

MRU student leaders say government cuts to blame for faculty strike

Calgary, AB February 3, 2022 — Mount Royal student leaders are laying the blame for this potential strike situation squarely on the government. The president of the students' association's Representation Executive Council, Spirit River Striped Wolf, says, "It's clear from the significant funding cuts, massive multi-year tuition increases to the tune of almost 23%, cuts to student financial aid, and other policies that post-secondary is not a priority for this government." Striped Wolf believes that deep funding cuts led to the current situation of a possible faculty strike.

Striped Wolf continues, "Students are exhausted. In addition to multiple semesters of constant changes in course delivery (online/in-person), we now have to face the possibility of a delayed semester. Students are left wondering if this will short-circuit our education. Will we be able to learn everything we were supposed to? Will we have to cram everything into a shorter period of time? Will this delay our exams and graduation and opportunities for summer employment?"

Striped Wolf believes that it was poor government policy to cut post-secondary funding during a period of high unemployment and change — and even worse to offload massive debt onto graduates that he thinks will result in a brain drain, delayed spending from debt repayments, decreased opportunities to access to Alberta post-secondary institutions, and reduced knowledge mobilization and innovation — all things that MRU student leaders believe will seriously damage the Alberta economy for years to come.

"When unemployment is high like it has been in Alberta for some time now, people tend to go back to school to enhance their credentials or change career paths, so cutting funding to places of learning and increasing tuition costs at times like this is extremely short-sighted," says Striped Wolf. "Alberta's post-secondary system is a real mess and we call on the Alberta government to restore funding to appropriate levels and for the MRU Board of Governors to revoke the tuition increases so Albertans can continue to easily access and benefit from a high-quality system of higher learning."