

A sample media release

Ontario faculty alarmed by proposal to recklessly overhaul university funding

TORONTO, April 11, 2022 – The Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) is alarmed by the Ford government's budget proposal to allocate 60 per cent of university funding based on institutional performance. By design, performance-based funding threatens education quality as it rewards institutions that meet specific performance targets while penalizing those that do not.

"This government's irresponsibility suggests that a system that encourages competition between universities will make Ontario a national leader," said Sue Wurtele, President of OCUFA. "In reality, performance-based university funding will create a system of winners and losers, putting education quality at risk for everyone."

OCUFA has long cautioned against performance-based funding. The government's proposal is especially alarming as it ignores the reality that Ontario's universities already receive the lowest per-student funding in Canada. This approach will likely disadvantage small and northern institutions, which already lack the resources of larger universities. Overall, performance-based funding works against quality improvement and punishes students studying at already cash-strapped institutions facing further funding cuts.

This proposed funding model will further incentivize the rise of precarious academic positions on Ontario's campuses. If this government is serious about faculty renewal, they must ensure that retiring professors are replaced with full-time tenure-stream faculty and not precariously employed instructors. Good jobs are at the heart of our university system and faculty associations across Ontario believe in the importance of hiring more junior faculty members in secure full-time positions.

"Instead of coming up with half-baked ways to take money away from universities, students, and faculty, this government should focus on investing in education quality at Ontario's postsecondary institutions," said Wurtele. "The government should be helping to create good jobs for faculty forced to work short-term precarious contracts."

Faculty believe in a postsecondary education strategy that increases university funding, removes barriers to attaining a higher education, and creates good jobs. However, this government continues to make rash decisions about Ontario's postsecondary education system without consulting the faculty, staff, and students who know the system best. It is time for this government to stop making rushed, politically motivated decisions and start listening to faculty, students, and parents.

Founded in 1964, OCUFA represents over 17,000 faculty and academic librarians, and other academic professionals in 30 member associations across Ontario. For more information, please visit the OCUFA website at www.ocufa.on.ca.

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Guide to a sample media release

- 1 The title should, in as few words as possible, explain what the story is all about. If possible, the headline should contain an action or verb (alarmed). It should also contain a hook, or something that intrigues the reader ("recklessly overhaul"). Remember to keep it short—eight-to-ten words is a good target.
- 2 This is the "lead", or the most important part of the release. The first sentence restates the headline, but with more information. All of the most important information—the who, what, where, when, and why—are expressed in these two sentences.
- 3 Quotes can play a variety of roles in a press release. Here, it is used to elaborate on the 'why' of the story, or the reason it is important. It also contains several key messages. Quotes are the ideal place to include more evocative and passionate statements.
- 4 These paragraphs contain data and key statistics that expand upon the information provided in the lead. They serve to provide deeper context for individuals interested in the story.
- 5 This quote provides additional context and concludes with an essential part of the messaging around this story—namely, how do solve the problem outlined in the release?
- 6 This paragraph ends the release by articulating your organization's solution to the problem and vision for moving forward.
- 7 The final paragraph should provide more information on your organization. It can also include a link to your website, should the reader want more information.
- 8 Press releases always end with "-30-". Why? Probably because telegrams used to end in "XXX" ... seriously.
- 9 Be sure to include contact information of your spokesperson or media coordinator. Make sure that person is available to take calls after the release is distributed and that your spokesperson is prepared to do media interviews.