

November 27, 2008

Dr. Tom Williams  
Principal and Vice-Chancellor  
140 Dunning Hall  
Queen's University

Dear Dr. Williams:

I am writing on behalf of the QUFA Executive, Council of Representatives and the many QUFA Members who have raised serious concerns about the recent announcement of budget cuts. One concern is that in the haste to create a "sense of urgency" around the budget, you appear to have forgotten your initial commitment to open communication, transparency and constituent involvement on important issues.

To begin, let me express our disappointment in the fact that the University has not yet delivered on the promise you made during your meeting with QUFA Executive and Council members in mid-October to provide us with a clear, detailed explanation of the current fiscal status of the University. General rhetoric about "expenses exceeding revenues" is uninformative. Details on the specific nature of the increasing expenses, are necessary to make informed decisions. You were clear at the mid-October meeting that departmental and faculty budgets should not be secret, that they should be public documents that can be scrutinized and questioned by members of those departments and faculties, and that you would relay this message to the Deans. To this end, we request that you stipulate to Deans that university, faculty and departmental budgets are open documents and should be provided (minus any personal salary information) to any member of the university community who requests them.

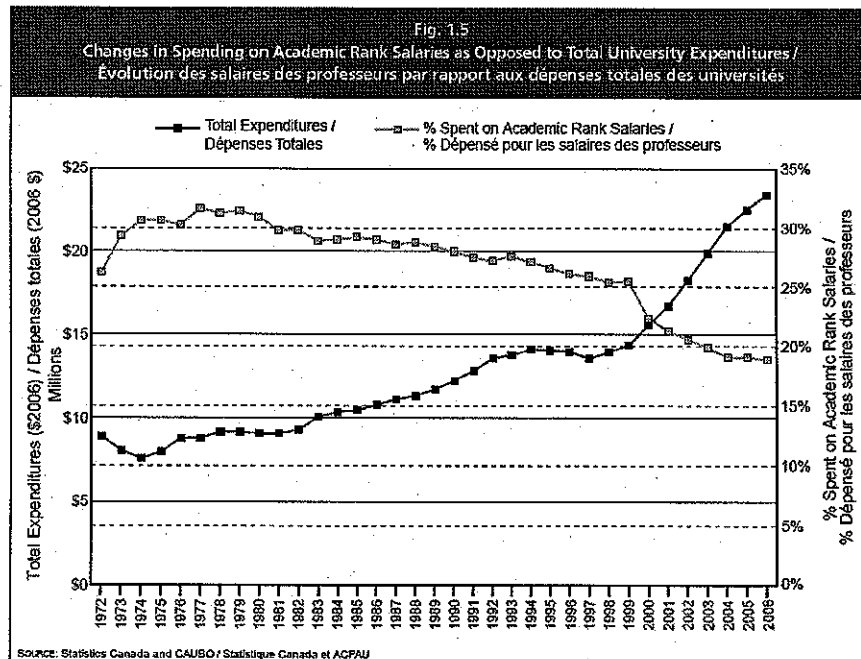
Without information, our Members, including Department Heads, find themselves caught between waiting to hear a detailed explanation of Queen's financial situation and feel compelled to urgent requests to develop plans for dealing with the projected level of cuts. For now, QUFA Executive is recommending that its Members demand more information before accepting or volunteering any action related to the current budget situation. In all of this, we must be also be aware of the consequences that any action has on those most vulnerable to loss of workload or job such as our term adjunct members and support staff.

The proposed budget cuts affect us as academic staff not only with respect to our workload and our ability to carry on day-to-day activities but perhaps even more importantly, with respect to the quality of instruction we can deliver in the classroom. These are essential issues, addressing the core mandate of the University. The lack of specific information about factors relating to and influencing budget decisions contributes to the general erosion of morale at Queen's.



Under the previous Principal, absence of transparency and communication with academic staff led to a significant decline in trust in University Administration among QUFA Members. It is discouraging to witness what appear to be similar patterns in the actions of current University Administration. Rumours that the announced budget cuts are linked to the University Administration's internal and external worries about commitments in the recently signed Collective Agreement, certification drives, pension plan issues and the political need to impress Queen's Park are all evidence of the growing distrust of University Administration. This situation is only exacerbated by the fact that the recent budget cut announcement contradicts your statement to QUFA Executive and Council members that an across-the-board cut was not a fair or effective way to deal with the financial short-fall. It would seem that providing accurate and detailed information about the current financial situation at Queen's is the least you could do to address the climate of panic created by recent announcements concerning the budget.

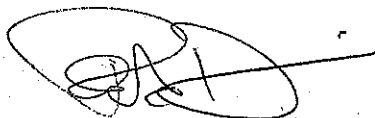
If budget cuts are necessary at Queen's, QUFA Executive and Council expects the University Administration to set the example by announcing precisely where and by how much the Administration plans to cut from the non-academic budgets. In our meeting with you in October, one of our Members discussed statistics published by the Canadian Association of University Teachers in the CAUT Almanac of Post-secondary Education 2008-2009 which indicated that during the past 30 years, the proportion of universities' budgets spent on academic faculty has declined significantly as a percentage of total expenditures (from above 30% in 1977 to below 20% in 2006) (Table below from CAUT, 2007, p.4). Data for Queen's for the fiscal year ending 2007 indicates that Academic Rank salaries accounted for 28.3% of general operating expenditures and 17.6% of total expenditures (*Financial Statistics of Universities and Colleges Fiscal year 2006-2007*, CAUT/CAUBO/ Statistics Canada). **“Other Salaries and Wages” increased between 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 from 32.0% of general operating expenditures and 20.7% of total expenditures to 33.7% and 22.2%, respectively** (*Financial Statistics of Universities and Colleges fiscal year 2005-2006*, CAUBO/ Statistics Canada; *Financial Statistics of Universities and Colleges for fiscal year 2006-2007*, CAUBO/Statistics Canada).



In light of this information, it would seem that if the Administration is really concerned about educational quality at Queen's, budgetary cuts must focus on changing the relative balance between funds spent in the classroom and those dispersed at the top of the Administration.

In conclusion, Dr Williams, QUFA is committed to holding you to your words about open communication, transparency and faculty involvement in affairs that matter most to us. We remind you that the cornerstone to effective implementation of any decision is the sharing of information and the development of a common understanding about the current situation and its origins. In the absence of real, detailed information about the budgetary situation it could appear that you are attempting to fabricate a sense of urgency and secure faculty co-operation through fear.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Peter A. Dacin', enclosed within a large, hand-drawn oval.

Peter A. Dacin  
President, QUFA