

February 1, 2022

In response to the administration's unsigned letter to the University of Lethbridge community on January 27, 2022, disclosing plans to lock faculty out of their research capacities in the event of an instructional duties strike, the labour and advocacy groups on campus—the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE) Local 053, the University of Lethbridge Graduate Association (ULGA), the Graduate Students' Association (GSA), and the University of Lethbridge Postdoctoral Association (ULPA)—express their utmost solidarity with the University of Lethbridge Faculty Association (ULFA) as their collective bargaining advances to a strike-vote. We are adamant that issuing [this announcement](#) during the cooling off period expressing intent to lock out ULFA members is an unacceptable attempt to interfere with ULFA's ability to inform members of the potential benefits of a strike to improve their Collective Agreement with the University of Lethbridge's Board of Governors.

We believe improving the working conditions of ULFA is essential to the long-term success of the University of Lethbridge and its standing as an academic institution. The students at the University of Lethbridge should continue to have access to excellent faculty members for their learning and research. Disparate salary and academic conditions threaten the institution's ability to retain and attract quality educators and researchers. Furthermore, the School of Graduate Studies and the University's undergraduate personalized study programs (such as independent studies, honors thesis, and applied studies) are conducted on a volunteer basis, whereby faculty members are not compensated, nor regularly given course relief to supervise graduate and undergraduate students. Removing teaching supports, and increasing workloads threatens the success of research programs and personalized teaching as faculty members would have no choice but to turn away prospective students whom the faculty would be lucky to mentor.

ULFA has highlighted some of the ways the university administration's Offer of Settlement falls short [here](#). Briefly, the administration is unwilling to expand benefits to sessional instructors, allow ULFA to oversee their own benefits packages (members still have to pay their benefits), or commit to modest salary increases that are still much lower than comparator institutions, and improved (non-voting) consultation on budgets, to name a few. Even in a challenging budgetary reality, these are not dramatic requests for a Collective Agreement renewal and already represent compromising positions, following mediation. Indeed, ULFA is not the only labour group at the University of Lethbridge bargaining to improve their collective agreements. AUPE Local 053 who represents non-academic staff and ULGA who represents academically employed graduate students, are bargaining with the University of Lethbridge Board of Governors and are similarly concerned about the Board of Governor's commitments during bargaining. We similarly feel the board must commit to a good-faith bargaining process with ULFA as we expect they commit to with AUPE Local 053 and ULGA.

We hope the University of Lethbridge Board of Governors reconsiders their position in order to #savethesemester, and we repeat our expression of solidarity with ULFA as they plan their strike vote.

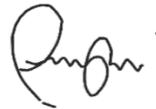
If any of our members wish to show solidarity with faculty members, we ask that you consider sending an email to the University's President: president@uleth.ca

Signed,



Jackson Ham
President
University of Lethbridge
Graduate Association

Vice President Labour
Graduate Students'
Association
University of Lethbridge



Priyanka Dutt
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Jacob Cameron
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AUPE – Local 053
University of Lethbridge



Chelsea Matisz
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