaches to governance practiced by management, and political interference in university operations (see for example, [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)).

MUNFA executive spent considerable time crafting a thorough submission on revising the Memorial University Act (see [here](#)), after it became clear that upper administration was not engaging with us in serious or substantive consultation. Members may recall that MUNFA Executive had to resort to filing an ATIPP in order to receive a copy of the administration's submission to government, only to find out that the administration and the Board of Regents had signed off and submitted that document to government before even meeting with us (see [here](#)).

It is time for government to step up and work with MUNFA to concretely address the shortfalls in collegial governance at Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador.

3) Executive Searches

As MUNFA highlighted in the lead-up to the hiring of former president Timmons, the executive search process at Memorial is broken (see [here](#)). MUNFA continues our efforts to end the use of expensive private search firms and systems of secrecy that prevent our members from effectively participating in these processes (see [here](#) and [here](#)).

We call on the administration and the Board of Regents to **end the use of executive search firms** and to ensure that search processes involve public presentations by shortlisted candidates. We demand that these principles be applied to all searches for senior administrative positions, including in the search for a new president.

4) Indigenous Identity – Investigation and apology

Lastly, in order to provide transparency to the community and to enable healing for those affected by the events surrounding Dr. Timmons' resignation, we reiterate our demand (see [here](#)) that the university conduct an independent investigation into the alleged false claims of Indigenous identity, the process by which Dr. Timmons was hired, and that University leadership should apologize to communities harmed.

As the premier recently [suggested](#), the University is in crisis. MUNFA believes it is time to make serious changes to how the University is governed. MUNFA's executive will be pushing for ASM involvement in all aspects of university reform.