



Graduate Students' Association

University of Alberta

Message of Solidarity with AUPE Hospital Workers

26 October 2020

The Graduate Students' Association of the University of Alberta, in its role as a labour union for academically-employed graduate students at the University of Alberta, stands in solidarity with the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees (AUPE) members engaged in labour action in response to the Government of Alberta's plans to eliminate over 11,000 positions within the public health sector. While the economic position of our province is dire, the savings achieved through these extreme budgetary cuts will be insufficient to remedy the province's projected \$24 billion deficit. We in the post-secondary sector understand this well, as we are currently faced with ongoing funding reductions of unprecedented scale and scope, which negatively impact our ability to fully realize our mandate in the same manner as the public health service of our province.

Our public service, our universities included, are not perfect institutions; no institution can be. While we may identify issues requiring solutions, and need to potentially mitigate costs to an extent, the extreme nature of the government program to curtail costs will harm the institutions Albertans have built over decades; this is the utilization of a metaphorical sledgehammer, when a scalpel would have been more appropriate. Problems requiring solutions will only be exacerbated by these policy decisions, while introducing a host of new challenges requiring attention.

We also cannot ignore the human cost of austerity, for those who have lost their livelihoods after years of service to the public good, for those left facing increasingly unmanageable workloads, and for those who rely on these people for the services they provided. The damage to our public sector will reverberate throughout the already fraught economy, compounding upon the clearly foreseeable consequences of healthcare spending reductions in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, within a province setting new caseload records every day.

The UAGSA unequivocally expresses its support for AUPE members and other public-sector workers standing to defend our healthcare, our education, and the public good.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Umesh".

Umesh Nimmathi
GSA Vice-President Labour, 2020-2021

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