

Dear Dr. Michael Benarroch, Premier Heather Stefanson, and other readers,

We are early-career professors, instructors, librarians, archivists, and student counsellors who came here to start careers because we saw an opportunity for a great future. We believe that the University of Manitoba is at a defining moment; the future and vision of this institution are on the line. Here's why we are striking: we see that this public institution has served the province well over its almost 150 years, but now, the University of Manitoba has a recruitment and retention problem. This is not empty rhetoric to us. Some of us are from Manitoba, but most of us are not. We are building our personal and professional communities, our children are joining schools and sports teams, we are putting down roots. We see the opportunities to flourish in Winnipeg, but watching the political gaming by the university's administration and the provincial government around our collective agreement in the past few weeks is giving many of us doubts about our futures here.

Early career faculty play an integral role at the university. We are a diverse group of scholars. We bring our energy, knowledge, and expertise from our training in different countries, cultures, and personal histories to this institution and province. No two faculty have the exact same job, yet we all "wear many hats" and play many different roles...

We are innovative educators and supervisors. We develop sought-after new courses for undergraduate and graduate students. We play a crucial role in teaching and training students in clinical, professional, and community-based programs. We train the next generation of high-impact researchers. We support Manitobans in developing highly desirable skills.

We are employers. We attract national and international talent to the province. We recruit, hire, and train excellent students and staff in well-paid positions. We open up employment opportunities across disciplines and sectors.

We are successful entrepreneurs. Collectively we have had tremendous success, already securing millions of dollars in provincial, federal, and international grant dollars for research, infrastructure and hiring. We are using these funds to start innovative research programs that will bring exponentially more money into the province in the upcoming years.

We are knowledge curators. We empower the academic community to share knowledge with each other and with Manitobans. We bring new expertise and innovative technologies to shape, share, and care for the information environment. We are responsive to new technologies and formats, providing leadership to ensure the university's research outputs remain accessible and understandable well into the future.

We are community-builders. There is something special about moving to this great city in friendly Manitoba. Most of us did not know each other before we arrived in Winnipeg, yet we come together across disciplines, faculties, and campuses. We have built relationships and research programs with colleagues throughout the university and have become vital partners with industry, clinical, and community groups. Our value extends beyond the university walls, into the diverse organizations we are a part of.

And yet, recent actions during this strike make us question if our efforts are valued. We are deeply concerned about reports of a provincial government mandate limiting free bargaining towards a new contract that will address recruitment and retention issues, with an apparent threat to decrease government funding if the administration does not comply. We are frustrated that elected government officials locked their doors and turned off their phones rather than have a conversation with their constituents. We are disappointed that our administrators did not take a stand with their faculty and students against government interference. We don't understand who is actually controlling the parameters of the bargaining, but it seems clear that our voices and needs are not being heard. The crisis is real.

We see open job positions in our departments go unfilled. We see some very talented colleagues at the university leaving. It can take years to replace someone, and in many cases it doesn't happen, leaving those positions unfilled indefinitely. Without stability in our departments, we are sometimes unable to deliver a strong curriculum for students, and those who remain are stretched thin by increasing service and teaching demands. Many of us have questioned whether we too should apply for jobs in other places. We see the momentum here slipping away.

Manitoba is at an important tipping point. We put tremendous energy into improving the institution and this province. The university and the province can decide to invest now, in us, in our colleagues, in our students, in our communities, and in our future. We want to be here, and to play the long game to truly be one of Canada's premier research institutions, contributing in fundamental ways to economic and social development in Manitoba, Canada, and the world. Help us to accomplish this by supporting the people who make this a place for scholars to thrive.

We want to see our government share our passion for finding ways to improve Manitoba's only research-intensive institution. Instead of stifling university spending, provincial investment in higher education should be increased! By investing in faculty you are investing in students, and investing in this province. The current strike may seem like our fight, but truly we fight for the future of Manitoba.

Dr. Aleeza Gerstein, Faculty of Science

Dr. Meaghan Jones, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences

Dr. Max Turgeon, Faculty of Science

Dr. Dylan MacKay, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences

Dr. Leslie Roos, Faculty of Arts
Dr. Merissa Daborn, Faculty of Arts
Dr. David Parent, Faculty of Arts
Dr. Joseph Delaney, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences
Dr. Lauren Kelly, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences
Dr. Alicia Nijdam-Jones, Faculty of Arts
Dr. Melanie Murchison, Faculty of Arts
Dr. Sunmee Kim, Faculty of Arts
Dr. R.J. Leland, Faculty of Arts
Dr. Patricia Thille, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences
Dr. Lisa Engel, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences
Dr. Olivia Wilkins, Faculty of Science
Dr. Deanna Santer, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences
Dr. Ayesha Saleem, Faculty of Kinesiology & Rec Management
Dr. Kaarina Kowalec, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences
Dr. Susan Logue, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences
Dr. Sherif Eltonsy, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences
Dr. Isabelle Kirouac Massicotte, Faculty of Arts
Dr. Cameron Hauseman, Faculty of Education
Dr. Joe Curnow, Faculty of Education
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Kimberley MacKay, RN BN, MN (NP), College of Nursing, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences
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Dr. Ryan Giuliano, Faculty of Arts
Dr. Kelsey Taylor, Asper School of Business
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Dr. Benjamin W. Lindsey, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences
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Karly Epp, Desautels Faculty of Music
Fabio Ragnelli, Desautels Faculty of Music
Victoria Sparks, Desautels Faculty of Music

Dr. Kari Zacharias, Price Faculty of Engineering

Dr. Nicole Goulet, Faculty of Arts

Dr. Jeongmin Kim, Faculty of Arts

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Dr. Suzanne Lydia Lennon, College of Nursing, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences

Rebecca Mueller, Max Rady College of Medicine, MPAS

Katrín Níelsdóttir, Libraries

Natalie Vielfaure, Libraries

Janice Winkler, Libraries

Caralie Heinrichs, Libraries

Grace Romund, Libraries

Caroline Monnin, Libraries

Meg Miller, Libraries

Kayla Tessier, MSW, RSW, Student Affairs (Student Counselling Centre)

Sarah Conci, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences

& twenty-four early-career faculty members who prefer to remain anonymous from the Faculty of Arts, Clayton H. Riddell Faculty of Environment, Earth, and Resources, Price Faculty of Engineering, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences, Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences, Faculty of Social Work, and Faculty of Science