

MUNFA’s Take on

Memorial University’s 2025-26 operating budget

On May 14, Memorial’s Board of Regents approved the university’s 2025–26 operating budget. It introduces a permanent \$20.85 million cut to the base budget and allocates \$13.68 million in public funding towards contract teaching, recruitment and retention, IT systems, and “business transformation.”

On May 7, MUNFA met with senior administration to learn about the proposed budget and to advocate for a different approach. By that point, however, it was clear that major decisions had already been made. While we raised concerns and provided recommendations to reinvest in teaching and research, stabilize programs, and renew contracts for Academic Staff Members in precarious roles, those suggestions were not reflected in the final budget.

Although the budget allocates funding towards contract teaching, the limited hiring program remains in place, restricting academic hiring in all units. The new spending does little to address the instability of academic work or to restore lost teaching capacity in a meaningful way.

We recognize that Memorial is facing real pressures, including inflation, declining enrolment, and aging infrastructure. Improving enrolment and retention under such circumstances requires firm prioritization of Memorial’s core mission of teaching and research. But instead of using the \$13.68 million in public funding from the paused tuition offset grant to invest in academic programs or improve affordability for students, the university has redirected a big portion of those funds to unspecified business transformation and change management projects, alongside strategic recruitment. Importantly, these priorities were set without meaningful input from the academic community.

The consequences of not investing in faculties and academic programs are already being felt. Certificate and Diploma programs are being suspended, course offerings are shrinking, class sizes are ballooning, and workloads are increasing. The university continues to rely heavily on short-term contracts. These decisions are eroding the working conditions of our members and the learning conditions of our students.

MUNFA is deeply disappointed that the university has chosen to proceed with permanent cuts, maintain the hiring freeze, and redirect public funding, while excluding academic voices from this critical planning. We remain committed to defending our members, advocating for reinvestment in academic work, and pushing for a decision-making structure where faculty are genuinely included.