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TO: All MUNFA Members

FROM: The MUNFA Executive Committee

DATE: February 16, 2016

SUBJECT: Memorial University and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's 2016 Budget

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MUNFA members are aware of the current economic challenges facing the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador. MUNFA and its members can expect that Memorial University Administration will enact cost-cutting measures in the coming months in response to these challenges.

While budget consultations are underway across the Province, little has been shared with University stakeholders about what budgetary changes the University is considering at this time. Recently, in a Newsline item on "travel requests", the University announced that "…a steering committee has been established to participate in government's fiscal planning, and comprises the chair of the Board of Regents, the president, the provost and vice-president (academic) and the vice-president (administration and finance), along with the deputy minister and assistant deputy minister of the Department of Advanced Education and Skills".

MUNFA representatives are consulting and coordinating action with other unions across campus, all of whom share concerns about the transparency of the process the University has taken in response to expected budgetary challenges. Accordingly, MUNFA has requested budgetary and other financial information from the University under the Province's Access to Information Legislation. This information will be shared with MUNFA members once received and processed.

One area of particular concern for MUNFA, and for many in the wider University community, is ensuring that the University honour its 'special payment' obligations to the Memorial University Pension Plan. In 2015, the University deferred this payment to fiscal year 2016 (details can be found here and here), but given the current economic climate, worries exist that special payments could be missed again.

MUNFA believes that, with the help of its members, it can compel the University to first consider cutting spending that falls outside of supporting the core mandate of the University - teaching and research - before it considers short-sighted measures such as deferring pension funding obligations any further.

Your MUNFA Representatives remain committed to working to ensure that the mandate of the University is protected and that pension funding obligations are met. In the coming weeks, once we receiver further information, MUNFA will seek input from members on the importance of your work to the teaching and research mandate of the University and to the health of the Province.