



Canadian Association of University Teachers
Association canadienne des professeures et professeurs d'université

January 14, 2020

BY EMAIL: c/o Shari Hoff, UNBC Governance Officer, shari.hoff@unbc.ca

Ms. C.E. Lee Ongman
Chair, Board of Governors
University of Northern British Columbia
3333 University Way
Prince George, BC
V2N 4Z9

Dear Ms. Ongman:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) to express our serious concerns about the state of labour relations at UNBC. In my many years of experience with CAUT, I can say without hesitation that I have not come across a more difficult and acrimonious labour relations environment than exists at UNBC today.

The recent strike by the UNBC Faculty Association has again highlighted a dire situation that was discussed extensively at the last meeting of the Council of CAUT. It is clear that the strike was in large measure a result of a number of underlying issues in the workplace that regrettably remain unresolved.

Following the debate, Council delegates unanimously approved the following motion:

WHEREAS the UNBC Faculty Association is in its second strike in back-to-back rounds of bargaining; and,

WHEREAS the UNBC Faculty Association has been forced to file an unprecedented number of grievances due to the Administration's reckless disregard for the Collective Agreement;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT CAUT work with the UNBCFA to explore the possibility of an independent, external review of labour relations at UNBC.

Consistent with the motion passed at Council, CAUT is urging you to agree to a joint workplace restoration and relationship enhancement process with the Faculty Association. Led by an independent external expert, this process will allow both parties to identify the underlying issues that have soured relations, and find ways to begin resolving these matters. If the Administration is uninterested in pursuing this option, CAUT will explore establishing an independent investigation.

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Academic staff strikes in Canada are extremely rare. What is even more unusual is for one institution to experience back-to-back protracted labour disruptions. Clearly, it is in everyone's interest to resolve these matters.

Sincerely,



David Robinson
Executive Director

cc: Stephen Rader, President, University of Northern British Columbia Faculty Association

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