

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **“Passing the Buck” Raises Concerns about the Future of Memorial University**

“Passing the Buck: The impact of increasing Memorial University tuition to pay down Newfoundland and Labrador’s deficit”, a new report by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, highlights the problems with the erosion of public funding for Memorial University and a shifting of provincial debt onto the backs of students.

“Newfoundland and Labrador has benefitted enormously over the past two decades from Memorial University’s ability to attract and retain students from our own province, across Canada, and around the world,” said MUNFA President Josh Lepawsky. “Faculty know first-hand from our students that many already struggle financially, experience food insecurity, and struggle to maintain stable housing. These fee increases only serve to further burden our students, and severely detract from the university’s ability to attract and retain the students we so desperately need as a province.”

Successive cuts in funding to Memorial University since 2015 have already impacted the institutions operations. As students face significant increases in tuition costs while the university prepares for additional funding cuts in the coming years, students will end up paying more for less.

“Many academic units and academic staff were already at a breaking point before the pandemic – having lost administrative staff and colleagues that are essential to keep our programs running,” said Lepawsky. “Now, as burnout amongst students, faculty, and staff in our institution is at an all-time high, our members are being asked to increase course caps, doubling the number of students in classes, or even eliminating course enrollment caps altogether. This guarantees faculty will have less time per student to fulfil their teaching mission. Frankly, this is unsustainable.”

“The importance of post-secondary education cannot be overstated, particularly as Newfoundlanders and Labradorians face a great deal of uncertainty and change in our future. We hope the provincial government realises their mistake and recommits to high-quality, universally accessible, post-secondary education,” said Lepawsky.

*The MUN Faculty Association is the certified bargaining agent for 850 academic staff members at Memorial University.*