

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MUNFA Welcomes Tuition Freeze Funding, but Warns Budget 2026 Does Not Address Decade of Underfunding

St. John's, NL - 29 April 2026.

Newfoundland and Labrador's Budget 2026 is a good news, bad news situation. The Memorial University Faculty Association (MUNFA) welcomes the confirmation that the government will be funding the tuition freeze at the University – resulting in a \$45 million increase in support to the University – this is good news for students confronting affordability challenges. However, disappointingly, the new PC Government has also followed through with the planned Liberal government cuts to the University's operating grant.

Since 2014, Memorial's funding from government has declined by 8.3%, without inflationary adjustment, while overall provincial government spending grew 33.5%. The consequences of these cuts at the University have been significant: more than 19 academic programs have been ended or paused, approximately 96 course sections in Humanities and Social Sciences alone discontinued, suspension of the accelerated Bachelor of Nursing program during a provincial nursing shortage, the number of seats available to train social workers has been cut, and there is a major reduction in support for first-year math instruction underway across the University. All these challenges are combined with a serious infrastructure crisis – the University is falling apart.

The last decade of cuts means Memorial University has lost adequate support staff and teaching capacity. Budget 2026's net increased transfer from government is approximately \$17 million dollars. Though good news for students, these problems are not addressed by the budget as it only offsets lost tuition revenue due to the freeze – this will be another difficult year at the University with more program cuts and lost capacity.

"Budget 2026 might be a good step for Memorial's student dealing with affordability problems, and we acknowledge that," said MUNFA President, Dr. Lisa Moores. "MUNFA and the Coalition of Memorial's faculty, staff, and student unions have worked very hard to impress upon this provincial government the value of our only university, and this move reflects that strong advocacy. But the budget does not close the gap on ensuring students can get the courses and supports they need to succeed. Those problems remain. We are calling on the government to make multi-year stable investments in post-secondary education – as has been seen in other provinces. Memorial cannot fulfill its mandate as a comprehensive University without additional support."

Memorial alumni contribute approximately \$2.06 billion to our provincial GDP each year, according to a 2021 economic impact assessment. Memorial is a vital piece of the province's economic and social fabric and government must deal with the financial gap that has emerged.

MUNFA is calling on the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to continue the dialogue about the crisis at the University. MUNFA continues to advocate for the stable investments that Memorial needs to rebuild programs, restore instructional capacity, and serve students and communities across the province.

PRESS RELEASE

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MUNFA represents more than 800 academic staff members across MUN, including faculty (both tenured and contract), librarians, counsellors, and co-operative and field education co-ordinators.