



CAPAL-ACBES

THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES BIBLIOTHÉCAIRES EN ENSEIGNEMENT SUPÉRIEUR

Canadian Association of Professional Academic Librarians /l'Association Canadienne des Bibliothécaires en Enseignement Supérieur (CAPAL/ACBES)

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Dr. Michael Benarroch

President and Vice-Chancellor, University of Manitoba

77 Chancellors Circle

Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2

November 29, 2021

RE: Statement of Support for the University of Manitoba Faculty Association (UMFA)

Dear Dr. Benarroch,

The Canadian Association of Professional Academic Librarians (CAPAL/ACBES) is writing to encourage you to protect the University of Manitoba's autonomy from government interference, and to express support for the University of Manitoba Faculty Association's (UMFA) job action, taken as a result of the ongoing labour dispute between UMFA and the University of Manitoba (UM).

As an association we are deeply concerned to learn this is the second labour dispute in five years to be drawn out largely by provincial wage freeze legislation. University independence from government is critical, and research and teaching cannot be subject to the whims of the provincial government of the day – and particularly not one intent on [introducing right-wing, US-style educational policy](#). Across the country we are seeing post-secondary education under attack. The University must retain its independence from government interference if it is to find a way to bridge the University's and UMFA's offers and end the current impasse.

In 2016 [we wrote](#) to then-President Barnard to express dismay at his public comments dismissing the value of libraries and library staff, in the wake of layoffs which saw the library system lose 25% of its support staff. It is no surprise that in the intervening years, we have heard reports that librarian workloads have continued to rise significantly. To refuse to offer a fair salary represents further devaluing of their work, is certain to reduce morale, and makes it challenging to retain early-career librarians.

CAPAL represents over 260 academic librarians and Library and Information Studies students working and studying across post-secondary institutions in Canada and the United States. Our mission is to promote, advance, and support the profession of academic librarianship for the advancement of research, teaching, and learning at accredited post-secondary institutions and to further the professional interests of our members. We believe that our academic communities are enriched when post-secondary institutions can recruit and retain talented academic librarians and archivists, in support of building excellent teaching and research communities.

We implore you to settle this dispute as soon as possible to minimize further disruption for students and allow our members to return to their work in building strong learning and research communities, either by accepting UMFA's tabled offer or by presenting a fair offer of your own.

Respectfully,

CAPAL/ACBES Board of Directors

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CC: Laurel Hyde, Chair, Board of Governors, University of Manitoba; Orvie Dingwall, President, University of Manitoba Faculty Association; Premier Heather Stefanson, Government of Manitoba.