



The Alberta Colleges and Institutes Faculties Association (ACIFA) is very concerned by recent developments at Laurentian University (LU). Earlier this month, LU entered into an insolvency process under the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA). A first for a publicly-funded post-secondary institution in Canada, this situation is concerning to ACIFA for a number of reasons.

First, as a result, 83 Faculty and 27 Academic Support Staff lost their jobs, and approximately 70 programs were cut as a result of the "agreement" reached by LU and its creditors. Remaining staff and Faculty were then expected to "ratify" new collective agreements while under duress, as LU made it clear that failure to secure a new deal would result in further measures, including the potential shuttering of the University.

Second, smaller institutions like LU serve as a cultural, economic, social, and educational hub for a large geographic area, and the impact of LU's "restructuring" will have lasting implications for the communities LU serves. The closing of programs that serve students in the English, French and Anishinaabemowin languages will represent a huge loss for smaller, more rural communities in Northern Ontario and will very likely result in an exodus in talent, industry expertise, and research dollars from such communities at a time when they have never been more needed.

Finally, ACIFA strongly believes that what happens at one institution in Canada will have a ripple effect on others. Our colleagues at the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) have indicated that the Government of Ontario was well-aware of the financial difficulties encountered by LU for the past six months, and ACIFA is very concerned that Faculty, staff, and students are paying the price for LU's financial crisis (much of which must also be laid at the feet of Senior Leadership at the University).

What is happening at LU is nothing short of a failure of current provincial/federal funding models for post-secondary education in Canada, and the precedent it sets for other publicly-funded post-secondary institutions across the country is very troubling.

ACIFA represents roughly 5,000 Faculty members at colleges and polytechnic institutes across Alberta, and stands shoulder-to-shoulder with our colleagues in the Laurentian University Faculty Association (LUFA). We call on the Government of Ontario to take accountability for the situation at LU and provide a more sustainable funding model going forward, one that will allow LU to re-emerge for their current insolvency crisis and provide much needed certainty for the post-secondary sector.

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